

ON THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS.

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READ AT BATTEL ABBEY, 23, JULY, 1852.

“At nunc horrentia Martis.”

“Κάρριστοι μὲν ἔσαν, καὶ καρρίστοις ἐμάχοντο.”

FEW things are more difficult to describe than the events of the battle-field. To say nothing of that lack of coolness which is essential to accurate observation, an individual spectator commonly sees only a small portion of the engagement, and is apt to overrate the incidents occurring in the foreground of his view, while those which take place in the distance are but slightly noticed. Acts comparatively insignificant thus become magnified, while those of far greater importance are occasionally either much distorted, or altogether overlooked. Allowances must also be made for party prejudices, and for the flowers of rhetoric almost inseparable from such descriptions. Now if even contemporary accounts of modern battles are found to differ *inter sese* in some essential particulars, it must be a matter of great difficulty to frame an intelligible history of the sanguinary conflicts of ancient times from the materials furnished us by partial and often incompetent chroniclers, and written from oral traditions at periods considerably subsequent to the transactions themselves. It is only by a collation of many descriptions, and a competent acquaintance with the field whereon the battle took place, that a writer can hope to convey a moderately accurate idea of such a scene. Many popular accounts exist of the tremendous struggle which occurred on, and gave name to, the spot where we are to-day assembled, but they are chiefly copied one from another with little or no reference to original documents, and written in total ignorance of the geographical features of

the locality.¹ In attempting to lay before you some general remarks on the subject, in order to invest this day and this place with some little additional interest, I shall adopt an opposite course, and deduce nearly or quite all my materials from authorities who lived near the times in which the battle occurred, and from personal surveys of the scene of action.²

On the political causes of the battle I shall say nothing: they are well known to all. And on the events which succeeded William's landing at Pevensey on the 28th of September up to the fatal day—October the 14th, 1066, I have already contributed some remarks which have been published in the Society's transactions.³ You will therefore have the goodness to consider the Norman duke as intrenched in his temporary castellum at Hastings, and the unfortunate Harold as having erected his standard and fixed his gonfanon upon this spot. Short as had been the interval between the arrival of the Saxons from the north and the morning of the battle, they had not neglected to fortify this naturally strong and well-chosen position. According to the Roman de Rou, Harold "had the place well examined, and surrounded by a good fosse, leaving an entrance on each of three sides, which were ordered to be kept well guarded."⁴ Upon the vallum his soldiery erected a barricade, composed of their shields and of wood from the adjoining forests, principally ash, the whole being so joined and wattled together as to form an almost impenetrable wall.⁵ We can well understand how the army could in a few hours erect a fortification of some strength by such means, when we remember that the ordinary mode of constructing houses of the meaner sort in

¹ Henry of Huntingdon, also (in other respects a valuable authority, as living in times not very remote from the Conquest,) tells us that William "aciem suam construxit in *planis* Hastings."

² I would here record my obligations to my friend, the Rev. John Collingwood Bruce, M.A., F.S.A., author of 'The Roman Wall,' &c.,—with whom I lately had the pleasure of reviewing the localities of the battle—for several useful suggestions and memoranda.

³ *Suss. Arch. Collections*, vol. II, p. 53 et seq.

⁴ Taylor's Edition, London, 1837, p. 143. The Roman de Rou, a chronicle of the Dukes of Normandy, is a Norman-French poem of the twelfth century, of great historical interest and importance. It was written by Master Wace, a native of Jersey, whose christian name is unknown. He lived and wrote as late as the year 1173, yet from incidental notices in the work it appears that he had gathered much of his information from eye-witnesses.

⁵ Rom. de Rou, p. 176.

Saxon times was by driving large stakes into the ground, and filling up the spaces by interweaving pliant branches of young trees, and covering the whole with clay or mud—a style of building still retained for out-houses in some parts of Sussex, and known by the rather unclassical designation of “raddle-and-dab.” Within this extempore fort were assembled the men of London, and Kent, and Hertford, and Essex, and Surrey, and Sussex, and St. Edmund, and Suffolk, and Norwich, and Norfolk, and Canterbury, and Stamford, and Bedford, and Huntingdon, and Northampton, and York, and Buckingham, and Nottingham, and Lincoln, and Lindsay, and Salisbury, and Dorset, and Bath, and Somerset, and Gloucester, and Worcester, and Winchester, and Hampshire, and Berkshire, and elsewhere. This enumeration is from Wace, who informs us that, in addition to these, “the villains were also called together from the villages, bearing such arms as they found; clubs, and great picks, iron forks, and stakes”—a mixed and motley group, animated by the fire of a generous patriotism, and fully bent upon a vigorous resistance.

The manner in which the night of the 13th of October was spent by them redounds little to their honour. On the eve of such a crisis as they knew the next day must inevitably bring, they might have been more rationally employed than in drinking and dissipation. The Saxon camp in fact rather resembled that of a victorious host, than that of one which stood upon the very brink of destruction. “All night,” says our graphic chronicler, “they might be seen carousing, gambolling, and dancing, and singing; *bublie*, they cried, and *wassail*, and *laticome*, and *drinkheil*, and *drink-to-me*.”⁶ Sad the contrast between that hilarious toast-drinking and the shrieks and groans which were, a few hours later, to resound from the blood-drenched hill.

Far different was the scene presented by the Norman army on the eve of the battle. The priests were everywhere busy, confessing and shriving the soldiery, and mingling with their penances and pardons exhortations to valorous deeds. All night they watched and prayed in portable chapels which had been fitted up throughout the camp. Among the priests-militant so engaged, two were especially conspicuous: Odo,

⁶ Rom. de Rou, p. 156.

Bishop of Bayeux, the Conqueror's uterine brother, afterwards Earl of Kent; and Geoffrey de Mowbray, Bishop of Coutances, a name subsequently famous in Sussex history.⁷ Instead of *wassails* and *drinkheils*, misereres, and litanies, and paternosters, and holy psalms resounded on every side. In the spirit of superstitious zeal, the soldiers vowed, that if God would grant them the victory, they would never more taste flesh on a Saturday, the day of the week upon which the field of Hastings was to be lost or won. At break of day Bishop Odo celebrated high mass, and pronounced a solemn benediction.

The line of the Normans' march, from their camp at Hastings to the battle-field, must have lain on the south-western slope of the elevated ridge of land extending from Fairlight to Battel; that is, to the north of the village of Hollington, through what is now Crowhurst Park, to the elevated spot then called Hetheland, but now known as Telham Hill. This district, which is even at the present day encumbered with woods, must have presented many obstacles to the advance of a multitudinous army. But every possible means to facilitate their movements had been employed; and, early in the morning of the fatal 14th of October, they stood upon the heights of Telham in full view of the Saxon camp, more than a mile distant.

“*Haud procul* hostiles cuneos nam cernit adesse,
Et plenum telis irradiare nemus.”⁸

Here the duke marshalled his followers into three columns of attack. In the first column of cavalry were the warriors of Boulogne and Ponthieu, with most of those adventurous mercenaries who so largely swelled the invading force;⁹ in the second were the auxiliaries from Bretagne, Mantes, and Poitou: the great duke himself led what might be regarded as the flower of this congeries of armies, his own proper subjects, the chivalry of Normandy. While these preparations are being made, let us take a rapid glance at the appearance presented

⁷ Roman de Rou, p. 157. Ordericus Vitalis, edit. Prevost, ii, p. 146.

⁸ De Bello Hastingsensi Carmen, 343, 344.

⁹ William “had soldiers from many lands, who came some for land, and some for money. Great was the host, and great the enterprise.” (Wace.)

by William's soldiery. Here we shall be chiefly assisted by that extraordinary and interesting monument, the Bayeux Tapestry. The date of that work, as most are aware, is disputed, but this is not the place to enter upon the discussion; and I will simply state my belief, that it is as old as the period assigned to it by some of our best authorities, namely, the life-time of Matilda, the Conqueror's queen. Whether it is actually the workmanship of the fair needlewomen of her court is little to our present purpose. I only claim for it all the authoritativeness of a contemporary document. The tapestry represents the horsemen clad in mail which usually reaches only to the knee, though sometimes, as in the case of the duke himself, it descends to the ankle. It is usually of the ringed, but occasionally of the masclé, or diamond pattern. The helmet is conical, and is remarkable for an appendage in front, called the nasal, which effectually protected the nose from injury. The feet, which rest in stirrups, are usually armed with prick-spurs. The left hand supports a kite-shaped shield, about four feet in length, sometimes plain, but often ornamented with roundles, crosses, and rudely pourtrayed wyverns: no trace of true heraldic bearings is found. The offensive arms are spears, sometimes furnished with trifurcated and other pennons, heavy swords, and maces, or batons of command. For the modes of warfare then prevalent, it is difficult to conceive of a more appropriate armature than the *tout ensemble* of a Norman cavalier, as shown in this needle-work, presents. Of the few infantry shown, some are in mail, and others in ordinary costume, armed with bows and arrows. The tapestry does not show war-engines, although, according to the *Carmen*, there were *balistæ* intermixed with the infantry. These, however, may have been simple cross-bows.

“Premisit pedites committere bella sagittis,
Et balistantes inserit in medio.”¹⁰

During the march from Hastings, a distance of about six

¹⁰ V. 337, 338. The *Carmen de Bello Hastingsensi*—a poem of more than eight hundred verses, is attributed to Guy, Bishop of Amiens from 1059 to 1075. In spite of some exaggerations, and a violent prejudice against the Saxons, it pre-

sents internal evidence of having been written very early after the battle, and by one who possessed exact information on the subject. Some incidents of the day are found in no other author.

miles, the Normans had not worn their armour, and it was only when they came within view of the Saxon camp that they proceeded to arm. The testimony of the 'Chronicle of Battel Abbey' is tolerably conclusive on this point. It was at Hetheland, which I take to be identical with Telham, that this preliminary was gone through. Several historians relate an anecdote connected with it, which is worthy of quotation :—

“ Having arrived at a hill called Hethelande, situated in the direction of Hastings, while they were helping one another on with their armour, there was brought forth a coat of mail for the duke to put on, and by accident it was handed to him the wrong side foremost (*inversa ipsi oblata est*). Those who stood by and saw this cursed it as an unfortunate omen, but the duke's sewer (Fitz-Osborne) bade them be of good cheer, and declared that it was a token of good fortune; namely, that those things which had hitherto kept their ground were about fully to submit themselves to him. The duke, perfectly unmoved, put on the mail with a placid countenance, and uttered these memorable words: 'I know, my dearest friends, that if I had any confidence in omens, I ought on no account to go to battle to-day; but, committing myself trustfully to my Creator in every matter, I have given no heed to omens, neither have I ever loved sorcerers.' ”¹¹

This sensible speech was followed by the duke's celebrated vow, that if God would grant him the victory over his foe, he would found a monastery upon the field of battle as an asylum for his saints, and as a succour for the souls of those who should be there slain. William Faber, a brother of the abbey of Marmoutier, near Tours, who had joined the army for the advancement of himself and his convent, hearing the vow, obtained the duke's consent to have the establishment dedicated to his patron, St. Martin, who had the valuable recommendation of being known as the “military saint,” and the tutelary of Norman soldiers.

William's arming was not completed until he had suspended from his neck a portion of the holy relics upon which Harold had so solemnly sworn that he would never oppose him in his designs upon the throne of England.¹² The bulk of these objects of his superstitious regard was also present upon the

¹¹ M. A. Lower's Translation of the Chron. Monast. de Bello, a work of the twelfth century. London, 1851. (p. 4.) See the anecdote at greater length in Rom. de Rou, pp. 162, 163.

¹² Ordericus Vitalis, ii, 146. Edit. Aug. le Prevost.

battle-field. Three hundred amulets of gold and silver, we are told, were enclosed in a feretory in the form of an altar, upon which mass had been daily celebrated from the setting out of the expedition.¹³ The duke now called for his horse, and was soon mounted upon a noble charger, a recent present from the King of Spain. William's carriage on this occasion was eulogised by one of his followers, the Viscount of Tours: "Never," said he, "have I seen a man so fairly armed, nor one who rode so gallantly, or bore his arms, or became a hauberk so well; neither any one who bore his lance so gracefully, or sat his horse and manœuvred him so nobly. There is no other such knight under heaven! A fair count he is, and fair king he will be."¹⁴ The Bayeux Tapestry exhibits the duke holding his baton over his right shoulder; and, by representing him of the same height as the generality of his attendants, disproves the legendary statement of his enormous stature, a notion which probably originated from a misconception of the meaning of the epithet *Willelmus Magnus*, which some of the Norman historians are fond of applying to him.

There were others too, who, from some remarkable demeanour in preparing for the conflict, attracted the gaze of the whole army. Hardly less conspicuous than the duke himself was his half-brother, the Bishop Odo. While most of the monks and priests withdrew to the neighbouring heights within view, to *watch* and pray, this valorous churchman, disdaining danger, "drew on a hauberk over a white aube, 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."¹⁵ There, too, was the young knight Toustains Fitz-Rou le Blanc, bearing the sacred gonfanon which the pope had blessed and presented to William. This had been offered, in turn, to Raol de Conches, the hereditary standard-bearer of Normandy, and to Walter Giffard, but declined, by the former on the ground of his desiring the more useful service of the sword, by the latter on account of his bald and hoary head. "I shall be in the

¹³ Chronicle of Battel Abbey, page 41.

¹⁴ Rom de Rou, p. 167.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

battle," he cried, "and you have not any man who will serve you more truly; I will strike with my sword till it shall be dyed in your enemies' blood!"¹⁶

It is interesting to the Sussex antiquary to observe that all the great baronial houses, whose estates lay in this county, owed their lands to the prowess of their ancestors on the field of Hastings:—Roger de Montgomeri, afterwards earl of Chichester and Arundel, was there, and commanded one wing of the army; the men of Brius were there, and at their head was doubtless William, the subsequent lord of Bramber; William de Warenne, afterwards lord of Lewes, came too, "his helmet setting gracefully on his head;" Robert earl of Mortaine, the future lord of Pevensey, "never went far from the duke's side, and brought him great aid;" Robert, earl of Eu, the counsellor of William, was there, and for his services received the rape of Hastings. He "demeaned himself as a brave man, and those whom his blows reached were ill handled." The names of D'Albini, De Aquila, Monceux, Mowbray, and Tregoz, all afterwards eminent in Sussex, also receive honourable mention in the Chronicle of Wace.

At length amidst the sound "of many trumpets, of bugles, and of horns," the Normans were drawn up in order of battle, and the duke harangued them in a set speech, which is variously reported by the different chroniclers. What he really said must have been inaudible to the great majority of his sixty thousand followers. The alleged cruelty and perfidy of the Saxons, the perjury of Harold, and the rich rewards which awaited the invaders in the event of conquest, formed excellent topics for declamation, and were no doubt seized upon. "On then! in God's name, and chastise these English for their misdeeds!" is the laconic but inspiring peroration put into his mouth by one of the chroniclers.

They now proceeded to march from Telham Hill, and to cross the valley which separates that elevation from the one upon which Harold's army was encamped; the graceful and gradually rising spot upon which "the Abbey of the Battel" now rears its time-stained turrets. A finer site for a camp

¹⁶ Rom. de Rou, pp. 168, 169.

cannot be conceived: almost in its whole circumference bounded by low, and, in those days, marshy ground, it was difficult of access to the attacking army, and proportionably easy of defence; and had the Saxons adhered to their original purpose of remaining within their lines, the result of the battle would probably have been favourable to the defenders.

Within the barricaded embankment, in view of the approaching army, stood Harold attended by his brothers, Girth and Leofwine, and the chief men of his realm, while above his head waved the gonfanon, a noble standard sparkling with gold and precious stones, which he little dreamed was so soon to be stricken down, and sent as a thank-offering and a trophy of his enemy's triumph to the successor of the apostles, in return for the blessed banner of William, which was now waving at a distance in the morning breeze. This flag is particularly mentioned by the chroniclers. William of Poitiers notices it as "the memorable standard of Harold, having the figure of an armed man woven of the purest gold;" and William of Malmesbury says that "it was of the shape of a fighting man wrought with costly art of gold and precious stones." Packed in a very contracted space stood the army of Harold, which appears to have been in point of numbers nearly or quite equal to the duke's. The Saxon regular troops wore short and close hauberks and hemlets that hung over their garments.¹⁷ Their arms were swords, bills, lances, and clubs; but their favourite weapon was the battle-axe which they had borrowed from the Norwegians. It was commonly employed with both hands, and had a heavy blade a foot in length.¹⁸ Of their shields, some were kite shaped, like the "Normans;" others, particularly those of the nobles, round and very convex.¹⁹ The peasants, who had been hastily collected during Harold's hurried march, wore their ordinary costume, chiefly of leather, and were furnished with the rude but easily available weapons already mentioned.

¹⁷ Rom. de Rou. The Bayeux Tapestry makes little or no distinction between the dress of the Saxons and that of the Normans.

¹⁸ Rom. de Rou, p. 200.

¹⁹ Bayeux Tapestry.

The Saxons were all on foot. The Carmen contemptuously says of them :—

“Nescia gens belli, solamina spernit equorum,
Viribus et fidens hæret humo pedibus.”²⁰

and again tells us, that on their arrival on the field of battle :—

“Omnes descendunt, et equos post terga relinquunt ;”²¹

while Wace assures us that they were ignorant of jousting and of bearing arms on horseback—a statement which might be deemed incredible did it not rest upon such excellent authority.

At length, according to Wace (to whose ample account of the battle I am principally indebted), “the English stood ready to their post, the Normans still moving on ; and when they drew near, the English were to be seen stirring to and fro ; men going and coming ; troops ranging themselves in order ; some with their colour rising, others turning pale ; some making ready their arms, others raising their shields ; the brave man rousing himself to the fight, the coward trembling at the approaching danger.”²² Now was the struggle about to begin—a struggle fraught with tremendous consequences ; and many an islander trembled, and many a transmarine heart beat high, at the recollection of an old prophecy attributed to Merlin,²³ “that a Norman people in iron coats should lay low the pride of the English,” “Then,” to quote the monk of of Battel, it “was manfully fought with arms.”²⁴

But first, there comes upon the stage of this eventful drama, a character to whom the old historians, Guy, Benoit, Gaimar, and Wace, allude with peculiar gusto. Among the Norman knights was one who, from his prowess and agility, had acquired, according to the usage of the times, the sobriquet of Taillefer or “cut-iron.” He is usually designated a jougler or a minstrel ; but whatever his accomplishments might have led others to call him,²⁵ it is evident from what follows, that he was also a personage of equestrian rank, a noble or a knight. He asked and obtained the duke’s permission to strike the first blow,²⁶ but previously, he commenced in lofty strain the composition

²⁰ V. 369, 370.

²¹ V. 377. Yet a popular picture, by A. Cooper, R.A., represents Harold (receiving the arrow in his eye) on horseback.

²² Rom. de Rou, p. 186.

²³ Translation of Chron. de Bello, p. 5.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ The Carmen styles him “Incisor ferri,” “mimus,” “histrio.”

²⁶ Rom. de Rou, p. 190.

known as *Cantilena Rolandi*, and which Wace describes as the song of "Karlemaine, and of Rollant, of Oliver, and the vassals who died in Renchevals."²⁷ He then began a series of exploits, which Gaimar graphically enumerates:—²⁸

"Forth from the French, with gallant haste,
The juggler Taillefer then pressed,
Armed and on a fiery horse,
And placed him 'fore the Norman force;
Where wonders in the English sight
He played with all a master's sleight;
First, to incite them to advance,
High in the air he hurled his lance,
And caught it by the point—and then
As nimbly threw it up again.
This daring feat he thrice did shew,
Then launched his weapon 'midst the foe,
A luckless wight of whom it struck,
So skilfully his aim he took;
Then drawing forth the sword he wore,
Thrice drew and caught it as before,
With an address so magical,
It seemed enchantment to them all.
These tricks performed, he urged his steed,
And galloping with utmost speed,
Forced through the foe an opening wide,
And dealt his blows on every side."

Thus began the battle of Hastings—"that battle whereof," to employ the words of Wace, "the fame is yet mighty! Loud and far resounded the bray of the horns, and the shocks of the lances, the mighty strokes of clubs, and the quick clashing of swords."²⁹ The Norman war-cry "Dieu aide" was answered by the Saxon-English "Out, out!" "Holy Cross!" "God Almighty!"³⁰ Taillefer was still conspicuous in the *mêlée*. The

²⁷ The song has not been recovered. It appears very probable that it was *improvised* for the occasion. Had it been a composition previously committed to writing, I think Gaimar and others would have given us at least the substance of it.

²⁸ In the passage:—

"Un des Franceis donc se hasta
Devant les autres chevalcha, &c."

Lines 5272, 5273.

The translation is by Andrews. Maister Geffrei Gaimar's *History of the English* is a very long Norman-French poem,

which appears to have been written about the middle of the twelfth century. It has recently been edited by Thomas Wright, Esq., M.A., F.S.A.

²⁹ Rom. de Rou, p. 191.

³⁰ Spelt by Wace, "Ut!" "Oli-crosse!" "Godemité!"

"Olicrosse est en engleis
Ke Saint Croix est en franceis
E Godemité altretant
Com en frenceiz Dex tot poissant."

"Normans escrient; *Dex aie*;
La gent englesche; *Ut s'escrie*."

first victim of his prowess was an English standard-bearer ; then fell a second ; in the third attempt, amidst a clashing of swords upon helmets and a shower of Norman arrows, he himself fell.³¹

The close order in which Harold's army was drawn up is noticed by several of our authorities. The Carmen says :—

“ Anglorum stat fixa solo densissima turba,³²
Tela dat et telis, et gladios gladiis ; ”

and Huntingdon compares it to a castle, impenetrable to the Normans—“ quasi castellum impenetrabile Normannis.” “ Each side,” says Wace, “ defies the other, yet neither knoweth what the other saith ; and the Normans say that the English *bark* (as in more modern times they tell us they whistle with ‘ la langue des oiseaux,’ and for the same reason)—because they understand not their speech ; ” and thus the war of bitter words and still bitterer wounds went on. For some hours, apparently, little progress towards a decision of the conflict was made. The men of Harold stood well together, as their wont in battle was, and woe to the hardy Norman who ventured to enter their redoubts ; for a single blow of a Saxon war-hatchet would break his lance and cut through his coat of mail.³³ What force therefore could not do was at length effected by stratagem. To quote the words of the monk of Battel : “ By a preconcerted scheme the duke feigned a retreat with his army, and Eustace the valiant count of Boulogne, nimbly following the rear of the English who were scattered in the pursuit, rushed upon them with his powerful troops.”³⁴ It was during this retreat and pursuit that there occurred an incident of a frightful character, which is particularly described by Wace. “ In the plain ” says he, “ was a fosse The English charged and drove the Normans before them, till they made them fall back upon this fosse, overthrowing into it horses and men. Many were to be seen falling therein, rolling one over the other, with their faces to the earth, and unable to rise. Many of the English also, whom the Normans drew down along with them, died there.

³¹ Henry of Huntingdon. His fate is not mentioned by other historians.

³² Carmen, v. 415, 416.

³³ Guill. Pictav., p. 201, quoted by Thierry.

³⁴ Chron. of Battel Abbey, p. 6.

At no time in the day's battle did so many Normans die, as perished in that fosse. So those said who saw the dead." ³⁵ The account given in the 'Chronicon de Bello' is similar. "There lay," says our monk, "between the hostile armies a certain dreadful precipice, caused either by a natural chasm of the earth, or by some convulsion of the elements. It was of considerable extent, and being overgrown with bushes or brambles was not very easily seen; and great numbers of men—principally Normans in pursuit of the English—were suffocated in it. For, ignorant of the danger, as they were running in a disorderly manner, they fell into the chasm and were fearfully dashed to pieces and slain. And the pit, from this deplorable accident," he adds, "is still called *Malfosse*." According to William of Malmesbury the slaughter was so great, "that it made the hollow level with the plain with the heap of carcases." According to Odericus Vitalis, Eugenulph or Engerran de Aquila, whose descendants afterwards gave to their barony of Pevensey the name of the "Honour of the Eagle," was among the number of those who thus ingloriously fell. The scene is graphically described in the Bayeux Tapestry, and the accompanying legend is: HIC CECIDERUNT SIMUL ANGLI ET FRANCI IN PRELIO. Upon an elevated bank some Saxons soldiers are shown hurling down darts upon the Normans as they struggle and plunge in the fosse. This exactly agrees with Malmesbury's statement—"By frequently making a stand, they slaughtered their pursuers in heaps; for, getting possession of an eminence, they drove down the Normans, when roused with indignation and anxiously striving to gain the higher ground, into the valley beneath, where, easily hurling their javelins and rolling down stones on them as they stood below, they destroyed them to a man." ³⁶

There is no place near Battel which can, with a due regard to the proprieties of language, be called a "dreadful precipice" (*miserabile præcipitium vaste patens*), though, by comparing Malmesbury with the Monk of Battel, I think I have succeeded in identifying the locality of this "bad ditch." From all the probabilities of the case it would seem that the flight and pursuit must have lain in a north-westerly direction, through that part of the district now known as Mountjoy.

³⁵ Rom. de Rou, p. 193.

³⁶ Edit. Giles, p. 277.

Assuming this, the eminence alluded to by Malmesbury must have been the ridge rising from Mount Street to Caldbeck Hill, and the *Malfosse*, some part of the stream which flowing at its foot, runs in the direction of Watlington, and becomes a tributary of the Rother. This rivulet still occasionally overflows its banks, and the primitive condition of the adjacent levels was doubtless that of a morass, overgrown with flags, reeds, and similar bog vegetables. Thanks, however, to good drainage, the "bad ditch" no longer remains. The name was corrupted, previously to 1279, to Manfosse, and a piece of land called Wincestrecroft, in Manfosse, was ceded to the abbey of Battel in that year. Now Wincestrecroft is still well known, and lies in the direction specified, west by north of the present town of Battel.³⁷

To return to our narrative. A cry now ran through the Norman host that the duke had fallen in the disaster at Malfosse, and the varlets³⁸ who had been set to guard the harness, seeing the sad loss of life in the fosse, began to quit their post and to fly from the impending danger. But William having been apprised of the report, and seeing numbers running away, hastened to stop them. Brandishing a spear with his right hand in a menacing manner, and at the same time removing his helmet with his left, he cried out, "Look! I am alive, and with God's help I will yet conquer."³⁹ On this they returned to their charge. Bishop Odo at the same time galloped towards the varlets, and said to them: "Stand fast! stand fast! be quiet, and move not! Fear nothing; for, please God, we shall conquer yet!"⁴⁰

"Estez, estez,
Seiez en paiz, ne vos movez;
N'aiez poor de nule rien,
Kar se Dex plaist, nos viencron bien!"

This scene is depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry, and the inscription accompanying it is: HIC ODO EPISCOPUS TENENS

³⁷ See more on this subject in the notes to my translation of the Chron. Monast. de Bello, pp. 6, 7, in which I was assisted by the exact local knowledge of Mr. Vidler, an old inhabitant of the parish, and author of a little work called 'Battel and its Abbey.'

³⁸ The servants, attendants, grooms, or "gillies" of the Norman knights.

³⁹ Orderic. Vit. ii, 148. This incident is also represented in the Tapestry.

⁴⁰ Rom. de Rou, p. 194.

BACULUM CONFORTAT PUEROS; "Here Bishop Odo, holding his baton, exhorts or encourages the varlets."

Thus reanimated, these men stood to their post; while Odo (who throughout the battle showed himself—though not exactly in the clerical sense of the term—a good "episcopus") returned at a hand gallop to the barricades, holding aloft his mace, and urging on the knights, wherever he saw most need, to assault and strike the enemy.⁴¹

And so continued the main battle. "From nine in the morning, when the conflict began, till three o'clock came," says Wace, "the battle was up and down, this way and that, and no one knew who would conquer and win the land." In one of the fluctuations in favour of Harold, William's chances appeared so desperate, that even Eustace of Boulogne, who elsewhere conducted himself so courageously, seriously advised him to escape from the field, since the battle was lost beyond recovery.

"Morz est por veir, sens faille,
Sil ne se part de la bataille;
Nul recovrer n'a mais ès suens."⁴²

Harold's personal bravery throughout was unimpeachable. Not content with the functions of a general in exhorting his followers, he was assiduous, we are told, in every soldier-like duty; often would he strike the enemy when coming to close quarters, so that none came within his reach with impunity; for in an instant he brought down at one blow both horse and rider.⁴³ On his part, William was equally intrepid, everywhere ready to encourage his chevaliers by his voice, his presence, and his example. "He lost," says Malmesbury, "three choice horses⁴⁴ that were pierced under him that day." Yet he does not appear to have suffered the loss from his person of a single drop of blood.

The discharge of archery, though incessant, took but little effect: the wooden shields of the Saxons were so many targets, which received, but were not penetrated by, the Norman arrows. At length the archers, at the suggestion, it

⁴¹ Rom. de Rou, p. 194.

⁴² Benoit de Ste. Maure, L'estoire des dux., in Chron. Ang. Norm., vol. i.

⁴³ W. of Malmesbury.

⁴⁴ Wace says but two.

is said of William himself, shot into the air in such a manner that the arrows should fall upon the faces of the enemy.⁴⁵ Many were immediately blinded, and received frightful wounds in their faces. "Then it was," says Wace, "that an arrow that had been thus shot upwards, struck Harold above his right eye, and put it out. In his agony he drew the arrow, and threw it away, breaking it with his hands, and the pain to his head was so great that he leaned upon his shield. So the English," he adds, "were wont to say, and still say to the French, that the arrow was well shot, which was so sent up against their king; and that the archer won them great glory who thus put out Harold's eye."⁴⁶

According to the *Roman de Rou*, the Normans now feigned a retreat: but I think it will be found that the incident is misplaced, and that it belongs to that earlier part of the day's proceedings which is connected with the disaster at Malfosse; we can hardly imagine that such a stratagem would be resorted to a second time. It would appear that the conflict sometimes degenerated into mere skirmishes and personal encounters; and the historians, particularly Wace, give us some very interesting episodes of this kind, which, from internal evidence, would seem to have been furnished to him by eye-witnesses. One of these may be quoted:—

"On the other side was an Englishman who much annoyed the French, continually assaulting them with a keen-edged hatchet. He had a helmet made of wood, which he fastened down to his coat, and laced round his neck, so that no blows could reach his head. The ravage he was making was seen by a gallant Norman knight, who rode a horse that neither fire nor water could stop in its course when its lord urged it on. The knight spurred, and his horse carried him on well till he charged the Englishman, striking him over the helmet, so that it fell down over his eyes; and as he stretched out his hand to raise it and uncover his face, the Norman cut off his right hand, so that his hatchet fell to the ground. Another Norman sprang forward, and eagerly seized the prize with both his hands, but he kept it little space, and paid dearly for it; for as he stooped to pick up the hatchet, an Englishman, with his long-handled axe, struck him over the back, breaking all his bones, so that his entrails and lungs gushed forth. The knight of the good horse meantime returned without injury; but on his way he met another English-

⁴⁵ *Docuit etiam dux Willielmus viros sagittarios ut non in hostem directe, sed in aëra sursum sagittas emitterent cuneum hostilem sagittis cæarent: quod Anglis*

magno fuit detrimento." Henry of Huntingdon, in *Mon. Hist. Brit.* 763.

⁴⁶ *Rom de Rou*, p. 198.

man, and bore him down under his horse, wounding him grievously, and trampling him altogether under foot."⁴⁷

The fair hands that wrought the embroidered history of the Conquest have introduced several such encounters, without giving us the names of the champions concerned. They have also strewed not only the main portion of the design, but its borders, with the "Scuta virum, galeasque, et fortia corpora" of the slain. In a spirit the opposite of that of most of his brother chroniclers, the monk of Battel thus expatiates on the scene: "A fearful spectacle! The fields were covered with dead bodies, and on every hand nothing was to be seen but the red hue of blood. The dales all around sent forth a gory stream, which increased at a distance to the size of a river. . . . Oh! how vast a flood of human gore was poured out in that place where these unfortunates fell and were slain! What dashing to pieces of arms; what clashing of strokes; what shrieks of dying men; what grief, what sighs, were heard! How many groans; how many bitter notes of direst calamity then sounded forth, who can rightly calculate? What a wretched exhibition of human misery was there to call forth astonishment! In the very contemplation of it our pen fails us."⁴⁸

The time when Harold received the arrow-wound may be regarded as the moment from which the tide of battle turned in favour of the Normans. His patriotic warriors fought on still, but the struggle had become with them one of fierce despair rather than of courageous and confident hope. Now it was that twenty of the Norman knights bound themselves to each other by a solemn vow that they would break the Saxon's ranks and bear off his standard, or perish in the attempt. In this hazardous enterprise many fell, but the rest, hacking a path with their swords, made themselves masters of the prize.⁴⁹ With this ensign of his regal authority fell Harold himself. An armed man," says Wace, "came in the throng of the battle and struck him on the ventaille of the

⁴⁷ Rom. de Rou, p. 209, et seq. The reader will understand that the citations from Wace in this paper are from the excellent translation, by Edgar Taylor, Esq., F.S.A., of so much of the *Roman* as relates to the Norman Conquest;

except in the few instances where the original Norman-French is quoted.

⁴⁸ Chron. of Battel Abbey.

⁴⁹ Henr. Hunt. in Mon. Hist. Brit., p. 763. "Signum regium, quod vocatur Standard."

helmet, and beat him to the ground; and as he sought to recover himself, a knight beat him down again, striking him on the thick of the thigh, down to the bone."⁵⁰ The men who struck the fatal blows were never known, and probably they themselves fell in the desperate mêlée. The princes Girth and Leofwine were killed in the same fatal onset. This is shown by several authorities, although the Bayeux Tapestry places their death at a much earlier stage of the battle.

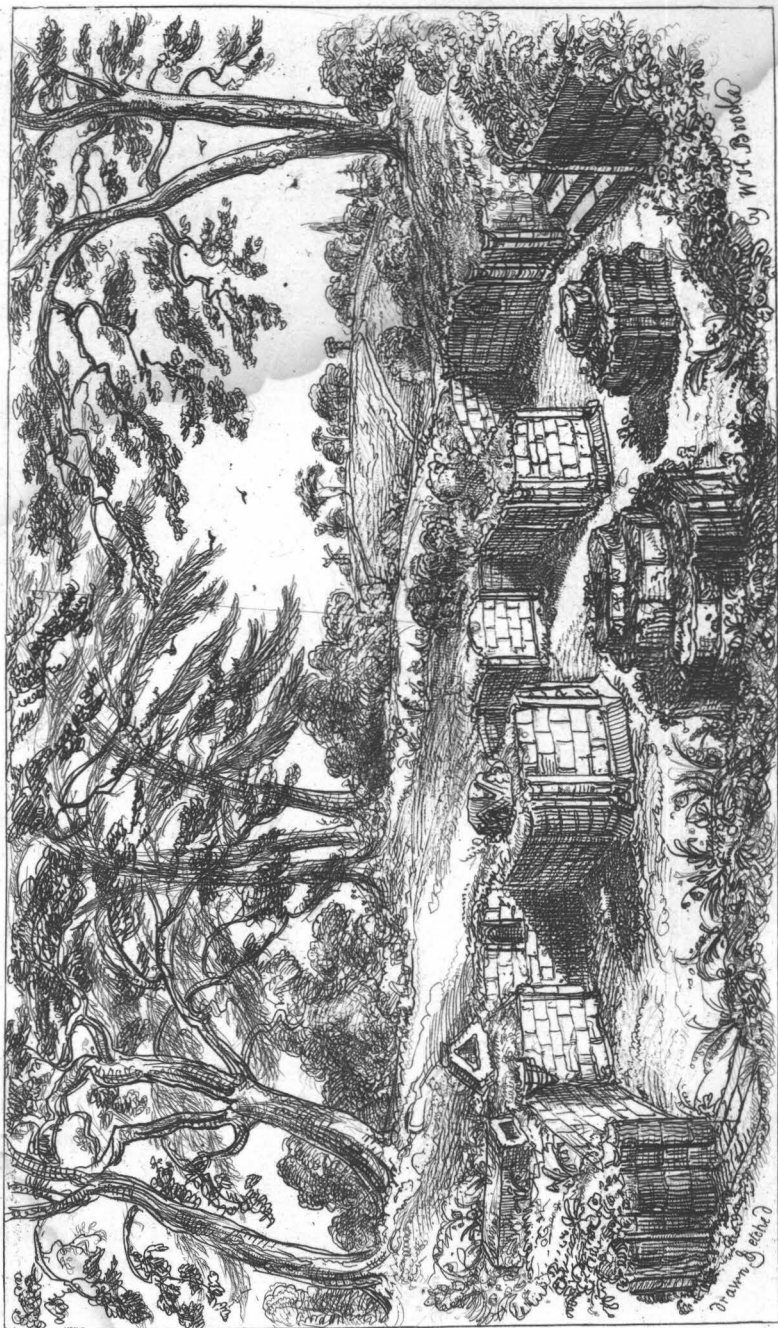
Respecting the precise spot where Harold and his standard fell, there is no doubt. William had vowed to build his monastery upon the site of the conflict, and that he built it *here*, upon the identical place where the crowning-point of his victory happened, is stated by several authorities, and the Chronicle of Battel Abbey, written upon the spot, furnishes conclusive proof of it. When William of Marmoutier and his brethren, some time after the battle, engaged in the work of rearing the abbey, not liking the place on account of its lack of water, they proceeded to build on a more eligible site on the western side of the hill, at a place called *Herst*;⁵¹ but the Conqueror hearing of what they had done waxed wroth, "and commanded them with all haste to lay the foundation of the temple on the very place where he had achieved the victory over his enemy." The brethren suggested the inconvenience which would arise from the dryness of the site, when William gave utterance to the memorable promise that, if God would spare his life, he would so amply endow the establishment, that wine should be more abundant there than water in any other great Abbey. The chronicler goes on to inform us that, "in accordance with the king's decree, they wisely erected the high altar upon the precise spot where the ensign of Harold, which they call the Standard, was observed to fall."⁵²

The place is still pointed out. The noble Abbey-Church had been destroyed at the Reformation, and all traces of its parts and arrangements had been well-nigh obliterated; shrubs and parterres covered the ground once drenched with the blood of patriots and long hallowed by the offices of religion; but the finger of tradition faithfully pointed to a spot which art, and nature, and time had combined to conceal. Sir Godfrey

⁵⁰ Rom. de Rou, p. 252.

⁵² Chron., p. 11.

⁵¹ I cannot identify this locality.



"HIC HAROLD REX INTERFECTUS EST."

Webster, in the year 1817, anxious to test the truth of the popular belief on the subject, caused excavations to be made in the northern part of the abbey grounds, and there, in the very place indicated, discovered the most satisfactory evidence that could be required. Sunk below the general level of the ground, and filled up with earth and rubbish, he disclosed what was originally the undercroft or subterraneous chapel beneath the east end of the church, with the foundations of the massive columns by which the vaulting of its roof had been upheld, and two flights of steps which had led upwards to the north and south aisles of the church. In the easternmost recess of this crypt are considerable remains of an altar, and this must be regarded as the representative of the exact *locus in quo*, which hangs in the air a few feet above, where upon the floor of the choir once stood the high altar itself.

But to conclude the narrative of this eventful day. The fighting continued some time after Harold was known to have fallen, even when the sun had set upon the awful scene. Amidst the gloom of that October evening, either rampant with victory or mad with revenge, they still fought on—only distinguishing foes from friends by their language—until the thickening darkness and the exhaustion of their strength compelled them to desist. Never was discomfiture more complete, or triumph more decided. The majority of those Saxons who escaped from the field, made their way to London; but many others betook themselves to the neighbouring woods, some to bind up their wounds and bewail the sad issue of the day, others to lay themselves down and die.

“Solum devictis nox et fuga profuit Anglis
Densi per latebras et tegimen nemoris.”

Carmen, 559-60.

The battle was over; the people-elected Harold—more deserving of our pity for his misfortunes than of admiration for any kingly right or regal qualification that he possessed—was dead; a greater and wiser, if not a better, monarch had virtually, though not actually, by holy chrism and solemn benediction, ascended the throne. William had conquered and won the land! An old and decayed, and corrupt dynasty had ceased to be; a greater and nobler people had come to

improve and elevate our race ; a battle was won—a conquest gained—for which we have infinite cause to be thankful.

“Then,” says Master Wace, “William returned thanks to God, and in his pride ordered his gonfanon to be brought and set up on high, where the English standard had stood, and that was the signal of his having conquered.” What follows is not a little revolting to those unaccustomed to the horrors of war: “He ordered his tent to be raised on the spot among the dead, *and had his meat brought thither, and his supper prepared there.*”⁵³ His barons pressed round him to offer their congratulations and to extol his deeds. Never had there been such a knight, they said, since Rollant and Oliver. “And the duke stood among them, of noble mien and stature, and rendered thanks to the King of glory, through whom he had the victory; and thanked the knights around him, mourning frequently for the dead. And he ate and drank among the dead, and made his bed that night upon the field.”⁵⁴

The sabbath morning that dawned upon the scene brought few of the calm, and bright, and holy concomitants, proper to the season. Nought was there to tell of “peace upon earth and goodwill to men;” but instead of it, the sad and sickening fruits of pride, ambition, and the primal curse. Even the iron-hearted Conqueror is said to have wept at the spectacle. Then calling to his presence a clerk who, previously to the departure of the armament from St. Valery, had written down the names of the chief men of the army, he caused him to read the roll to ascertain who had fallen and who had survived; ⁵⁵ and Bishop Odo, truer now to his sacred functions, “sang mass for the souls that were departed.” The document alluded to, if preserved, was the true Roll of Battel Abbey, but it has not come down to our times, and the various lists which we possess are of subsequent date, and more or less apocryphal in their character.⁵⁶

William’s next duty, before setting out for his castellum at Hastings, was to see to the interment of the dead. If we may trust the author of the Carmen, he was in this matter guilty

⁵³ Rom. de Rou, p. 256.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 258.

⁵⁵ Chron. de Normandie, quoted by Thierry. John Foxe, Act. and Mon.

⁵⁶ See a paper in the present volume, by the Rev. Joseph Hunter, F.S.A., on this interesting subject.

of a great and inexcusable breach of humanity, of which even his enemies do not accuse him. "He traversed the field, and selecting the dead bodies of his friends, buried them in the bowels of the earth; ⁵⁷ but left the corpses of the English strewn upon the ground to be devoured by worms, and *wolves*, and birds, and dogs."

"Lustravit campum, tollens et cæsa suorum
Corpora dux, terræ condidit in gremio;
Vermibus atque lupis, avibus canibusque voranda,
Deserit Anglorum corpora strata solo."

V. 569—572.

Ordericus, however, says that William gave the Saxons permission to bury their dead.⁵⁸ And Wace informs us that the noble ladies of the land came also, some to seek their husbands, and others their fathers, sons, or brothers. They bore the bodies to the villages, and interred them at the churches; and the clerks and priests of the country were ready, and, at the request of their friends, took the bodies that were found, and prepared graves and laid them therein.⁵⁹ The body of Harold was found frightfully gashed with wounds and not easily to be identified among the mass of his followers. The story of his mistress, Edith Swanhals, having been called in for this purpose, rests upon slender authority, and appears quite improbable. According to the *Carmen*, the duke had the lacerated corse wrapped in purple linen and carried to his marine camp (*castra marina*) at Hastings, where by his command it was buried upon the cliff, beneath a stone insolently inscribed with the words: "By the orders of the Duke, you rest here, King Harold, as the guardian of the shore and the sea."

"PER MANDATA DUCIS, REX HIC HERALDE, QUIESCIS,
UT CUSTOS MANEAS LITORIS ET PELAGI."⁶⁰

⁵⁷ During the recent excavations—for the railway from Hastings to Tunbridge Wells, which passes within a few hundred yards eastward of Battel Abbey, it was rather confidently expected that some traces of the battle, such as arms or human bones, would be brought to light; but this expectation was not realised, and

this proves, I think, the correctness of my opinion, that the battle and the retreat took place in the opposite, or westerly and north-westerly direction.

⁵⁸ Ord. Vit., ii, 153.

⁵⁹ Rom. de Rou, p. 258.

⁶⁰ Vv. 591, 592.

Pictavensis also says, that he was buried by the seashore, and Ordericus agrees with the Carmen in asserting that the duke peremptorily denied the request of the Countess Ghitha for the remains of her son. "I have lost," was the sorrowing mother's plea, "three of my sons in this war; will you deny a bereaved widow's heart the consolation of possessing the bones of *one* of them? Give me but those beloved remains and I will pay you for them weight by weight in pure gold."⁶¹ The duke, with characteristic sternness, replied, that he despised such traffic as that, and that he considered it unjust that one should receive burial at the hands of a mother, whose cupidity had caused so many mothers' sons to lie unburied.⁶² William of Malmesbury, however, tells the story in a manner more creditable to William's humanity. "He sent the body of Harold to his mother, who begged it, unransomed; though she proffered large sums by her messengers. She buried it at Waltham, a church which he had built at his own expense in honour of the Holy Cross." It is added by some minor authorities that Ghitha's request was seconded by two monks, Osgod and Ailric, who had been dispatched by the abbot of Waltham for that purpose. The popular belief, encouraged for their own purposes by the fraternity at Waltham, was, that Harold had found honourable sepulture among them; though it may deserve a place among historic doubts whether his real grave is not upon the cliffs of the Sussex shore.

The number of the slain is variously stated. The Carmen, with admirable latitude of expression, says, that William killed "two thousands, besides innumerable other thousands!" Ordericus tells us, from the information of eye-witnesses, that the Normans lost 15,000 men. "How great think you," asks the monk of Battle, "must have been the slaughter of the conquered, when that of the conquerors is reported, upon the lowest computation, to have exceeded ten thousand?" All things considered, we should probably not greatly err in fixing 30,000 as the number who perished on this memorable field.

⁶¹ Carmen, v. 579, &c.

⁶² Ordericus Vit., iii, 152.

I have extended these remarks far beyond my original intention, though I trust that the nature of the subject and its historical and local importance will form a sufficient justification for the length of my essay; which I will now conclude with a few remarks, upon the localities which history and tradition have identified with the battle.

1. I have shown the Hetheland of the Battel Chronicle and Telham Hill to be one and the same spot. Tradition says as much, but corrupts the name to *Tellman* Hill, because there the conqueror *counted* his troops!

2. There has been much conjecture as to the original name of the place now called Battel. It has been stated to be *Epiton, Sothope, Senlac, St. Mary, Heathfield, &c.* I believe that no town or even village existed here in Saxon times. It was probably a down covered with heath and furze—a wild, rough common, without houses and almost without trees. The Saxon chronicler had no better mode of indicating the locality of the hostile meeting than by saying that it occurred AT THE HOARY APPLE TREE (*æt thære hâran apuldran*)⁶³—probably from some venerable tree of that species growing near at hand.⁶⁴

3. The portion of the town of Battel which lies eastward of the church is called the Lake, and sometimes *Sanguelac*, i.e. the “lake of blood.” Tradition says, that the Conqueror gave the place this name because of the vast sea of gore there spilt; and the Battel chronicler’s account of the conflict would almost

⁶³ Sax. Chron. in Mon. Hist. Brit. But the phrase has been translated in a totally different sense.

⁶⁴ In Saxon and early Norman times it was very usual to mark places by some particular tree. See the Codex Dipl. Sax. Æv. *passim*. An instance may be cited in this immediate neighbourhood. According to the ‘Battel Chronicle,’ when William Faber commenced the founding of the Abbey he began to build (as already stated) on a site to the westward of the

spot where the battle had taken place, and where the abbey was eventually erected. “The place is to this day called Herst; and a certain thorn-tree growing there is a memorial of this circumstance,” p. 10. The *hoar apple-tree* was a common land-mark in the Saxon period. Mr. Hamper, in his elaborate paper on Hoarstones, in *Archæologia*, vol. xxv, cites no fewer than fourteen instances in different counties.

warrant the name.⁶⁵ Even but a few years since, the springs of chalybeate water hereabouts—the sources of the little river Asten—were believed to have received their redness from the blood of the slaughtered Saxons. Drayton, with his usual grace, embodies the beautiful idea in his *Polyolbion* :

“ Asten once distained with native English blood ;
Whose soil yet, when but wet with any little rain,
Doth blush, as put in mind of those there sadly slain.”

Most unfortunately, however, for tradition and poetry, the true original name of the spot referred to was not *Sanguelac*, but *Santlache*, and it is so spelt in all the earlier monastic documents.

4. One of the boroughs or subdivisions of the hundred of Battel is called *Mountjoy*. Now Boyer defines *Mont-joie* as “ a heap of stones made by an army as a monument of victory,” and this may be the origin of the name. In this district, and on the line by which the Saxons must have retreated, is another spot, known as *Call-back-hill* ; and this, tradition—ever fond of playing with words—has made the place where the duke “ called back ” his pursuing troops. Here again legendary history must yield to etymological criticism, for the true name is *Cald-bec*, i.e., “ the cold spring ; ” and such a spring is yet seen bursting from a cavernous recess on the spot.

5. To the westward of the town of Battel, on the London road, is a large tree, called the *Watch-Oak*, which is supposed to have derived its epithet from some watch set either the night before or the night after the battle ; but the tradition is very vague. One other place may be noticed : this is *Standard-hill*, in the adjacent parish of Ninfield, where somebody’s standard, William’s or Harold’s, was set up. So says tradition ; but there seems nothing to support such a notion. Harold’s standard was first pitched *here*, and here it remained until it was supplanted by the oriflamme of the Conqueror ; and here, as we have already seen, subsequently arose this

⁶⁵ Vide p. 31 supra.

majestic edifice "the Abbey of the Battle"—an expiatory offering for the slaughter which had there taken place.

"KING WILLIAM bithought hym alsoe of that
 Folke that was forlorne
 And slayn also thoruz hym
 In the bataile biforne.
 And ther as the bataile was
 An Abbey he let rere
 Of Seint Martin for the soules
 That there slayen were ;
 And the monkes wel ynoug
 Feffèd without fayle,
 That is callèd in Englonde
 Abbey of Bataile."

So sings Robert of Gloucester; but upon the history of this celebrated monastery, which, in after times, the monks delighted to style *the token and pledge of the royal crown*, I cannot now enter, although that history is by no means an unimportant or an uninteresting one. I must, however, add a word or two in conclusion. What a contrast does the 23d of July, One thousand eight hundred and fifty-two present to that 14th of October, One thousand and sixty-six! *Then*, a hostile meeting of two semi-barbarous nations intent upon shedding each other's blood—*now*, a confluence of beauty, rank, and intelligence, equally intent upon diffusing pleasure, harmony, and good-will, and promoting the great cause of human progress. For I contend that the study of archæology is every way calculated to improve the human mind and character. We review the barbarous past with interest it is true, but with no regret that our lot was not cast in Saxon or in Norman times. We can survey these venerable walls with pleasure, without the slightest yearning after cloistral life. In a word, like the traveller who has laboriously gained the summit of a lofty hill, we can *look* back upon the devious windings and rugged passes of the way, brightened and mellowed by distance; but, like him, we have no desire to *go* back, to tread again the dark and dangerous past. It has been well said that "an undevout astronomer is mad," and the same may be predicated of an ungrateful archæologist. The more we scrutinize the annals of other days—the more we investigate the reign of

tyranny, of intolerance, of superstition—the more we contrast the rudeness of other ages with the comforts and refinements of our own—the wiser, the more grateful, the happier we shall be!

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Page 17. The eve of the battle.—We must recollect that the contrast between Saxon riot and Norman sanctity is drawn by a Norman pen. The words *bulbie* and *laticome* put into the mouths of the Saxons remain unexplained; though Mr. Blaauw suggests that the latter may, by some perversion, represent the defiant phrase, “Let them come on!”

Page 28. The slaughter at Malfosse.—Since the preceding pages have been in type, I have learned the existence of an opinion that this “deplorable accident” must have occurred “on the precipitous slope and dell behind Beauport, where Sir Charles Lambe, not long ago, found many bones in the lower swampy ground.” But a diligent examination of the various accounts of the battle convinces me that the statement I have given is the correct one; and that William’s pretended retreat could not have been to so great a distance from Harold’s camp as Beauport, which is three miles from the spot. Besides, the name *Malfosse*, which was retained in 1176, and (in the slightly corrupted form of *Manfosse*) in 1279, is clearly identified with the accident, by its contiguity to Winchester-croft, a place well-known, and lying as I have stated, west by north of the town.

“Adam, son of Adam Picot, Deed of release to Reginald Abbot of Battel of nine acres of land and wood in *Manfosse*, called Wincestrecroft, in exchange for twelve acres of land and wood near the Birechette. Dated Battel, Eve of St. Michael, 1279. Seal fine and perfect.”—*Thorpe’s Cat. Battel Abbey Charters*, p. 50.
