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ROCHESTER CASTLE.[1]

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It would be an unnecessary claim upon the attention were I to request it to the very early history of Rochester Castle. The events connected with the city during the Anglo-Saxon period, though possessing in themselves a peculiar interest, more particularly when considered with reference to the foundation of the Monastery of St. Andrew, and the various donations to the church belong, however, to a time that has not left us any memorial of an architectural character. They will therefore receive but slight notice. The kings who flourished from the eighth to the eleventh century made various grants to the church. Their charters have been preserved in a noble record that has been printed, and thus these proofs of their devotion have been made generally accessible.

The first of these deeds is a grant from Ecgberht King of Kent, dated in the year 765. It conveys, at the request of Bishop Eardulf, and by the assent of Genberht, Archbishop of Canterbury, to the former prelate the land within the walls of the Castle of Hrofescester, with a small hamlet and two acres adjoining the broad road or street, whose boundary is on the south of the same land.[2] It would be merely conjectural to attempt fixing upon any particular spot as this, which is here so vaguely described. The same difficulty exists in endeavouring to ascertain where all the

[1] Read at the Annual Meeting of the Institute at Rochester, July, 1863.

[2] Textus Roffensis, Edit. Hearn., p. 77; Dugd. Mon. vol. i. p. 166; Codex Dipl. vol. i. p. 137.

lands given to the church by succeeding Anglo-Saxon kings was situated. Enough is it for the present outline of the earlier history of the castle, briefly to enumerate the donations made to the Church of St. Andrew, and to its different bishops.

Thus, in the year 788, a charter of Offa, King of the Mercians, conveys to the church six plough lands at Trotterscliffe. These are stated to be given to the church of the Blessed Apostle, and to the Episcopality of the Castle which is called Hrofescester. The words *Episcopium Castelli*, although they may reasonably admit of this translation, when they become thus literally rendered are but imperfectly understood. A passage adduced from Bede may help to make them more intelligible, and also show that they were significantly used. This historian, in speaking of the Synod held in the year 670, at Hertford, mentions amongst those ecclesiastics who were present, Putta, Bishop of the Castle of West Kent, called Rochester. Therefore it is manifest that in his time the Bishopric and the Castle of Rochester were held together. The expressions "Episcopium Castelli quod nominatur Hrofescester," and the "Episcopus Castelli Cantuariorum quod dicitur Hrofescæstir," being intended to convey the idea of the union of spiritual and military authority in the city where the Church of St. Andrew had been founded.[3]

It is scarcely necessary to enter into a close examination of the word *Episcopium*, when taken in connection with the castle. Since it evidently means both episcopal residence within its walls, and the episcopal custody of the castle itself. Nor indeed would this passing digression have been introduced, had it not been for the purpose of showing how early the Bishops of Rochester used it for their residence.

The position of Rochester on the Medway, and its lying on the great Roman Road from Dover to London, at once constituted it a most important position. Besides this, the site where the present castle is situated imparted to the city the additional advantages of command of the river, and natural strength. It must thus have always been from the days of Cæsar to the next conqueror of England a place of

[3] Episcopium Castelli may be accepted in the same way as we speak of Rose Castle and Bishop Aukland.

great utility, as will hereafter be seen, in protecting the kingdom from invasion.

A charter of King Offa, granted in the following year, 789, gives one plough land to Bishop Weremund for the use of the church placed in the castle named Hrofescaester. The Church of St. Andrew became subsequently enriched by donations of land in 811, by Coenwulf, King of the Mercians. It was enriched also by three endowments of a similar kind in different years, 842, 850, 855, by Æthelwulf. In the last of them, the Castle of Hrobi is again spoken of as being a boundary of his gift.

There are numerous other instruments relating to the see, but as they make no allusion to the present castle, it would be only a waste of time to notice them. Enough has been said to show that there is sufficient evidence to prove both the ancient existence of a castle at Rochester before the Conquest, and its immediate connection with the see founded by the piety of Æthelbert.

There is now a considerable break in the history of the bishopric. It has continuously been followed for nearly two centuries and a half, but the line of succession of those enjoying it can no longer be traced with the same precision. During the interval elapsing between the death of Æthelwulf in 855, and the next mention of the castle, six Anglo-Saxon princes had enriched the monastery of St. Andrew, whilst they governed Wessex. This embraces a period of rather more than two hundred years, and brings down the general history rather abruptly to the time when Lanfranc sat at Canterbury, and William had nearly secured the conquest of England. The survey of Domesday shows that an exchange of land was made by the Conqueror and the Bishop of Bayeux. Odo received land at Aylesford as an equivalent for the site where William built his castle at Rochester.[4]

In the year 1088 a great dissension arose amongst the English nobility in consequence of part of his Norman followers favoring his own cause, whilst others, who were the more numerous party, were desirous of establishing Robert, Earl of Normandy, on the throne. The earl's chief supporter was Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. This royal prelate was one of the

[4] Episcopus etiam de Rouecestre pro excambio terre in qua castellum sedet, tantum de hac terra tenet quod 17*s.* 4*d.* valet. Domesday, vol. i. p. 2, b.

sons of Arlotta, the mother of the Conqueror, though by a different father. He espoused the cause of Robert, and exhorted him to lose no time in coming to England. In the meanwhile he took the precaution to fortify Rochester. As soon as the earl was able he sent over a body of soldiers to his uncle, who placed them in charge of the city he had just secured. Eustace, Count of Boulogne and Robert de Belesme, persons of the highest rank, were immediately invested with the command.[5]

Odo had already shut himself up in Rochester with five hundred soldiers, where he anxiously awaited the arrival of the Duke of Normandy. William, however, anticipating the addition of fresh reinforcements, in the month of May invested the place with a considerable army. He erected, says Vitalis, two forts, and contrived to shut up the bishop so closely that all egress was impracticable. Robert did not personally come to the succour of his kinsman, nor indeed did he send him any further assistance. But there were several Normans in the besieging army who gave him all the aid in their power, although it was not done openly through fear of the king. After the garrison had endured great privation, Odo surrendered it. The Norman chronicler enters into a full description of the interview the besieged held with the Conqueror after their submission. But it is unnecessary to repeat an ideal conversation given with such minuteness.[6]

Thus in the first year of William's reign the City of Rochester fell into his hands, and it continued in the possession of the Crown until the reign of Henry II., who in 1126 made a grant of it to the Archbishop of Canterbury. This donation is the origin of many important events connected with the history of the castle, as will hereafter be shown in the course of succeeding years.

During the reign of Rufus, Lanfranc presided over the see of Canterbury. A long intimacy had existed betwixt the Primate and Gundulf, a monk of Bec. This naturally led to the promotion of the latter on a favourable opportunity. Accordingly when the see of Rochester became vacant through the death of Arnost in 1076, Lanfranc recommended his friend to fill the vacant see. It would be neither suitable nor illustrative of the present subject to follow the actions that

[5] Flor. Worc. sub anno.

[6] Order. Vital., l. viii. c. 2.

have been so highly eulogised by Gundulf's biographer. At Rochester he is chiefly known by the works he executed at his cathedral. He found it in a state of decay. He is said to have rebuilt it. Little, however, of his work exists at the present day. Although the evidence of his labours is scarcely perceptible, it can hardly be doubted that his reputation as an architect was well deserved. He studied the comforts of his monks, having been one himself, and he increased their numbers. When he entered on his Bishopric there were not more than five, but at his decease he left more than sixty, who were capable of reading and perfectly singing in the service of God. We are further told that he was exceedingly knowing and efficient in masonry, so that he constructed a castle of stone at Rochester at his own cost. He built a hospital for lepers at Chatham ; and in 1090 founded and erected the Abbey of Malling. The keep adjoining it was also his work. The Textus Roffensis gives him the credit of superintending the erection of the White Tower in London.[7] The same authority aided by local tradition has assigned to him the equal honor of building the castle at Rochester. So generally indeed has he been reputed to be the architect of this magnificent structure, that it still retains the name of Gundulf's tower. There is not any notice of it in the Textus Roffensis.

It is at all times a perplexing undertaking to reopen for investigation a subject which the concurrent voice of former generations has apparently settled. And it is also an unenviable duty to enter afresh upon the examination of a question that has been prejudged. But these difficulties are legitimate points for calm consideration, and reasoning can never be more profitably employed than when its powers are directed to ascertain on what grounds any historical statement depends, and how much of it is supported by actual truth.

Now, upon reading the account that has been written of the acts of Gundulf, it is very apparent that the great aim of his biographer was to hold him up to the world as the leading spirit of his age, and as a prelate who was unusually endowed

[7] Hæc est conventio inter Gundulfum episcopum et Eadmerum Anhænde Burgensem Lundoniæ. Dum idem Gundulfus, ex præcepto regis Willelmi magni, *præesset operi magnæ turris Londoniæ*, et hospitatus fuisset apud ipsum Æadmerum, quâdam vice ipse cæpit episcopum rogare, ut concedat sibi societatem ecclesiæ quam regebat, videlicet Sancti Andreæ. Quod ei episcopus satis libenter concessit. Textus Roffensis, p. 212. Written in 1143.

with practical wisdom, as well as saintly piety. He was the cherished correspondent of Anselm, and the beloved friend of Lanfranc. He had rebuilt his own cathedral from ruins, and he is also said to have constructed at the same place a castle of stone. Nor is it improbable that he built a structure of this kind. But, upon perusing the account of the transactions that led to this latter work, it is perfectly clear that the building could not have been the one still bearing his name. The mere fact of his agreeing to build a castle for the sum of sixty pounds in consideration of Rufus restoring to his church the Manor of Hedenham, in Buckinghamshire, is in itself sufficient proof that the present keep, called Gundulf's Tower cannot be the identical work alluded to. It may by way of illustration simply be said in disproof, that the building could not possibly have been erected for so small a sum. Measure its size with Dover and Chilham,[8] and calculate the various sums expended on their erection,[9] and it will be seen how little sixty pounds produced in works upon those castles, whilst the tower at Rochester is larger than one and nearly as large as the other. There is, however, other testimony adducible which more directly destroys Bishop Gundulf's claim to the honor of building this magnificent fortress. I allude not now to the conclusions that must necessarily be drawn from its architectural character, since they will receive due attention when that part of the subject is considered; but rather that whilst the arguments deducible from the foregoing statements tend to invalidate, if indeed they do not quite contradict the legendary associations connected with Gundulf's fame as a military architect, there is also another notice on record relating to the castle of Rochester, in which the name of its real builder is disclosed.

The most valuable work relating to the early history of the see of Canterbury is the chronicle written by Gervase. He

[8] Dover 123 × 108 ft. sq. 95 ft. high.
Rochester 103 × 85
Castle Rising 60 × 90
Newcastle 62 × 56

[9] Chilham was built 17, 18, 19, and 21 Henry II., from 1171 to 1175, and cost 331*l.* 16*s.* 9*d.*

Dover was built 14 to 33 Henry II., but chiefly 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 Henry II.; in these six years there was expended on Dover:—

		£	*s.*	*d.*
26 Henry II.	on walls	165	13	4
29 „	works	129	16	11
30 „	towers	131	8	10
31 „	towers	299	2	1
32 „	towers	207	9	0
33 „		151	15	4
		£1085	5	6

was a sacristan in the church and both personally witnessed its conflagration, and subsequently watched the progress of its rebuilding. In addition to the important description he has left of these events, he has written the history of the archbishops. The lives of those who governed the see immediately about his own time are naturally worthy of all confidence, since he would be well acquainted with the transactions in which they were engaged. This writer was also present at the dedication of Archbishop William's new church in 1130, and thus lived as his contemporary. He speaks of him in his biographical sketch as having crowned Stephen, and in other terms as standing high in the king's favor. In proof of this he tells us that at the archbishop's instigation he gave and confirmed to the Church of Canterbury and to William, the archbishop, the castle that was in the city of Rochester, where the same archbishop built an extremely beautiful tower. This valuable passage is conclusive, and removes all doubt of its author from dispute.[1]

The time when William de Corbeuil occupied the Primacy extended from 1123 to 1139. Therefore from this evidence the keep must have been erected during this interval of sixteen years. The continuation of Florence of Worcester enables us to fix the date of this magnificent structure a little more closely, by three years. This narrative is confirmatory of that of Gervase. He says, under the year 1126, that the king by the advice of his barons, granted to the Church of Canterbury, to William de Corbeuil, the archbishop, and his successors, the perpetual custody and constableship of the Castle of "Hrofi," with permission to make within it a defence or tower such as he liked, and to hold and guard it for ever; and that the soldiers stationed in the castle should have free entrance and egress according as their turns required. Also that they should render security to the king for the same castle. This fixes the erection between 1126 and 1139.

This is the first time there is any mention made of it as a direct tenure under the Crown. It may be observed, too, from the wording of this royal grant, that no regular fortress or tower had been erected up to that time. Archbishop William

[1] "Hujus instinctu, rex Henricus dedit et confirmavit ecclesiæ Cantuariæ et Willielmo archiepiscopo Castellum quod est in civitate Roffensi, ubi idem archiepiscopus turrim egregiam ædificavit." Gervasii Actus Pontificum, apud Decem Scriptores, p. 1664.

obtained a privilege that had not been granted to Gundulf. This prelate, according to the same chronicler, had already been dead eighteen years, which again disposes of the claims that have been advanced on behalf of this bishop being its builder. The regard of posterity will rather be due to him as an ecclesiastical than as a military architect.

The custody of the castle thus in 1126 transferred to the Archbishop of Canterbury at once terminates all its connection with the see of Rochester. This is affirmatively proved by the official transaction just spoken of. It may still further be demonstrated by the entire omission of all mention of it in the subsequent documents which relate to the history both of the bishopric and the city. In illustration of this it may be observed that the castle is not named in the charter granted by Henry I., nor in that of Stephen ; nor in the first granted by Henry II., which gives protection to the monks after the conflagration of their church. The charter confirmatory of their privileges ceded by the same monarch, expressly frees them from all labor upon the castle, an exemption which could only emanate from the Crown in favor of those who were feudally bound to perform services in its own defence. Upon the same point the charter of Richard is equally silent. Again, had the castle appertained to the see in the reign of John, it would not have been exempted from that careful valuation of the episcopal manors which was then taken. Nor again under a taxation in the 20th of Edward I. would it have been excepted.[2]

The error of making Gundulf the builder of the present castle was an easy one for superficial inquirers to commit. It may thus be explained. Gundulf's fame as an architect had been established by his actual works upon the church or Cathedral of St. Andrew. He had been spoken of by his biographer as the constructor of a castle of stone at Rochester, and consequently the erection of the one existing was thought to be the work of his well known ability. The munificent outlay he made on the cathedral added weight to the current story, whilst the fact that he had ever built any castle at Rochester, made the tradition popular that the one now existing was the identical structure. The notice taken of his skill in masonry by the anonymous author of his life was

[2] These acts are gathered from the Charters and other documents printed in the Textus Roffensis.

accessible in the extracts printed in the Registrum Roffense. The acts of the Metropolitans written by Gervase and the chronicle of Florence of Worcester were less easy to be consulted by the general reader, and thus William de Corbeuil became deprived of that renown which the erection of so magnificent a tower entitles him to receive.

I have hitherto pursued these researches into the history of Rochester Castle by the assistance of such charters and annals as have been preserved. They are sufficient to establish Archbishop William's claims, without any examination of the architectural character of the keep itself. Yet this will necessarily follow when the present purely historical part of the subject has been completed.

Before the features of the keep itself are brought in review, there are records of a different kind to those just used which require to be noticed. This is essential to the present inquiry, because whilst they open an entirely fresh branch of it for elucidation, they also furnish us with a few new facts. The earliest entries I shall notice have never been considered, and one particular document, the latest of any value, though printed, has not been specifically applied to the structure it so well illustrates.

In order to obtain every information that could be brought to bear on the history of this truly imposing monument, I have made a careful search through such records kept under the custody of the Master of the Rolls as would be likely to cast upon it any light. It need scarcely be stated that after Domesday Book, the most important materials for the early history of the kingdom are to be found in that venerable record called the Great Roll of the Exchequer. It has been examined from the 31st year of Henry I., to the close of the reign of Richard I. Not continuously, because the Rolls are lost from the year 1130 until 1155, but from this time until 1199, which embraces a period of forty-four years. The result of this search is more readily given than the attention it required. It may be a tedious, yet it is always a most instructive pursuit, every few words as they become extended expressing new information. On a recent occasion the search became the means of completely establishing the date when the castles of Canterbury and Chilham were erected, together with their cost. With respect to these buildings as well as Dover there is every information

that can be desired. Had Rochester Castle always remained in the hands of the Crown, the expense of its erection and repairs would have been returned on the Pipe Roll with the most scrupulous exactness. It has, however, been shown, that in 1126 Henry I. granted it to William de Corbeuil, and, therefore, the expenditure upon the building was not entered on the Roll of the Sheriff of Kent, but was returned by the treasurer of the see to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Yet, fortuitously, as it were, it happens, that in the thirteenth year (1167), the sheriff returns as small an outlay upon the castle as four marcs. Having seen it bestowed on the Archbishopric, we naturally ask why this charge should occur. And the question is more pressingly repeated when it is discovered that a further sum of fifteen pounds was spent in works upon it in the twentieth year of the same reign (1174). The difficulty may thus readily be solved. A large fluctuating revenue accrued to the Crown upon the vacancy of any Bishopric or Religious House that was of royal foundation. When a prelate or an abbot died, the king usually took the temporalities into his own hands, and he received the profits until the vacancy was filled up. When once these possessions had been seised into the king's hands, the ecclesiastic who succeeded could not enter upon his dignity till he had obtained a writ of restitution. The law continues in force to the present day, though its abuse is done away. These receipts of the Crown were purely casual, but they added considerably to the Royal revenue. The history of every see can furnish numerous instances of its temporalities being thus diverted to secular purposes ; from the reign of Rufus, who seized Gundulf's manor of Hedenham in Buckinghamshire, till that of Elizabeth, who kept the Bishopric of Ely vacant for nineteen years that she might receive its income.[3]

It has just been noticed that in 1167 an outlay was made on the Castle. It was then seised in the King's hands. The temporalities of Becket having been under avoidance from the year 1164, and so the profits of the see remained under the appointed custodes until 1174, when Richard, his

[3] The form is given in Fitzherbert's Natura Brevium; Cripps, pp. 79, 80, &c.; Carte, vol. i. p. 594.

successor, was consecrated Archbishop. During these ten years, therefore, the Castle of Rochester being in the hands of the Crown, the expenses of its repairs were entered by the Sheriff of the County, who was the official custos of the see, upon the Great Roll of the Pipe.[4] There is no other entry of value upon it pertinent to our present inquiry, during the remainder of the reign.

In the third year of Richard I. (1192) we meet with the following notice: "In garrisoning the Castle of Rochester to Hugh de Bosco," a sum not legible, "and to the same for a hundred seams of corn, and a hundred of rye, and fifty of oats, and for a hundred pigs and forty cows for victualling the aforesaid castle, 47*l.* 16*s.* 8*d.*" In the following year there occurs an entry of the same constable for works upon it, and for its defence, 20*l.* And again in the next year, he is paid 14*l.* for the custody of Rochester Castle. How are these entries to be explained after the castle had been granted to William Corbeuil and his successors? on the grounds already adverted to. The see of Canterbury was now again vacant. Close upon this time, Fitzwalter died, and Langton his successor was not appointed till the eighth or ninth year of King John's reign (1207). The Bishopric of Rochester was also vacant by the death of Gilbert de Glanville in 31 Henry II. (1185), and lay in the hands of the Crown till 16 John (1215); therefore, the Sheriff of Kent being the official custos, the repairs and issues of the castle were under his care.

The last entry of Richard's reign relating to it, is an outlay in 1197 of a hundred and eighteen shillings for works upon the drawbridge. The Chancellor's Roll of the third of John also notices slight works upon the castle.

One of the inferences suggested by these facts is that from the year 1192 to 1202 the Castle of Rochester was again in the hands of the Crown, and it so continued until it was once more ceded to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was Stephen Langton.

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Archbishops of Canterbury.		Bishops of Rochester.	
Lanfranc	1070—1089		
Anselm	1093—1109	Gundulf	1077—1108
Ralph d'Escures	1114—1123	Ralph d'Escures	1108—1114
William de Corbeuil	1123—1136	Ernulf	1115—1125
Theobald	1139—1162		
Becket	1162—1170	Gilbert Glanville	1185—1215

At the close of John's reign it again took a prominent place in history, since at this time the well-known confederacy of the English Barons was formed, which more than any other event in the British annals, has contributed to our national greatness.

The importance of securing Rochester Castle was so apparent that the Barons had sworn that whenever it should be besieged they would use their utmost endeavours to relieve it. William de Albini had been invested with the command, and, in fulfilment of their promises, when hostilities commenced, they marched as far as Dartford from London to its succour. The King had, however, previously seized upon the principal avenues leading to it, and broken down all the bridges, so that the garrison had only their own resolution and courage to depend upon. They had little more than walls to protect them ; not even weapons sufficient for their defence. After a protracted siege of three months it fell into the King's hands.

If the besieged had suffered much from want of provisions, John had also found the attack troublesome and expensive. He was so exasperated at the endurance of the garrison, that when he gained its possession he threatened to hang every one within its walls. But the suggestion that was made to him that this would bring retribution upon his own knights if they were taken, caused him to desist from carrying his intentions into effect. He consequently sent William de Albini and some of his principal supporters as prisoners to Corfe. But so numerous were the State prisoners at this time, that the Close Rolls have various entries showing the necessity that existed for providing accommodation for them. Thus, while De Albini was sent to Corfe, because its remoteness made it a place of greater security, prisoners of less importance already confined there, were transferred to other strongholds. The same policy was shown by Edward I., who incarcerated some of the Welsh leaders in the Castles of Scarborough and Bamborough.

Concerning all the events of the baronial confederacy, the Close Rolls give the fullest information—information so interesting and so varied that their perusal makes us as it were eye witnesses of everything that happened. The capture of the castle, thus so briefly related, involved more important consequences than are at first sight apparent. It

was more than a common siege, and the results of William de Albini's noble resistance are impressed on our institutions. By this siege, the King, it is true, gained the credit of a victory, but it was only a brief and illusory triumph. His energies had become weakened by the endurance of the garrison. His hold of the people's attachment was severed. The nobility had universally cast off their allegiance. The fall of Rochester, in fact, warned the barons of the strong necessity that existed for entering into a closer compact with each other for their defence. It proved to them the need of vigorous and united exertions. Therefore to this event may be assigned the arrays marshalled at Brackley and Stamford. Hostile gatherings, which, in their turn, immediately led to the more important one that established the capitulation of Runnimede.

In this manner did the noble resistance of De Albini further the growing power of the aristocracy over the Crown. Thus, too, did it cause the extension of public rights. It effected even more than this, since it was the immediate origin of that Great Charter to which, under Providence, England is indebted for its Constitutional progress, and for the spirit of rational liberty which breathes through its institutions.

With no ordinary interest, then, shall we look upon a building thus inseparably linked with the memory of these momentous events. It rises before our eyes as a grand though dishonored pile, still displaying the skilfulness of architectural genius, and commended to our protection by the voice of hoar antiquity, but even deserving still more regard as a venerable landmark of history. Yet these natural feelings of admiration of a structure in itself so vast and impressive, will but feebly contrast with the emotions it raises in the mind, when it is further considered as the advanced bulwark of constitutional liberty, and as a monument bringing vividly to remembrance the most important struggle in which Englishmen have ever been engaged.

The nation itself did not perceive the benefits which in after ages were destined to flow from the Charter. Like a spring silently issuing from a secret cavern of the earth, ignorant of its future course as well as of the various tributaries that will increase its strength ere its waters are mingled with the sea, so were the consequences of the

united movement of the barons unobserved at the moment by its authors. Nor, with all our constitutional advancement, and exalted as we are by its provisions, can it be said that the whole of the benefits springing from Magna Charta have as yet been received, since English freedom, like the oak of our native soil, takes centuries to bring it to maturity.

But I am wandering too far from the subject immediately under notice. Yet I have felt that it was a fit opportunity to allude to the effects produced by this long siege of Rochester Castle. I have also conceived that if Bishop Gundulf may have received honour for the execution of works built by others, it was but an act of justice to mention the patriotic exertions of De Albini. His name ought to be held equally dear by the citizens of Rochester, since by his gallant defence of the castle he helped to secure their common liberties. He stood in the front of danger and risked everything for their rights. Nor, whilst thus so faintly descanting upon his valor, his endurance, and disregard of life, should our reverential gratitude be forgotten towards that enlightened prelate, Stephen Langton, who resolutely aided the popular cause, and placed him in command of the citadel.[5]

Although the barons had compelled John to recognise their liberties, they were still in a very insecure state. Except London, they had only one place of defence remaining. In the danger that lay before them, they saw that their ruin was inevitable if they depended merely on their own forces. In such a dilemma they invited the assistance of Louis[6] of France, and even offered him the crown of England. On the 21st of May, 1216, the young prince landed at Dover. He made an ineffectual attempt to gain the castle, but with this exception speedily became master of the county of Kent. Rochester fell to him on the 30th of May. John died in about five months afterwards. The footing Louis had gained in England was but of short duration, so that in the following year he made peace on honorable terms and quitted England.

Rochester Castle, which had fallen voluntarily into his power, now again became transferred to the Crown. It belonged to it uninterruptedly through several succeeding

[5] 1214. Letters of John to Archbishop of Canterbury, saying that the castle would be committed to his custody. Rot. Lit. Pat. p. 138.

[6] Son of Philip Augustus of France. He ascended the throne 1223.

reigns. It comes before us once more in history, but its great importance was past.

In 1226 and 1227 the Clause Rolls exhibit rather large sums expended by the Royal precept upon the construction of mangonels and petrariæ, as well as for a bretache and drawbridge on the south side of the castle. Another writ from the Crown orders the part that was ruinous in the keep to be repaired as well as the gutters of the hall.

After an interval of nearly half a century, the Castle of Rochester again becomes prominent in English history. The discontent of the barons had deprived Henry III. of many of his castles. These, by the consent of the insurgents, had been placed under the command of Simon de Montfort. He had successively defended on their behalf Kenilworth and Northampton; both of them had, however, been taken by the Royal forces. He was still in the year 1264 master of the counties round London, as well as of all their fortresses, with the exception of Rochester. This was in the keeping of Earl Warren for the Crown. The Earl of Arundel, Roger de Leyburne, and others of the nobility had fled thither with their forces to defend it against the insurgent party.[7]

Simon de Montfort marched out of London to attack it. But on his arrival he found the bridge over the Medway broken down, and a palisade made beyond it on the side next the city. In its defence Roger de Leyburne was wounded. Notwithstanding the skill evinced by the earl in his method of attack, he was shortly obliged to raise the siege, so that he might concentrate all his forces for a more urgent occasion, and, as the fortune of war decreed, for a victory over Henry at Lewes.

A document has been preserved which affords considerable information about the particular time when the siege of Rochester commenced. It also throws a good deal of light upon the social habits of the time, giving a history of the domestic economy of Roger de Leyburne, one of the leading knights then in the castle. This document, which is amongst the Public Records, is entitled "Compotus Rogeri de Leyburne," and relates to the forty-eighth year of Henry III. I shall not enter into such a detailed examination of these accounts as they deserve, because the Record is not only too

[7] Chron. Walt. de Hemingburgh, vol. i. p. 313.

long for the present occasion, but also because the contents will more appropriately receive express attention hereafter.

Some of its entries, however, are immediately applicable to our present subject, and I will proceed to notice them. It appears that Earl Warren and William de Braose came to the Castle of Rochester on the Wednesday after Palm Sunday, and that the attack upon it commenced on the following day. On the Saturday after Easter, the barons departed from the Castle, and on the Tuesday following Earl Warren left it. This roll further states that on the return of the king from the battle of Lewes, he came to Rochester, when he ordered the Constable of the Tower of the same place, and others being in the same, by Roger de Leyburne, to give up the Tower to the Earl of Leicester; which, according to the aforesaid precept, they obeyed. This cession of the Castle was in conformity with the Mise of Lewes, which decreed that the barons should have the custody of the Royal fortresses. After the king's power had been restored by the battle of Evesham and the sieges of Kenilworth and Northampton, constables were again appointed to hold it for the Crown; and under their government it continued, without further changes, for a period of three centuries, when, in 1610, James I. granted it to Sir Anthony Weldon.

Sufficient reasons have been already assigned for attributing the erection of the Keep to William de Corbeuil, Archbishop of Canterbury. It now becomes necessary to draw attention to the building in its present condition, to speak of the changes it has undergone, and of the expenses incurred in its reparation. And here, in the very outset, it may be stated, that history and architecture are so naturally allied, that whilst they lend mutual assistance in investigations like the present, they can neither ever be severed, nor will they be found contradicting each other. Whilst its buildings are the visible history of a country, history itself takes a fresh existence from the light they cast upon it. Indeed, these two studies are so firmly united, that they may be considered identical. They present such equal marks of value that it is difficult to pronounce which is entitled to the pre-eminence; or, again, which ought to win the highest confidence. Whilst history speaks to us with the quiet voice of time, the architecture of a building is the

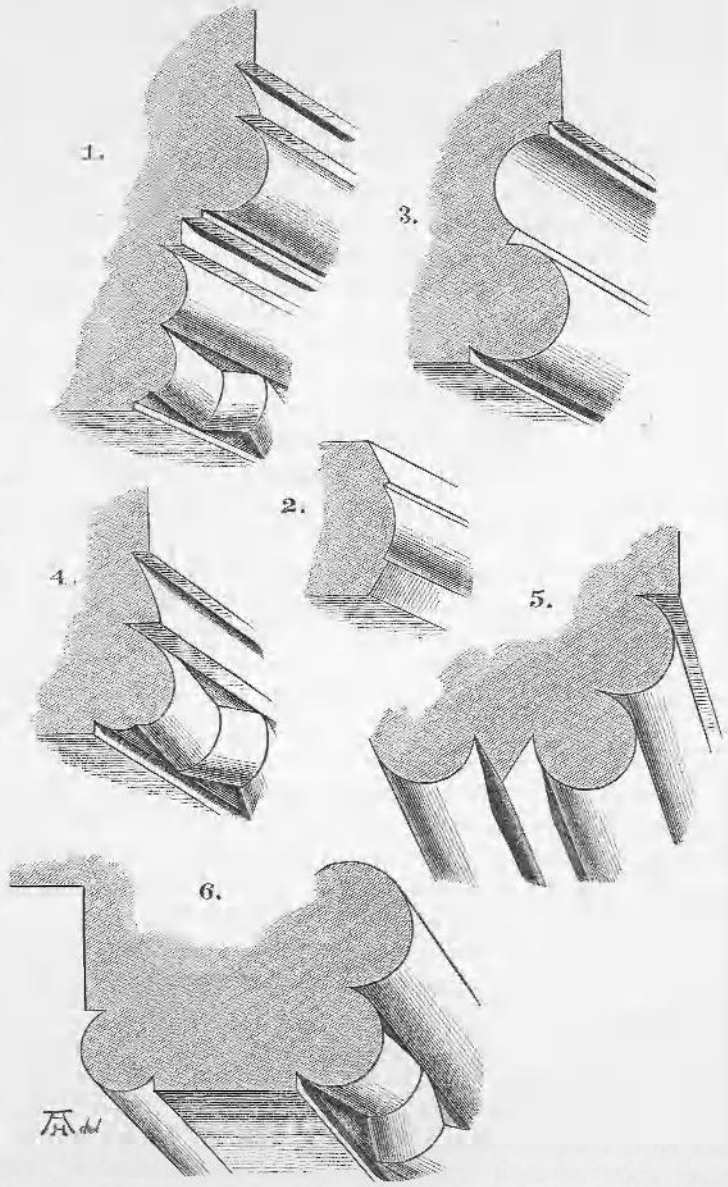

Fig. 1. Arch moulding, First floor. Fig. 2. String course, Second floor. Fig. 3. Window moulding, Second floor. Fig. 4. Window moulding, Third floor. Fig. 5. Chimney arch, Second floor. Fig. 6. Chimney arch, Fourth floor.

evidence of its truth. The facts revealed by the one are confirmed by the other, and when an account is slight, imperfect, or obscure; when even we have the disadvantage of not possessing any information whatever; when the charters and the chronicles are put aside, the records rolled up, and all the volumes that have been consulted replaced on their shelves as conveying no information, the architecture of a building adduces absolute evidence. Its mode of construction, its peculiar masonry, or its characteristic mouldings, faithfully supply the place of written testimony. So clearly, indeed, are these various tests discernible, that they are capable of supplying the place of other authority, whilst they also constitute an independent and additional historic proof. This will be at once illustrated in the structure under notice.

We have had before us, for example, two dates, between which the erection of the castle was undoubtedly executed. It embraces a period of thirteen years. In 1126 Henry II. granted Rochester to the Archbishop of Canterbury; in 1139 the same prelate died. It is probably impossible to determine the year of its erection more closely. For since the very year is not recorded, the style of the building does not supply the means of arriving at it with more exactness. The mouldings round the doors and windows of the Castle at once remove all speculation about its age being earlier than these years. It is true that architectural works in Kent would be naturally a little in advance of all other counties. Norman architects would be employed, and they would introduce the latest forms. But this will not sufficiently explain features in themselves irreconcileable with contemporary analogies. Attempting to make Bishop Gundulf the builder of the present Castle on such presumptive comparisons as this, will at once involve the question in such contradictions that no amount of ingenuity can reconcile them.

The Castle once erected, it seems to have required, comparatively speaking, but little outlay upon it for many years. It sustained injury during the time it was held against John, which explains the necessity of issuing precepts to the Sheriff of Kent in the years 1222, 1223, 1226, and 1227. A portion of the money thus expended in these years was not unlikely to be laid out upon the south-east angle of the

Keep, the greater portion of which appears to have been re-built. As this part is much hidden by ivy, it is, however, difficult to see at what particular time its reconstruction was effected. It may even have been done as late as 1369, when, as will be shortly stated more fully, a considerable expenditure was incurred.

This military structure presents nothing dissimilar to other Norman Castles. It comprised the Keep, seventy feet square, erected as usual on the highest ground. This was encircled with a lofty wall, and with a deep fosse on the greater part of its outside. Notice has already been made of the expense of a bretache, or wooden tower in advance, as well as of a drawbridge. There were also other buildings erected within the court, such as a great hall, a chapel, and offices of various descriptions. An inquisition taken in the 3rd of Edward I. supplies additional information as to its original state. The jury declare that when Hugo de Blythe and Simon Potyn caused work to be done upon the Tower of the Castle of Rochester, they paid a hundred shillings, and that they spent more when Reginald de Cobham was Sheriff of Kent and Constable of the Castle. The value of this entry seems to be that it shows that the reparation or re-building of the south-east angle of the Keep, may have been done under their directions, and just previous to the year 1275.[8] The inquisition also gives the following facts. That the Earl de Warren and Roger de Leyburne were in the Castle during the war, and burnt the King's Hall there. John Potyn also unroofed the chamber of the hall, and took off 3000 tiles, and the said John robbed it of lead. He also had the materials of a certain oriol. Other dilapidations were discovered, but as they do not give any information about the buildings, they do not require attention.

It is not until the 29th of Edward III. that any notice is again met with relating to the building. In this year (1356) a writ of inquiry was issued to ascertain its defects. It is, however, more than doubtful whether they were attended to at that time. Twelve years later the Castle had become so much out of repair that a large outlay was necessary. The

[8] Mandatum est Vicecomiti Kanciæ quod de exitibus ballivæ sue faciat habere Galfrido Norman et socio suo Capellanis regis ministrantibus in Capella Castri Regis Roffensis quorum uterque capit per annum quinquaginta solidos pro stipendiis suis. Rot. Claus. i. Edw. i. m. 6.

Roll of Accounts relating to operations then carried on has been preserved. As this document has been printed in the Archæologia Cantiana (vol. ii., p. 11—131), it will be unnecessary to recapitulate the items. It informs us that the works carried out in the 41st and 42nd years of Edward III., 1367-68, were under the direction of the Prior of Rochester (John de Hertlip). The building was evidently greatly in want of repair, as he charges himself in his statement with 1203*l.* 15*s.* 4*d.*, which he received on account.

This document is interesting from the description it gives of implements and materials that were employed, and supplies many architectural terms in use at the period.

A later document has been preserved showing that operations were carried on in the 6th year of Richard II., under the supervision of Wm. Basynges, Master of the Hospital at Strood.[9]

In the account of works in the 41st and 42nd years of Edward III., frequent mention is made of the new tower.[1] This cannot mean the Keep, and must therefore refer to some tower that has since perished. I am inclined to consider that the document chiefly relates to the south side of the enclosure of the Castle, where the whole of the existing buildings are of this period.

[9] Accounts 1 and 2 Ric. III. 363, 10.

[1] Pro coopertura Novæ Turris Castri predicti, 65*l.*