

## *Notes and Documents*

### A PICTORIAL RECORD OF THE CONQUEST.

As far as I am aware, no English writer has observed the evidence of the probable date of the Bayeux tapestry, furnished by a poem of Baldric, abbot of Bourgueil on the Loire from 1079 to 1107, and afterwards bishop or archbishop of Dol. It was written while he was still abbot, and was addressed to his friend and patroness Adela, the daughter of William, the wife of Stephen of Blois and the mother of King Stephen. The first eighty-eight lines were published long ago by Duchesne (iv. 272), and have been reprinted elsewhere, for instance in Migne's 'Patrologia;' but though Duchesne copied the lines that bear on the question of the tapestry, he never printed them, and they did not appear till 1871, when the whole of the poem was first printed at Caen from a copy at Tours of a manuscript in the Vatican.<sup>1</sup>

It purports to be a description, probably with a good deal of poetic exaggeration, of the chamber of Adela, of its ceiling, floor, and hangings. The subject of those about the alcove, where her bed was placed, was her father's invasion of England.

The story apparently began with the comet, for the preceding lines seem to be merely a sketch by Baldric of William's early life. At least, if there was anything corresponding in the hangings, Baldric's curt summary is quite unlike the lengthy descriptions in which he afterwards indulges:—

Ecce videbatur Normannia foeta virorum  
 Nomine Guillelmum progenuisse ducem.  
 Finibus a patriis in primis hunc abigebant,  
 Et profligabant jura paterna sui.  
 Protinus hos princeps nimia virtute subactos  
 Legibus edomuit suppositisque suis.  
 Hic successiva serie de consule consul  
 Mox extra seriem de duce Caesar erit.

As many lines are given to the comet:—

<sup>1</sup> *Poème adressé à Adèle, fille de Guillaume le Conquérant, par Baudri... publié par M. Léopold Delisle, in the Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie, vol. xxviii., deuxième livraison. (Avril 1873.)*

Ecce micat caelo, micat ecce rubens cometes,  
 Crinibus effusis fulgurat in populos.  
 At ne de stella nos vana putes cecinisse,  
 Vidimus hanc omnes plus quoque quam decies.  
 Stella fuit stellis aliis conspectior ipsa,  
 Et nisi longa foret altera luna fuit.  
 Quippe videbatur vestigia verrere longa  
 Et longe proprias spargere retro comas.

Then William convenes his magnates, describes the unsuccessful mission of his ambassadors, sets forth his claims on the grounds both of relationship and of the late king's will, and calls on the ambassadors to confirm his statements. When they have done so, he again addresses the assembly. He himself feels no doubt what course he should take, but asks that they should agree with him, though in any case his resolution is inflexible. He expatiates on their own victories in Maine, Brittany, and Anjou, and on those of Guiscard in Apulia. Let the perjured English feel their wonted valour. If he wins a kingdom, they will be enriched :—

Nomen ego regis, vos divitias habeatis,  
 Dumque vacat, vestras amplificate domos.  
 Omnibus illa bonis, ut nostis, terra repletur,  
 Gens imbelle satis et muliebne genus.

Only ships are wanting, and he calls on his nobles to provide a fleet within five months. Next come, as at Bayeux, the felling of the trees, and the building of the fleet, which, says the poet, surpassed that of Xerxes, and the embarkation amid the farewells and tears of wives and sweethearts. The duke's own ship carries a gilded prow. The duke on touching the shore hails the land as his own, and, contrary to the evidence of the Bayeux tapestry, exclaims :—

Nolo tuos agros, regio mea, depopulari,  
 Hostibus hostis ero, pax, mea terra, tibi.

The beginning of the battle follows immediately; the English fight on foot in a close wedge,

Qui, nisi desiperet, intemerandus erat.  
 Nam neque Normannus consortos audet adire,  
 Nec valet a cuneo quemlibet excipere.

William orders his bowmen to aim high, so that a deadly shower falls on the heads of the English :—

Creditur a caelo mors super ingruere.

They stand so close that the killed have no room to fall. Then appear the feigned and the real flight of the Normans, and the fatal breach in the ranks of the pursuing English. William, who was

said to have been slain, takes off his helmet and cheers on his men.  
Like Cortes,

Quo fugeritis ? ait. Procul est a litore classis,  
Nos ipsam nobis spem simul abstulimus.

He spurs his steed to the charge, his men rally, great slaughter  
on both sides follows ; the Fates could not keep up with it :—

Lassari potuit, nisi fallor, turba Sororum,  
Stamine non rupto plurimus occubuit.

At last,

Ni caeli praesagia vana fuissent,

Providence favours the Normans, Harold falls arrow-slain, and  
the English fly. Many perish, suffocated by their armour ; those  
who can, pull it off, and fly unarmed. The Normans pursue on  
horseback, till night puts an end to the pursuit. At this point the  
Bayeux tapestry, in its present state, ends, but that of Adela had  
some additional scenes. The English fly to woods and caves, the  
remnant of the nobles try to defend the towns. Next day William  
marches against them, so as to give them no time to rally. The  
city (unnamed) makes peace and surrenders, an example followed  
by the whole province :—

Cives excipiunt pacem pacemque redonant,  
Urbs patet, excipitur dux alacri facie.  
Protinus applaudit provincia civibus illis,  
Collaudant factum suscipiuntque ducem.  
Nobilitas, populus, urbes simul, oppida, rura,  
Supra se regem constituere ducem.  
Guillelmus consul rex est de consule factus,  
Sanguinis effusi nuncia stella fuit.

From the preceding sketch it will be seen that this tapestry  
differs widely from that of Bayeux. This begins with the comet,  
the other with Harold's taking leave of Edward before his voyage,  
and nearly half the scenes in that of Bayeux are occupied with the  
subsequent events in Normandy and Brittany before it reaches the  
comet. On the other hand, while the Bayeux tapestry ends with  
Harold's death, the other goes down some way further. Moreover,  
if Baldrick can be trusted, the tapestry he describes was made of  
much more precious materials than that of Bayeux :—

Ambit enim lectum dominae mirabile velum,  
Quod tria materia jungit et arte nova.  
Nam manus artificis sic attenuaverat artem,  
Ut vix esse putes quod tamen esse scias.  
Aurea praecedunt, argentea fila sequuntur,  
Tertia fila quidem serica semper erat.  
Sic quoque cura sagax tenuaverat ambo metalla,  
Tenuius ut nil hoc posse fuisse reor.

Interlucebant rutilo discrimine gemmae  
 Et margaritae non modici pretii.  
 Denique tantus erat velo fulgorque decorque,  
 Ut Phoebi dicas exsuperasse jubar.

On the other hand where the two are on the same ground there is considerable similarity. Both have the comet, the order to build the fleet, the felling of the timber, the building of the ships, the embarkation, the voyage, the landing, and the battle. Both too had written explanations of the scenes and figures. We are told at the beginning of the description :—

Porro recenseres titulorum scripta legendo  
 In velo veras historiasque novas ;

and again, at the end :—

Regis divitiae, sua gloria, bella, triumphi,  
 In velo poterant singula visa legi.  
 Veras crediderim vivasque fuisse figuras,  
 Ni caro, ni sensus, deesset imaginibus.  
 Littera signabat sic res et quasque figuras,  
 Ut quisquis videat, si sapit, ipsa legat.

It is a strong argument for the early date of the Bayeux tapestry that a poem written within forty years of the Conquest should describe work of so similar a character as adorning the chamber of a daughter of the Conqueror.<sup>2</sup>

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THE WORDS SOLINUM AND SOLANDA.

Several years ago I arrived at the conclusion that the alleged identity of these two words was an unsupported conjecture. So long as it remained a conjecture only, its correction was not urgent ; but now, as is so often the case, the result of leaving it unassailed is that arguments are based upon it. The last number of the REVIEW contained a paper by Mr. Seebohm, in which that distinguished scholar took the identity for granted, as his no less distinguished opponent, Professor Vinogradoff, has done in his masterly work on 'Villainage in England.'

I believe the alleged identity was first asserted by Archdeacon Hale who wrote in his 'Domesday of St. Paul's' (1858), p. xiv :—

The word *solanda*, or, as it is written at p. 142, *scolanda*, is so evidently a latinized form of the Anglo-Saxon *sulung* or plough land, and approaches so near to the Kentish *solinus*, that we need scarcely hesitate to consider them identical.

<sup>2</sup> An early historical tapestry at Ely is described in Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, l. 303, *note*.