

## APPENDIX (K).

## THE IMMUNITY OF BAMBURGH IN 1070.

BAMBURGH was one of the only three places between the Humber and the Tweed—the other two being York and Durham—that were not laid waste in the terrible harrying of Northumberland by the Conqueror in the beginning of 1070.<sup>1</sup> Probably the earl Gospatric had sought refuge in the castle, and there heard of the warning vision of Earnan that caused him to make a pilgrimage barefoot to the shrine of St. Cuthbert, then on Holy Island.<sup>2</sup> Gospatric's crime had been his taking away with him in the flight from Durham the greater portion of the rich ornaments of the church.<sup>3</sup> Bamburgh was no doubt 'the corner of Northumberland defended on all sides by the sea or marshes' that was the camp of refuge of William's enemies in the North.<sup>4</sup> Bishop Egelwin and 'the family of St. Cuthbert' had reached the island with the body of their patron on the 14th of December, 1069. The first night of their flight they had spent in the church of St. Paul at Jarrow. After keeping Christmas at York, William set out to reduce the hostile fastness. The inhabitants of the country between the Tees and the Tyne everywhere fled at the approach of bands of Norman pillagers. The church of Jarrow was given to the flames. William himself marched upon Hexham. The Tyne may have been in flood, or he may have been anxious to make his presence felt once for all in the country.

<sup>1</sup> 'Willelmo rege cum magno superveniente exercitu, et per menses Decembrem, Januarium, Februarium, omnia vastante, fugientibus omnibus ubi latere poterant, et etiam extra patriam peregrinantibus, tota terra ab Umbra usque Tuedam per multum tempus in solitudinem redacta est, præter Eboracum et Dunelmum et Benbanburc.'—MS. Life of St. Cuthbert at Brough Hall in Raine, *Priory of Hexham*, vol. i. Surt. Soc. Publ. 44, App. p. viii.

<sup>2</sup> *Symeonis Hist. Dunelm. Eccl.* iii. 16; Rolls ed. I. pp. 102-104.

<sup>3</sup> All this explains the passage from William of Jumièges, vii. 42; 'Sicarii denique intra Dunelmum latitantes . . . in maritimum præsidiorum remotiora sese receperunt, inhonestas opes piratico latrocinio sibi contrahentes,' which Professor Freeman, *Norman Conquest*, iv. 303, quotes without understanding.

<sup>4</sup> 'Rursum comperit hostile collegium in angulo quodam regionis latitare, mari vel paludibus undique munitio.'—*Orderici Vitalis, Hist. Eccl.* iv. 8. (Migne, *Patrologia*, vol. 188, p. 230.) Cf. 'Babbenburg . . . munitio inexpugnabilis . . . quia inaccessibilis videbatur propter paludes et aquas.'—*Ibid.* viii, 21, see above p. 231, n 29.

The whole of Hexhamshire was, we know, laid absolutely waste.<sup>5</sup> He then probably followed the eastern branch of the Watling Street, an old Roman causeway. It should be remembered that during this campaign William had not the command of the sea, and that it was a matter of policy to encompass his enemies as far as possible before they could make good their escape to Scotland. Alarmed, however, at his near approach the English at Bamburgh broke up their camp in the night, probably leaving Gospatric with a garrison in the castle, and fled towards the Tweed. William pursued them to the banks of that river.<sup>6</sup> He spent fifteen days in negotiations on the very Border, and after receiving the submission of Gospatric, who nevertheless thought it prudent not to venture into the king's presence in person, returned to Hexham by a still wilder route than that of his advance, through a country that had never been known to be traversed by an army,<sup>7</sup> possibly by the western branch of Watling Street. From Hexham he marched back to York.

Mr. Hodgson Hinde saw that it was a physical impossibility for William to return to York from the Tees by way of Hexham, as Orderic Vitalis says he did, and in order to get over the difficulty proposed to read Hamelac (Helmsley) for Haugustald (Hexham). Professor Freeman 'thankfully' accepts the correction<sup>8</sup> without considering why William's pursuit should be said to have stopped on the right bank of the Tees when we know that Jarrow was burnt and Hexhamshire made a wilderness. Besides if the insurgents at Durham had betaken themselves to Professor Freeman's imaginary camp at the mouth of the Tees this could hardly be called 'maritimum præsidiorum remotiora' from William's standpoint. The blunder lies in the name of the river and not in that of the town. The Brough Life of St. Cuthbert quoted above shows most positively that William's ravages extended 'usque Tuedam.'

<sup>5</sup> 'Tota ubique terra vacaret cultore,' Raine, *Hexham Priory*, i. App. p. viii.

<sup>6</sup> Orderic Vitalis, iv, 8, says 'ad flumen Tesiam insequitur,' but 'Tesiam' is evidently a mistake for 'Tuedam.'

<sup>7</sup> 'Mense Januario Rex Guillelmus Haugustaldam revertebatur a Tesia, via quæ hactenus exercitui erat intentata, qua crebro acutissima juga et vallium humillimæ sedes, cum vicinia serenitate verna gaudet, nivibus compluuntur. At ille in acerbissimo hiemis gelu transivit, animosque militum confirmavit sua alacritate. Illud iter difficiliter peractum est, in quo sonipedum ingens ruina facta est, &c.'—Orderic Vitalis, iv. 8 (p. 320).

<sup>8</sup> Freeman, *Norman Conquest*, iv. p. 306.