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DOMESTIC EVERY-DAY LIFE, AND MANNERS AND CUSTOMS IN THIS COUNTRY,

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH
CENTURY.

By GEORGE HARRIS, Esq., LL.D., F.S.A.,

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III.—*From the Norman Conquest to the end of the Thirteenth Century.*

THE Norman conquest, when William, Duke of Normandy, in the year 1066, landed in this country with a number of his chosen followers, and after killing King Harold in battle, and routing his army, established here the Norman sway, and introduced new laws and customs and manners, is one of those leading events in the history of this country by which the most important results upon its whole career, and more especially the cause of its civilization, were produced. True it is that the bulk of the people remained, and many of their institutions continued unchanged. But a great deal that was new was engrafted on the old. The native inhabitants were brought into immediate contact with the people of another country, who were not only more powerful than themselves,* but who possessed different habits and pursuits and modes of thought, and who varied from them essentially in character and disposition; besides being used to a manner of living entirely varying from what they found here, and who were moreover determined, as the dominant power, to make changes in the government and institutions of the kingdom. Civilization was thus advanced by the coming in contact of

* Civilization considered as a Science.

the people of the two countries, and by the superior cultivation possessed by the Normans; and a very great stimulus was given to art, commerce, and national enterprise of every description. Hence, although I do not intend to give an account of the battles and political contests which occurred during their early career in this country, yet the Norman conquest is so intimately connected with, and had so important an influence on the habits, pursuits, and general condition of the people in this land, that it is absolutely necessary, in order correctly to become acquainted with the latter, to take a general survey of the former also.

We are told that the state of this country, just before the arrival of the Normans, was such that it directly invited the attacks of an enemy. The great towns, with few exceptions, were either quite open or fortified only by stockades and banks, or perhaps by a ruinous Roman wall; and the English themselves, although very brave, were decidedly inferior to the people of the continental nations in the art of war. And although they were stout and well fed, yet they were so dreadfully addicted to drinking that they were quite unnerved by their excesses in this vice.*

William, Duke of Normandy, who was a sort of sovereign prince over that part of France which is still called by the same name, was born at the castle of Falaise, in Normandy, of the ruins of which a representation, copied from a sketch I made on the spot, has been deposited in the Society's archives. The castle stands on a firm rock, overlooking a wild valley, down which a torrent rushes. This edifice is, indeed, a magnificent specimen of Norman architecture, and tourists in Normandy will do well to pay it a visit. The outer walls are of great antiquity, and in excellent preservation. The breach in them made by Henry IV. of France, when he besieged the castle in 1589, is still to be seen. The keep rises from the precipitous side of the ravine below. It is a huge square pile, massively built and unornamented, except with a few traces here and there of herring-bone masonry.

Inside it has been completely gutted. The well, cut deep into the solid rock, which of old supplied its defenders with water, is open to view. The noble tower, which remains almost entire, is round and perfectly plain in structure, of smooth masonry, some 130 feet high, with walls 15 feet thick. A winding stone staircase leads to the different stories; and a hole through the centre of the flooring of each opens a way to the oubliettes far down in the darkness below, and into the depths of which many an unfortunate wretch has, in times bygone, been precipitated. From one of the windows of the castle it is said that William's father, Duke Robert, watched and fell in love with a very beautiful girl, the daughter of a tanner who lived in one of the huts in the valley below the castle, and whom he saw washing herself in the stream. She afterwards became the mother of a little boy, who eventually succeeded his father in his title and dominions, and was called William the Conqueror, from his successful invasion of this country. The room in which the Conqueror was born is pointed out among the ruins of the castle of Falaise, and the tanneries are still carried on under the castle walls.

On one occasion in after years, while William the Conqueror was laying siege to the town of Alençon, the inhabitants, meaning to reproach him for his lowly birth, called out from the top of their walls, "The hide, the hide, have at the hide!" and shook and beat pieces of tanned leather, as William's maternal grandfather had probably been in the habit of doing. When the Conqueror heard of this he caused the feet and hands of all the Alençon prisoners in his power to be cut off, and then thrown by his slingers within the walls of the town.*

William was one day hunting in the park of Rouen, surrounded by a noble train of knights, esquires, and damsels, when a sergeant or messenger, just arrived from England, hastened into his presence, and told him that Edward the Confessor, the late King of England, was dead, and that a new

* Pictorial History of England, vol. i., p. 192.

king, Harold by name, had assumed the crown. The bow dropped out of William's hand, and he was unnerved by anxiety and surprise. He did not speak a word, but we are told that he looked so fierce that everybody was frightened. He crossed over the Seine in a little boat still silent, went into the hall of his palace, sat himself down, wrapped his head in a mantle, and bent his body downward. This was not a very dignified or noble course for a sovereign prince and brave warrior to pursue, nor one which was very likely to induce Harold to resign his crown, or to prove to the followers of William that he was particularly well calculated to fill the English throne. In course of time, however, William seems to have got into a better humour, and he at last condescended to speak to some of his humble servants in attendance, and determined to assert his right to the English crown, which he claimed as the next heir of the late King Edward.* Soon after this he set sail for England, his fleet amounting to nearly 600 ships, besides a great many smaller vessels. The ship in which he sailed was given to him by his wife Matilda, and he distinguished it from all the others, as at night it had a cresset which flamed on the topmast, and in the daytime it had very splendid ornaments and decorations. The crimson sails swelled to the wind, the gilded vanes glittered in the sun; and at the head of the ship was the effigy of a child armed with a bow and arrow, and ready to discharge his shaft against the hostile land.†

William of Normandy was advised, in order to ensure success in his expedition, to bring over with him the bones of St. Valery, and a ring containing one of St. Peter's hairs.‡

Sometime before this, and before Harold became king, he had been so unfortunate as to be shipwrecked on the coast of Normandy, and to fall into William's hands, who made him take an oath that he would assist William in gaining the crown of England. In order to make the oath more binding,

* Palgrave's History of the Anglo-Saxons, p. 363. † *Ibid.*

‡ Pictorial History of England, vol. i., p. 206.

William had placed a large tub full of relics of the bones of saints, but covered over with a rich cloth so that they were not seen, in the chamber where the oath was taken.* When Harold returned to England he refused to fulfil his engagement, on the ground that he had been compelled to take the oath against his will. Owing to contrary gales, some delay occurred in the assembling of William the Conqueror's fleet ; but on the eve of St. Michael a prosperous wind arose, and carried the whole armament across the waves. They found the English coast entirely unprotected, but there were numbers of peasants on the cliffs, who were in great alarm at the approach of the vessels, which they said had been foretold by the dreadful comet that a short time before had been blazing in the sky. William's fleet landed between Hastings and Pevensey.

A number of war-horses and archers were brought over in the vessels, as well as several knights in armour, and numerous banners.† King Harold soon afterwards encountered them, but was slain, and his army dispersed ; the conquering Normans advanced into the heart of the kingdom, and Duke William was at once acknowledged as King of England.

Had any of us been living at the time of which I am now speaking, we should probably have been told that a shepherd who was looking after his flock on one of the hills behind Hastings, first thought that he spied something very strange far out at sea, he could not tell what, but it seemed like a huge vessel very long and flat. Afterwards, as it got nearer, it appeared like a floating island. Still it approached the coast ; and all at once, when the sun came out and shone upon it, it sparkled like a cluster of diamonds, and bristles seemed to spring up, which those who were watching it soon saw were spears ; and they perceived also sails and flags of red, and white, and blue, and other different colours. By and by,

* Pictorial History of England, vol. i., p. 206.

† Palgrave's Hist. "Ang.-Sax.," pp. 368, 369, 370, 371.

as the fleet approached the shore, they could see the different vessels quite plain, and the men standing in them, some in bright armour, and some with bows in their hands. At last the ships were seen to come to the land, and the men got out and leaped on the shore, and they heard them shout and call out merrily as they left the ships.

The people on the hills, as soon as they saw this strange object at sea, made signs and called out to the people in the huts in the little village below, since grown into a town and called by the name of Hastings, to look at it, and they soon came running up the cliffs very fast. Before long nearly all the people, men, women, and children, had left their houses and climbed up the sides of the steep hill. When the fleet landed they all ran away fast; some hid themselves in the woods, others took refuge in the churches, while a party of young men set off to let King Harold and his army know of the strange visitors that had arrived at our shores, and said they were quite sure that their noble king and his brave army, which looked so valiant, and who had been victorious in every battle, would soon drive them back into the sea, although others thought there was never such an army as this Norman one seen in England before. Several of the Norman soldiers, owing to their wearing the hair short and shaving the upper lip, were mistaken by the poor English for priests.* But our unfortunate forefathers soon found the difference to their cost. The old people seemed very grave, and talked to one another a good deal of the great comet which had lately appeared, an account of which is contained in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, to which I several times referred in my last paper, and remembered how their wise men had declared that something dreadful would soon follow. The following is the reference to the comet in question noted down in this trusty record:—

“A. 1066. In this year King Harold came from York to Westminster, at that Easter which was after the midwinter in which the

* Pict. Hist. Eng., vol. i., p. 210.

king died ; and Easter was then on the day 16th before the Kalends of May. There was over all England such a token seen in the heavens as no man ever before saw. Some men said it was Cometa, the star which some men called the sacred star. . . . King Harold gathered so great a ship force, and also a land force, as no king here in the land had before done ; because it was made known that William the Bastard would come hither and win this land ; all as it afterwards happened."

A curious compound of pride, piety, and rapacity appears to have been William the Conqueror, and the traditionary account preserved of his death and the cause of it, and also of his funeral, are highly characteristic both of himself and of the rude age in which he lived. The King of France remarked one day to his courtiers on the increasing corpulency of his brother of England, and inquired facetiously when a certain "interesting event," which might naturally be expected as the consequence, was likely to take place. William, indignant at the affront, went over to France and besieged and burnt the city of Mantes ; but venturing too near the flames, and being thrown from his horse, he died in consequence. He was buried in the magnificent church of St. Etienne at Caen, which he had built there. But while the funeral was proceeding a poor cobbler stepped forward and demanded compensation for the ground on which the church stood, of which he had been fraudulently and forcibly dispossessed by William, ere he would allow the solemnities to proceed. William's ashes rested in the grave in St. Etienne, which is still pointed out, until the French Revolution, when, as little respect being shown for the dead as for the living, the tomb was violated and his ashes were dispersed.

The Normans found this country possessed of considerable capital, and of a flourishing foreign commerce. Merchants from distant countries were at this time accustomed to import to England articles of foreign manufacture that were unknown in Normandy, and the resident merchants in London and Winchester were possessed of great wealth. Exeter was also distinguished for its opulence, and was much

resorted to by foreign merchants.* It was so well walled and fortified that it was able to resist the Conqueror for eighteen days. Oxford, Warwick, Leicester, Derby, Nottingham, and York were all fortified places, and made sufficient resistance to provoke the utmost vengeance of the conquering army. At Leicester there appears to have been a citadel,† It is a remarkable fact, however, that, with very few exceptions, all the towns and even villages and hamlets which England yet possesses appear to have existed from the Saxon times. And if only about twenty-eight of our cities and towns, or even twice that number, can be traced to a Roman original, the number indebted to the Saxons for their first foundation must be very great. The present division of the country into parishes is about as old as the tenth century.‡

From the following entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, it appears that London was desolated by fire in the year 1077.

“1077. This year, on the night before the Assumption of St. Mary, there was a more dreadful fire in London than had ever happened since the town was built. And the moon was eclipsed the night before Candlemas. . . . There was this year a dry summer, and wild-fire burnt many towns, and many cities were ruined by it.”

It must be borne in mind that at this period most of the buildings were constructed of wood, so that fires when they did occur were difficult to check. In a subsequent entry in the Chronicle it is recorded that “the whole town of Lincoln was burnt, with a great number of persons, both men and women; and so much harm was done that no man could tell another how great the damage was.” The destruction by fire of St. Paul’s is recorded as follows in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 1087 :—

“A. 1087. This same year, before harvest, St. Paul’s minster, the residence of the Bishop of London, was burnt, together with many other monasteries, and the greater and handsomer part of the whole

* Pict. Hist. Eng., vol. i., p. 584.

† *Ibid.*, p. 318.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 349.

city; at the same time likewise almost all the principal towns of England were burnt down. Oh, how sad and deplorable was this year, which brought forth so many calamities!"

The cathedral of St. Paul's seems again to have been destroyed in less than an hundred years after this time, as it had to be rebuilt in the year 1187, and the stone used and the workmen employed were from Normandy.* William the Conqueror was indeed rather famous for building churches, and there are two very noble ones at Caen, in Normandy, still standing, which were erected by him. St. Paul's, in London, was reared upon arches of stone, and was considered a very wonderful work at that time.†

At this period some of the streets of London were exclusively inhabited by the richest Jews in Europe.‡ Hatred of and cruelty towards the Jews was, however, a marked characteristic of the Anglo-Normans.§ The Tower of London is supposed to have been originally erected soon after the Norman conquest.||

Fires in London and other large towns continued to be very frequent during the Anglo-Norman period. Thus it is recorded in one of the chronicles of that time that in the reign of Henry I., "Chichester, with the principal monastery, was burnt down. From West Cheap in London to Aldgate a long tract of buildings was consumed by fire. Worcester also, and Rochester, even in the king's presence; then Winchester, Bath, Gloucester, Lincoln, Peterborough, and other places did also partake of this calamity."¶ We are informed by the same chronicle that in the seventeenth year of Henry II.—

"There was seen in St. Osythes, in Essex, a dragon of marvellous bignesse, which, by moving, burnt houses, and the whole city of Canterbury was the same year almost burnt. In the eighteenth yeare of his reigne the church of Norwich, with the houses thereto

* Thompson's *Illust. London*, vol. ii., p. 14.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 271. § *Ibid.*, p. 284.

|| Penny Cycl., art. London.

¶ Baker's *Chronicle*, Hist. of Henry I., pp. 57, 58.

belonging, was burnt, and the monkes dispersed. At Lincoln a priest praying before the altar was slain with thunder, likewise one clerke and his brother was burnt to death with lightning. In the five and twentyeth yere the city of Yorke was burnt. . . . Also in the same yeare on the 10th of April the church of St. Andrews in Rochester was consumed with fire. In the eight and twentyeth year of his reigne, Barnewell, with the priory, near unto Cambridge, was burnt. In the 30th year the abbey of Glastonbury was burnt, with the church of St. Julian, and on the 20th of October the cathedral church of Chichester and all the whole city was burnt. In the yeare 1188, on the 20th of September, the towne of Beverley, with the church of St. John there, was burnt."*

In the reign of Henry III. it is recorded that "the church of St. Mildred, in Canterbury, and a great part of the city was burnt. Also the towne of Newcastle-upon-Tine, bridge and all."†

Several castles were built in this country by the Normans, which were strongly walled, and provided with deep moats or dry fosses, guarded with stakes and piles, so that the soldiers could never get beyond them to fight; and over the gates were chambers from which boiling oil and molten lead or pitch was poured down upon the enemy when they had advanced to the gate-house.‡

The existence and building of castles is referred to in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, although not until the reign of King Stephen. Thus,—

"A. 1137. When King Stephen came to England he held an assembly at Oxford; and there he seized Roger Bishop of Salisbury, and Alexander Bishop of Lincoln, and Roger the Chancellor, his nephew, and he kept them all in prison till they gave up their castles. When the traitors perceived that he was a mild man, and a soft, and a good, and that he did not enforce justice, they did all wonder. They had done homage to him, and sworn oaths, but they no faith kept; all became forsworn and broke their allegiance, for every rich

* Baker's Chronicle, Hist. of Henry II., pp. 79, 80.

† *Ibid.*, Hist. of Henry III., p. 123.

‡ Thompson's Illust. Great Britain, vol. ii., p. 116.

man built his castles, and defended them against him, and they filled the land full of castles. They greatly oppressed the wretched people by making them work at these castles, and when the castles were finished they filled them with devils and evil men."

The owners of these castles are accused in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of—

"Seizing persons who were supposed to be possessed of gold and silver, torturing them severely to make them give up their treasures ; swinging them up by their feet and smoking them. Some they put into foul dungeons with adders and toads. Many thousands they exhausted with hunger."*

Nevertheless among the "works of piety" done by Henry II., the building of Warwick Castle is enumerated as one of them.†

To this period belongs the renowned and picturesque castle of Warkworth, in Northumberland, although the precise date of its erection is not known. Although but a ruin, it is one of the noblest monuments of ancient grandeur. It is placed on a rocky eminence, a river running at its base, and the sea being about a mile distant. The keep stands on the north side, and is elevated on an artificial mount several feet higher than the other parts. Its figure is a square with the angles cut away ; from the middle of each side of the square there is a turret. Inside the castle are spacious apartments arched with stone, which are supposed to have been used as a refuge for cattle in troublous times. In one of these rooms there is a perpendicular hole that leads to a deep dungeon, which is fifteen feet square, and is flagged with stone. This was the place of confinement for prisoners, from which it was impossible to escape, and into which they were let down, as they were also drawn up from it, by ropes. The baronial hall is thirty-nine feet long, twenty-four broad, and about twenty feet high.‡

Instead of artillery the Normans had numerous powerful machines for casting arrows, combustible materials, hot and

* A.D. 1037. † Baker's Chronicle, Hist. of Henry II., p. 79.

‡ Mackenzie's View of Northumberland, vol. ii., pp. 112-114.

cold stones, and other offensive articles. Of these were the scorpion, a large stationary steel crossbow which discharged an arrow; and the onager, or wild colt (an animal supposed to throw stones by the force of its heels), had great power in discharging large fragments of stone. The war-wolf was anciently a frame made of heavy beams to destroy assailants at a gate, by falling on them like a portcullis; though it subsequently became an engine for casting stones.

Plate armour appears not to have been adopted until about the time of Henry the Fifth, when the cavalry were all clothed in steel from head to foot, so that nothing could be seen but the eyes, the armour being fastened by a padlock. The shields were either made like long hearts, or were circular targets, and the weapons were long two-handed swords, having various punishments delineated on the blades, used for beheading. Cannon were not used in the field until the fifteenth century, when the English appear to have employed several kinds of pieces. The use of portable fire-arms in this nation seems to have been known in 1440 or 1446, when they were called hand-guns and made of brass. The length and weight of these early pieces introduced what were called rests, which consisted of a kind of fork stuck into the ground before the soldier when the musket was fired, and carried in the right hand when marching. Some of these were armed with a sword-blade, called a swine's feather, for keeping off the cavalry. This in the time of Charles II. was used as a separate weapon to fix on the muzzle of the gun, and became the origin of the bayonet, so called from being manufactured at Bayonne.*

The invention of gunpowder in the fourteenth century of course produced a great change in the mode of warfare. At the first invention of cannon the smaller sorts were used to eject darts and bolts, and the larger stone shot. Greek fire (the principal ingredient in which is supposed to have been naphtha) was also occasionally used, and was directed through long copper tubes, and gave so great a light as to illumi-

* Thompson's *Illust. Great Britain*, vol. ii., pp. 182, 183, 187, 189-191.

nate the camps at night as fully as in broad day. These engines are supposed to have given rise to the romantic tales in the time of the Crusades, of knights fighting with fiery dragons, since the mouths of these weapons were shaped like the mouths of monsters, whence flames were emitted.*

The Anglo-Norman castle, as in the case of that at Falaise, which I have already described, occupied a considerable space of ground, sometimes several acres, and usually consisted of the outer or lower court, the inner or upper court, and the keep. The whole was defended by a lofty wall, strengthened at intervals by towers, and surrounded by a ditch or moat. Flights of steps led to the top of this rampart, which was protected by a parapet, embattled and pierced in different directions by loopholes or chinks, and œillelets, through which missiles might be discharged without exposing the men.

The entrance through the outer wall into the lower court was defended by the barbican, which in some cases was a regular outwork, covering the approach to the bridge across the ditch. The entrance archway, besides the massive gates, was crossed by the portcullis, which could be instantaneously let down in case of any emergency, and the crown of the arch was pierced with holes, through which melted lead and pitch and heavy missiles could be dropped upon the assailants below. A second rampart, similar to the first, separated the lower from the upper court, in which were placed the habitable buildings, including the keep, the relative position of which varied with the nature of the site. It generally stood upon a high artificial mound, and was the last retreat of the garrison.†

In France they built their castles with loftier towers and with still more massive walls than in England. In the general plan and disposition of the different parts of the building they were probably much alike. In an English castle, however, the lord always dwelt in the centre tower or keep, the upper part of which was occupied by the state apartments; while in

* Thompson's *Illust. Great Britain*, vol. ii., pp. 135-137.

† *Pict. Hist. Eng.* vol. i., pp. 662, 625.

a French castle the keep, or, as they called it, the donjon tower, was the habitation of the four principal officers, and the lord or castellan had a separate house in the outer ballium, which in an English castle was the place appropriated for the barracks and stables.*

There are but few remains of the domestic buildings of this period in this country, but a sufficient number exist to prove that even those of the greatest extent and solidity were of a very different character from the castles. We read that Edward the Confessor had a hunting seat, and Harold a country house.† It has been supposed that the Saxons and Normans adopted the masonry which the Romans had introduced into England, altering it as architecture improved. The rude materials of the early English churches were described in a former paper, and the erection of buildings of reeds and trunks of trees seems to have continued in some parts of England to a late period.

In the time of Edward I. the English churches were, however, some of them of great splendour, and possessed several curious and peculiar features, now no longer existing. The church itself was a long narrow building, intended to represent a ship, in which the gospel is tossed on the sea of the world. An altar could not be consecrated without reliques, and therefore an aperture was left for their insertion, which was closed up by a stone called the seal of the altar, having the cement mixed with holy water. Fonts were anciently locked up in Lent, because Easter and Whitsuntide were considered the proper seasons for baptism.‡ The entrance into large churches was anciently at the west door, in order that men might see the altar and all the church before them. The other doors were but posterns.§ As regards the general materials for building used during this period, it may be observed that even in the days of Henry I.

* Markham's Hist. of France, p. 157.

† Pict. Hist. Eng., vol. i., p. 625.

‡ Thompson's Illust. Great Britain, vol. i., pp. 70, 72.

§ Selden's Table Talk.

Pembroke Castle was built of twigs and turf. In 940 a King of Wales erected his White House, as it was called, of twisted branches with the bark stripped off and left white.*

The monasteries appear to have been numerous in this country during the Anglo-Norman era ; and an entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 1070, containing an account of the pillage of that of Peterborough, affords us a notion of their wealth. The robbers, we are told,

“Went into the monastery and climbed up to the holy crucifix, took the crown from our Lord’s head, which was all of the purest gold, and the footstool of real gold from under his feet. And they climbed up to the steeple, and brought down the table which was hidden there. It was all of gold and silver. They also seized two gold shrines and nine of silver, and they took so much gold and silver, and so much treasure in money, robes, and books, that no man can compute the amount ; saying they did this because of their allegiance to the monastery.”

Internal disorders occasionally arose in the monasteries themselves, as appears from the following entry in the Chronicle already quoted from :—

“A. 1083. This year a quarrel arose in Glastonbury between the abbot Thurston and his monks. It was first caused by the abbot’s unwise conduct, in that he treated his monks ill in many respects ; but the monks were lovingly minded towards him, and begged him to govern them in right and in kindness, and they would be faithful and obedient to him. But the abbot would none of this, and wrought them evil, and threatened worse. One day the abbot went into the chapter house, and spoke against the monks, and would have taught them amiss, and he sent for laymen, and they came in all armed upon the monks in the chapter house. Then the monks were greatly terrified, and knew not what to do, and some ran for refuge into the church, and locked the doors from within ; but the others followed them, and would have dragged them forth when they durst not come out. Rueful things happened there on that day, for the French broke into the choir and threw darts towards the altar where the monks were collected, and

* Thompson’s *Illust. Great Britain*, vol. ii., p. 94.

some of their servants went upon the upper floor and shot down arrows towards the chancel. They shot without ceasing, and slew some of the monks, and wounded many."

One entry in the Chronicle respecting another monastery records that :—

"All the chief men and the monks drove the abbot Henry out of the monastery ; and well they might, for in five and twenty years they had never known a good day. All his great craftiness failed him here, and it now behoved him to creep into any corner."

The Normans brought into England the custom of using seals, bearing the impress of a knight on horseback, instead of the Anglo-Saxon custom of signing a deed, either by subscription of name, or by the figure of the cross for such as could not write, the name having been inserted beforehand.*

The finest and most interesting specimen now in existence of Norman art or manufacture of any kind, is the famous Bayeux tapestry, still preserved in the town hall of Bayeux, in Normandy, and which is shown to all visitors. It is a band of linen over 230 feet long by nearly 20 inches broad, upon which a number of designs have been worked by the needle in worsteds of eight different colours. There are 72 compartments or scenes, in which figure 623 persons, 202 horses and mules, 55 dogs, 505 various other animals, 37 buildings, 41 ships and boats, and 49 trees, making a total of 1,512 objects. The historical portion of the tapestry is for the most part confined to a width of $13\frac{1}{8}$ inches, above and below which run two borders, containing lions, birds, camels, dragons, sphinxes, scenes of husbandry, and of the chase.†

This tapestry represents all the events relating to the death of Edward the Confessor and the conquest of England by William of Normandy, and is said to have been the work of Matilda, the wife of William. There is no doubt that it was done at the period of the Conquest, though probably the fair ladies of the court had a large share in it as well as the queen.

* Thompson's *Illust. Great Britain*, vol. ii. p. 110.

† The Bayeux Tapestry ; with Historic Notes, by F. N. Fowke, Arundel Society, London, 1875.

The figures are quaint and stiff, but spirited, and there is really much expression in the attitudes, though none in the countenances. The limbs are, however, well drawn, and the figures are tolerably correct, as are also the horses. The colouring is also very fairly managed. Considering their age, their state of preservation is really wonderful.

As regards the state of learning in general at the time of the Conquest, Domesday Book, which was made by order of William the Conqueror, shows that in the year 1086 there were only 243 inhabitants in Oxford, and in 1141 King Stephen reduced to ashes all that remained of that city. In 1214 it had, however, so revived as to possess about 4,000. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge had been established long before this, though they were successively burned and plundered by the Danes and Normans, and it was not until the thirteenth century that education and literature were established in England with any considerable degree of security or perfection. Nevertheless almost every cathedral, convent, and abbey was a school, in which those who were to be monks were particularly instructed in the arts of writing and illuminating manuscripts. There were also academies instituted in the different cities and great towns.* The Jews had, besides, schools of their own in London, York, Lincoln, and several other cities. The University of Paris seems, however, to have been the favourite seminary of the Anglo-Normans.† The English universities were afterwards enlarged by the munificence of certain individuals, who founded colleges and halls, with endowments annexed to them. At one period there used to be continual and fierce disputes between the students and the townsmen, or, as we should now term it, between gown and town, on whom they before depended not only for their lodgings, but actually for places in which to deliver their lectures.‡

A body of students, who were discontented with their own university, formed a new one at Northampton, and two were

* Thompson's *Illust. Great Britain*, vol. ii., pp. 107, 108.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 109.

‡ *Ibid.*, 120.

established in London.* The Inns of Court and Chancery for the study of the law were also founded in London at this time, and to each of these inns were attached academies, in which the students might be instructed in literature and art. Such establishments were called the lawyers' universities, in which the noble youth of the kingdom were often educated for courtiers and statesmen.† These inns of court are still existing, and are called Lincoln's Inn, the Middle and Inner Temple, and Gray's Inn; and there are the Inns of Chancery, called Lyon's Inn, Staples Inn, Clement's Inn, and some others.

Learning does not appear to have made very rapid progress in this country, as church preferments were often bestowed on those who were hardly able to read, and the best scholars wandered about the country as mendicants or beggars, with certificates from their chancellors, but were not always very courteously treated during their travels. The civil war much retarded the progress of education, and those who were desirous of study went to the foreign schools of Germany, France, Padua, Lombardy, Spain, Athens, and Rome.‡

William the Conqueror, when he had obtained firm possession of the throne of England, tried very hard to make all the people of this country talk French instead of English, but this he soon found was more than he was able to accomplish. The nation at large could never be induced to adopt the French tongue, and as the English were far more numerous than the Normans, his orders were made in vain. He desired, however, not only that French should be taught in all the schools, but that the pleadings in all law proceedings, and also the laws themselves, should be made in the French language. The consequence of all this was in a short time as you may well imagine, that there became no settled speech in the nation, but a sort of jargon, neither good English nor good French, but something very bad indeed, compounded of both, though in reality neither, very much like perhaps what

* Thompson's *Illust. Great Britain*, vol. ii., p. 121.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 142, 147.

English people, when they first go abroad, speak in France and call it French. Public speakers, at least those of them who wished to be understood (which I am inclined to think is by no means always the case with public speakers), were sometimes obliged to deliver the same discourse three times over to the same audience, once in English, once in French, and once in Latin. The audience were as much to be pitied, or more so, than the speaker. The Pope's Bull was written in bad Latin, and if nobody understood what it was all about, probably the loss was not very great.* The court and higher classes, to their discredit, quite neglected their native English language, and all spoke, or tried to speak, the more fashionable French tongue.

After the conquest, the mode of writing followed in this country soon altered considerably from the ancient Saxon characters, so that scarcely any resemblance of them remained. The Norman letters were resorted to in all public instruments. The use of the written character called the old English, or black-letter, commenced about the middle of the fourteenth century.†

One of the principal acts of William the Conqueror after he had firmly established his dominion in this country, and which had an extensive influence in the social condition of the people, was to effect a survey of the whole land, the result of which was entered in a book called "Doomsday Book," which is still in existence. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records this proceeding in the following terms :—

"A. 1085. The king had a great consultation with his witan concerning this land, how it was held, and what were its tenantry. He then sent his men all over England into every shire, and caused them to ascertain how many hundred hides of land it contained, and what lands the king possessed therein, what cattle there were in the several counties, and how much revenue he ought to receive yearly from each. He also caused them to write down how much land belonged

* Thompson's *Illust. Great Britain*, vol. ii., pp. 123, 124.

† *Ibid.*, p. 125.

to his archbishops, to his bishops, his abbots, and his earls; and that I may be brief, what property every inhabitant of all England possessed in land or in cattle, and how much money this was worth. So very narrowly did he cause the survey to be made, that there was not a single hide, nor a rood of land, nor—it is shameful to relate that which he thought no shame to do—was there an ox or a cow or a pig passed by, and that was not set down in the accounts; and then all these writings were brought to him.”

The same Chronicle records, in reference to the king's visit to the Isle of Wight, on his way to Normandy during the following year, that—

The king “according to his custom, extorted immense sums from his subjects, upon every pretext he could find, whether just or otherwise. Then he went over to Normandy.”

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 1087 contains the subjoined account of his Majesty's extortions.

“There was little righteousness in this land amongst any excepting the monks, who fared well. The king and chief men loved much and overmuch to amass gold and silver, and cared not how sinfully it was gotten, so that it came into their hands. The king sold out his land as dear as dearest he might, and then some other men came and bid more than the first had given, and the king granted them to him who offered the largest sum. Then came a third and bid yet more, and the king made over the lands to him who offered most of all; and he cared not how iniquitously his sheriffs extorted money from the miserable people, nor how many unlawful things they did. And the more men spoke of rightful laws, the more lawlessly did they act. They raised oppressive taxes, and so many were their unjust deeds, it were hard to number them.”

Reference to the Forest Laws made by William the Conqueror is contained in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the same year, 1087:—

“The king made large forests for the deer, and enacted laws therewith, so that whoever killed a hart or a hind should be blinded. As he forbade killing the deer, so also the boars; and he loved the tall stags as if he were their father. He also appointed concerning the hares that they should go free. The rich complained, and the poor

murmured, but he was so sturdy that he recked nought of them. They must will all that the king willed if they would live, or would keep their lands, or would hold their possessions, or would be maintained in their rights."

One regulation made by William the Conqueror, which was thought very hard and oppressive, was an order forbidding the people from fattening their swine on the acorns and beech nuts in the different forests, for fear that the game and beasts of chase might be disturbed by persons looking after their cattle.*

The Chronicle, however, does not fail to do the tyrant justice as regards the general laws for the good government of the kingdom which he enacted. It states,—

"Amongst other good things, the good order that William established is not to be forgotten. It was such that any man, who was himself aught, might travel over the kingdom with a bosom full of gold unmolested; and no man durst kill another, however great the injury he might have received from him."

An entry in the same Chronicle during the reign of Henry I. records as follows :—

"A. 1124. The same year, after St. Andrew's Day, and before Christmas, Ralph Bassett and the king's thanes held a witenagemot at Huncothoe, in Leicestershire, and they hanged more thieves than had ever before been executed within so short a time, being in all four-and-forty men; and they deprived six men of their eyes and certain other members."

And *Sir Richard Baker*, in his "Chronicle," records that Henry I. "commanded the robbers upon the highway to be hanged without redemption; of whom a famous one at that time was one Dunne, and of him the place where he most used, by reason of the great woods thereabouts, is to this day called Dunstable, where the king built the borough as it now standeth. Counterfeiters of money he punished with putting out their eyes—a punishment both less than death and greater."

The same authority informs us that—

"Stealing of cattle, which before was but pecuniary, Henry III.

* Companion to Charnwood Forest, p. 7.

† The Raigne of King Henry the First, p. 55.

made capital: and the first that suffered for the same was one of Dunstable, who having stolen twelve oxen from the inhabitants of Colne, and being pursued to Redbarne, was by a bailiff of St. Alban's, according to the king's proclamation, condemned and beheaded. And it may seem strange that in these times so much blood should be shed in the field, and none upon the scaffold."*

The Anglo-Normans resorted to nearly the same punishments for offences as did the Anglo-Saxons; the most common being the loss of a limb, which, however, might be redeemed by a fine. Hanging was sometimes resorted to. For minor offences the tumbrel and pillory were used; and the common places of execution appear to have been Smithfield and the Elms at St. Thomas à Watering's on the Kent Road.† The pillory seems, however, to have been mainly resorted to as the means of punishing ordinary offenders especially in cases of fraud. Putting out the eyes is occasionally mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as one of the punishments inflicted during the reign of William the Conqueror.

The occurrence of famines is several times referred to in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of this period, when, in consequence of the rude state of agriculture, the result must have been much more serious than it could be in our day. Thus we are told that in the year 1116, "the winter being severe and long, it was a very heavy time for the cattle and all things.

This was a very calamitous year, the crops being spoiled by the heavy rains which came on just before August, and lasted till Candlemas. Meat also was so scarce this year, that none was to be heard of in all this land, or in Wales."

"A. 1124. This year there was most unseasonable weather, which injured the corn and all fruits in England, so that between Christmas and Candlemas an acre's seed of wheat that is, two seedlings, sold for six shillings, and one of barley, that is three seedlings, for six shillings, and one acre's seed of oats, being four seedlings, for four shillings. It was thus because corn was scarce, and the penny

* The Raige of King Henry the Third, p. 122.

† Thompson's Illust. Great Britain, vol. ii., p. 25.

was so bad that the men who had a pound at the market could hardly for any thing pass twelve of these pennies."

The country appears to have been also desolated by tempests during the years 1117 and 1118, as the same Chronicle records:—

"This year [1117] also there was a violent storm of thunder and lightning, rain and hail on the night before the kalends of December. . . . This was a very bad year for the corn, through the rains which ceased scarcely at all.

"1118. This year, one daie in Epiphany week, there was dreadful lightning, which caused many deaths. . . . This year, also on St. Thomas's Day, there was so exceedingly high a wind that none who then lived remembered a greater, and this might be seen everywhere from the state of the houses, and of the trees."

From the records contained in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of this and former periods, and from the representation of the dwellings and the costume of those times, we may infer that the climate of this country must have been much milder than it now is, and that severe frosts and tempests were of much less common occurrence than they now are. A frost in May is recorded as an extraordinary event; and snow and frosts of long continuance even during the winter are mentioned as rare occurrences.

The occurrence of pestilence among cattle during the Anglo-Norman period is several times recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Thus, in the year 1037, we are told that "this was a very heavy year, and very disastrous and sorrowful; for there was a pestilence among the cattle; and the corn and fruits were checked; and the weather was worse than may easily be conceived." In the year 1111 it is recorded that "there was the greatest pestilence among the cattle ever remembered." In 1112 it mentions that the "severity of the winter occasioned much disease among the cattle."

And in 1131 we are told that "there was so great a pestilence among animals all over England, as had not been in the memory of man. It chiefly fell on cattle and on swine, so that in the town, where ten or twelve ploughs had been going,

not one remained, and the man who had possessed two or three hundred swine had not one left him. After this the hens died ; and flesh-meat became scarce, and cheese and butter. God mend the state of things, when such is His will ! ”

Earthquakes are also recorded at this period in the same Chronicle, and it would seem that these occurrences, as was also the case with certain appearances in the heavens, were supposed to be immediately connected with political and other events. Thus it is recorded, “A. 1060. This year there was a great earthquake on the translation of St. Martin, and King Henry died in France.”

“A. 1089. This year the venerable father, and patron of monks, Archbishop Lanfranc, departed this life, but we trust he has entered into the kingdom of heaven. There was also a great earthquake throughout England on the third day before the ides of August.”

“A. 1117. On the octave of St. John the Evangelist's Day there was a great earthquake in Lombardy, by which many monasteries, towers, and houses were thrown down, and the inhabitants suffered greatly. . . . And Gilbert, abbot of Westminster, died on the 8th before the ides of December ; and Farit, abbot of Abingdon, died on the 7th before the kalends of March.”

“A. 1119. On Michaelmas Eve there was a great earthquake in some parts of this land ; and it was felt most in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. The same year Pope Gelasius died on this side of the mountains, and he was buried at Cluny.”

Eclipses of the moon appear to have been closely observed by our Anglo-Norman ancestors. The following entries on this subject are to be found in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle :—

“A. 1106. One night, the Thursday before Easter, two moons appeared before day in the heavens, the one in the east, the other in the west, both full ; and the same day was the 14th of the moon.

“A. 1107. Many said that they saw various tokens in the moon this year, and his light waxing and waning contrary to nature.”

“A. 1110. On the fifth night of the month of May the moon

appeared shining brightly in the evening, and afterward his light waned by little and little, and early in the night he was so wholly gone that neither light, nor circle, nor anything at all of him was to be seen, and thus it continued till near day, and then he appeared shining full and bright. He was a fortnight old the same day."

"A. 1121. This year the moon was eclipsed on the night before the nones of April, being the fourteenth day of the moon."

The occurrence of extraordinary tides is occasionally recorded.

"A. 1099. This year, on St. Martin's Day, there was so very high a tide, and the damage was so great in consequence, that men remembered not the like to have ever happened before, and the same day was the first of the new moon. And Osmond, Bishop of Salisbury, died during Advent."

"A. 1114. This year there was so great an ebb of the tide in one day as no man remembered before, so that men went through the Thames, both riding and walking, east of London Bridge."

Accounts of storms, shipwrecks, earthquakes, and of famines and droughts, which are common alike to all periods of history, are duly recorded in the Chronicle, but a large infusion of the marvellous is instilled into these narratives. Thus, we are told that in the eleventh year of Henry II., on the 26th of January, "was so great an earthquake in Ely, Norfolke, and Suffolke, that it overthrew them that stood upon their feet, and made the bells to ring in the steeples."*

And that on Christmas Day, in the twenty-fourth year of the same reign, "in the territory of Darlington, in the bishoprick of Durham, the earth lifted itself up in the manner of an high tower, and so remained immoveable from morning till evening, and then fell with so horrible a noyse that it frightened the inhabitants thereabouts; and the earth swallowing it up, made there a deepe pit, which is seen at this day: for a testimony whereof Leyland saith he saw the pit there commonly called Hell-kettles."†

* Baker's Chronicle, Reign of Henry II., p. 79.

† *Ibid.*

Comets at this period excited both wonder and terror, and were generally regarded as prognostications of some great calamity.

"A. 1097. At Michaelmas, on the fourth before the nones of October, an uncommon star appeared, shining in the evening, and soon going down. The light which streamed from it seemed very long, shining towards the south-east, and it appeared after this manner nearly all the week. Many allowed that it was a comet."

"A. 1106. In the first week of Lent, on the evening of Friday, the fourteenth before the kalends of March, a strange star appeared. and it was seen awhile every evening for a long time afterwards. This star appeared in the south-west; it seemed small and dim, but the light that reamed from it was very bright, and like an exceedingly long beam shining to the north-east; and one evening it seemed as if a beam from over against the star darted directly into it. Some persons said that they observed more unknown stars at this time, but we do not write this as a certainty, because we saw them not ourselves."

"A. 1114. In the end of May, this year, a strange star, with a long light, was seen shining for many nights."

The occurrence of meteors, or falling stars, similar to what have been observed in our time, is thus recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 1095:—

"On the night of the feast of St. Ambrose, the second before the nones of April, there was seen all over the country a great multitude of stars falling from heaven, and during nearly the whole of the night; not one or two at a time, but so thickly that no man might number them."

Other prodigies, besides comets and eclipses, occasionally terrified the minds of the Anglo-Normans, and were generally regarded as calamitous omens, and were so recorded in the Chronicle referred to, which serves to afford us a vivid notion of the superstitions prevalent among the people at this period. Thus the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 1098, after recording the deaths of five eminent persons, proceeds to state that "in the summer of this year a spring of blood burst out at Finchamstead in Berkshire, according to

the declaration of many men of credit, who said they had seen it. . . . Before Michaelmas Day the heaven appeared as it were on fire almost all the night."

"A. 1100. At Pentecost, blood was observed gushing from the earth at a certain town of Berkshire, even as many asserted who declared that they had seen it. And after this, on the morrow after Lammas Day, King William was shot with an arrow by his own man, as he was hunting, and he was carried to Westminster and buried there."

In Baker's Chronicle the following passage is recorded concerning the death of King William the Second:—

"At Finchampstead in Berkshire, neare unto Abington, a spring cast up liquor for the space of fifteen dayes, in substance and colour like to blood. The night before the king was killed, a certain monk dreamed that he saw the king gnaw the image of Christ crucified with his teeth; and that as he was about to bite away the legges of the same image, Christ with His feete spurned him down to the ground; and that as he lay on the earth there came out of his mouth a flame of fire, with abundance of smoke."

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 1104 records that on the Tuesday after the first day of Pentecost, "at midday there appeared four circles of a white colour round the sun, one under the other, as if they had been painted. All who saw it wondered, because they never remembered such before."

Eclipses of the sun are recorded, and were considered to be connected with calamitous events that happened.

"A. 1135. This year, at Lammas, King Henry went over sea; and on the second day, as he lay asleep in the ship, the day was darkened universally, and the sun became as it were a moon three nights old with the stars shining round it at midday. Men greatly marvelled, and great fear fell on them, and they said that some great event should follow thereafter,—and so it was, for the same year the king died in Normandy, on the day after the feast of St. Andrew."

"A. 1140. In Lent, the sun and the day were darkened about noon, when men eat, so that they lighted candles to eat by. This was on the 13th before the kalends of April, and the people

were greatly astonished. After this, William, Archbishop of Canterbury, died."

The Chronicles furnish us with the following account of the burial of Henry I., which appears to have been the general mode of interment of persons of high rank at that period:—

"His bowels, braines, and eyes were buried at Roan, in Normandy, where he died: the rest of his body was stuffed with salt, wrapped in oxen hides, and brought over into England, and with honourable obsequies buried in the monastery of Reading, which himself had founded. His physitian that tooke out his braines, with the intolerable stinck soon after died."*

As regards the sports and amusements followed by the Anglo-Normans, hunting and hawking were in high estimation among them, and kings, ecclesiastics, and nobles pursued them with the greatest avidity and delight. Very severe laws, as mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle already quoted from, were enacted to preserve the royal game, and King Edward the Confessor received annually from his manor of Barton, near Gloucester, three thousand loaves of bread for the maintenance of his dogs. Some of the Norman sports, however, were of a more domestic and quiet character. Richard the First, while on his voyage to the Holy Land, used to play games of chess, and ten sorts of games with dice are mentioned by one author of the twelfth century.† In the Bayeux tapestry King Harold is represented on a journey with a hawk perched upon his wrist. After the Conquest, the common people in England were not allowed to keep hawks; to hunt with them was considered an amusement fit only for kings and nobles. Men of rank carried their falcons about with them not only on their journeys, but sometimes even took them into the field of battle. Stores of good hawks were also generally kept in the monasteries for the recreation of the monks. The ladies, too, were accustomed to follow hawking.‡

* Baker's Chronicle, Reign of Henry I., p. 60.

† Thompson's Illust. Great Britain, vol. ii., p. 281.

‡ Pictorial History of England, vol. i., p. 648.

The sports of the common people at this time were bull-baiting, cock-fighting, and horse-racing, which were particularly practised in London in the twelfth century; as well as sports on the Thames, of running at mark, or tilting, in boats with wooden spears. Skating and drawing each other along upon the ice were also practised in the winter season upon the frozen fields near London.*

The earliest notice of a theatrical entertainment in England belongs to the year 1100, when Geoffrey, abbot of St. Alban's, was author of a play of the Life of St. Catherine. The religious drama appears to have been first devised at Rome by St. Jerome, and to have consisted of portions from the Scriptures as substitutes for the ancient classical tragedies. They received the name of mysteries, from the sacred character of their subject, and are supposed to have been introduced into England by the pilgrims who travelled to the Holy Land. Another kind, which exhibited the history of a saint, were called miracles, and were commonly written and acted by ecclesiastics, in dresses belonging to the church. They were generally performed in or about sacred edifices, always in the afternoon, and were especially attended by females.†

There were also what were termed moralities, or serious reflections on human life in verse, which we are told, and which we can readily believe, were extremely dull, and were but seldom understood. Minstrels and jongleurs (as they were called) were also retained by the great; and at a grand wedding of a gay young prince in France, in the year 1237, some of them danced on ropes, and others rode on oxen dressed in scarlet, sounding their horns at the approach of every dish. In 1332 a company of men was ordered to be whipped through London, for spreading slanderous reports in alehouses. These are supposed to have been mummers, a species of dramatic performers, often of the lowest and most scurrilous kind, who always went about masked, were lawless and

* Thompson's *Illust. Great Britain*, vol. ii., p. 282.

† *Ibid.*

profligate, and were at length proscribed by a law made in the year 1511.*

The tournament was in full fashion during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and it was patronized by the sovereigns as an important military spectacle, though a very expensive one, and also not without danger to life and limb. One historian censures it on account of its danger to the virtue and reputation of the fair ladies who participated in it. The chase and other field sports still continued to engage the higher ranks of society. In 1363 a proclamation from King Edward II. recommended the people to apply themselves to archery instead of "spending their time in throwing stones, wood, or iron; in playing at hand-ball, foot-ball, or club-ball; in bull-baiting and cock-fighting, or in more useless and dishonest games."†

The wake was a festival held in honour of the Church's patron saint, beginning on the eve before the holiday, and was originally celebrated by the people coming to church with lighted tapers, and performing their devotions, *waking* the whole night. Singing, dancing, and playing on harps and pipes, also accompanied them.‡

The love of seeing strange out-of-the-way sights is very ancient in this country.§ Matthew Paris tells us of a monk who fell into a pit in running to see a whale; and the old English Chronicles are particular in stating that whenever a monstrous birth or strange fish appeared, it was as a matter of course exhibited to the king. In the fifteenth century a dwarf Turk, forty years old, was thought worthy of being shown to King Edward IV., when he told that "he had

* Thompson's Illust. Great Britain, vol. ii., p. 294.

† *Ibid.*, p. 293.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

§ "A strange fish! Were I in England now as once I was, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver. Here would this monster make a man,—any strange beast there makes a man. When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian."—*Tempest*, act ii., scene 2.

hadde chyl dren as hyghe and as lykely as the kynge hymselfe." *

The occurrence of prodigies, and appearance of strange unnatural sights, are of very frequent record in the chronicles of these times, and affords a lively notion of the credulity of the multitude in this period of ignorance.

In the year 1171 "there was seen at St. Osythes, in Essex, a dragon of marvellous bigness, which by moving burned houses, and the whole city of Canterbury, was the same yeare almost burnt." † Six years after this we are told that "a storme of blood rained in the Isle of Wight two houres together." ‡

"In the year 1180, near unto Orford, in Suffolk, certaine fishers took in their nets a fish having the shape of a man in all points, which fish was kept by Bartholomew de Granville in the castle of Orford six moneths or more. He spake not a word. All manner of meates he did gladly eate, but not greedily,—raw fish when he had pressed out the juyce. Oftentimes he was brought to church, but he never showed any sign of adoration. At length, being not well looked to, he stole to the sea, and never was seene after." §

It is also recorded that one year during the reign of King John, "fishes of strange shape were taken in England, armed with tabret and shields, and were like unto armed knightes, saving that they were greater in proportion. About Maide-stone, in Kent, a certaine monster was found stricken with the lightning, which monster had an head like an ape, a belly like a man, and all other parts farre differing from any other creature." || And that in the seventeenth year of the reign of King Henry III. "were seene five suns at one time together, after which followed so great a dearth that people were constrained to eate horse-flesh and barks of trees; and in London 20,000 were starved for want of foode. And though it may seem no

* Thompson's *Illust. Great Britain*, vol. ii., p. 295.

† Baker's *Chronicle*, Reign of Henry II., p. 79.

‡ *Ibid.* § *Ibid.*, p. 80.

|| *Ibid.*, Reign of John, p. 103.

fit place to tell it, yet here or nowhere it must be told, that in this king's time there was sent by the king of France the first elephant that ever was seen in England."*

It is a curious and interesting subject of remark, that most of the games of children in this country have remained unchanged for many ages back, and that they may in general be traced to a classical period for their origin.

In comparison with the Saxons, and especially with the Danes, the Normans were temperate and delicate in their meals when they first invaded England; but I am sorry to be obliged to record that they soon contracted some very bad habits in this respect, when they had become acquainted with our countrymen; and in a short time they not only equalled, but even exceeded them in the excesses in which they indulged. An author of those times blames the brave barons, when going to war, for having their horses laden with wine instead of weapons, luncheons instead of lances, spits instead of spears, and bottles instead of battle-axes. But the Anglo-Saxon custom of four meals a day was altered to two, and the prime minister of Henry I., who must have been very abstemiously disposed, used his endeavours to reduce them to one meal. Dinner, we are told, was at one time at three o'clock in the morning, and the supper at five in the afternoon. Occasionally the dishes were of great variety. William de Longchamp, Bishop of Ely, is said to have had at his table all the sorts of beasts that roam on the land, of fishes that swim in the water, and of birds that fly in the air. There were also many dishes of which the composition is now unknown. The most esteemed kind of bread was a sort of ginger bread, called peppered bread; but wastel bread and simnel cakes were part of the allowance of the king of Scotland when in England, whence it is concluded that they were made of the finest meal. The wine of this period is supposed to have been principally brought from France; though some sorts, like Rhenish, were also made in England. There were also in use, several sorts of other liquors, composed of honey,

* Baker's Chronicle, Reign of Henry III., p. 123.

spices, or the juice of mulberries. Cider, perry, and ale were drunk, moreover, at this time. Knives were only used at the greatest tables, and forks were not introduced into England until about the year 1614. In the household of the famous Guy, Earl of Warwick, six oxen were eaten for breakfast. The general hour of breakfast about this time with the nobility was seven. Dinner was served at nine or ten in the morning, and commonly lasted three hours. Supper followed at four, and collations at nine. A cook of Croyland Abbey is recorded with honour in the annals of that foundation, for having, at his own charge, provided the monks with almond milk on fish days.*

So greatly had the passion for feasting increased in England in the fourteenth century, that a severe law was made by Edward III. to restrain persons of certain ranks to banquets proportionable to their degree. Edward himself, however, by no means always set an example of moderation in this respect, and on the marriage of his son he gave an entertainment, at which there were thirty courses and the fragments of the table fed 1,000 persons.

The Anglo-Norman period of our history is said to have been characterized, on the whole, by a kind of gross hospitality and indiscriminate charity, which to a great extent made the poor English, whom their rules oppressed, in many instances overlook or think less of the tyranny by which they were borne down. In general, the great men of this time were composed of the most opposite qualities. They were very acute and penetrating, but grossly ignorant and easily imposed upon. They were very brave, but very cruel, very effeminate in their dress and manners, yet capable of undergoing the greatest fatigues. It is due, however, to them to state that they rendered all due respect, even to adoration, to the fair ladies of that rude age.†

The hall belonging to the mansion was the place where the great lord used to eat, where he saw all his servants and

* Thompson's *Illust. Great Britain*, vol. ii., pp. 297, 298, 299.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 284, 286.

tenants about him. He eat not in private except in time of sickness. When once he became a thing cooped up, says Selden, all his greatness was spoiled; nay, the king himself used to eat in the hall, and his lords sat with him, and then he understood men.*

At this period of our history there were no servants' halls to great houses. The whole family in a castle or mansion dined together in the great hall. A large salt-cellar was placed in the middle of the table to make a division between the upper end, where the lord sat with his guests, and that part which was occupied by the menial servants.†

Probably no conquest of any country ever produced more important domestic and social changes than those which were occasioned by that of William the Norman over this nation. The oppressions and calamities that immediately followed were no doubt grievous, but the eventual benefit that resulted from them far more than compensated for these evils. Civilization was immensely advanced by the conquest; and the domestic condition of this country was, in the end, greatly improved. The power of the nation was also largely increased, the best proof of which is that it has never since been conquered. In the case, indeed, both of individuals and of nations, how often does it happen that events, which were at the time regarded as dire calamities, prove in the issue to be the occasion of prosperity, both great and permanent!

A curious and important question—interesting alike to the ethnologist, the historian, and the statesman—might be raised as to the general effect upon different nations, and the precise extent of the influence exercised as to their general character, their pursuits, and their career in the course of civilization, which has been produced by the several and successive invasions that they have experienced, the consequent infusion of new blood, and the introduction of new ideas, new customs, new codes of laws, and new military and commercial systems.

* Selden's "Table Talk."

† Markham's History of France, p. 73.

As to the general influence of invasions upon a conquered country, much must of course depend on the character of the invaders, especially on their being of a race and endowments superior to those of the invaded, and which may generally be presumed from the success of their invasion.

Islands like ours are less liable to be extensively affected by invasion than nations which form a portion of the Continent, where the invaders march in by wholesale instead of coming in small bands by means of boats. France, Germany, Italy, and most of the nations on the Continent have been subjected to invasion, and have, I believe, each been more influenced and more changed by them than has this country. As regards more especially the subsequent peopling of the land, women as well as men are much more easily introduced into a continental country than into one which is insular, by means of which the blood of the nation would become more extensively changed, both parents being of the stock of the invaders.

The best proof that the mass of the nation in this country was unchanged by the Norman conquest as regards its blood, is that the old national language was in the main retained, and the Norman tongue was but little generally, and not at all permanently adopted, although every effort was made by the conquering party to compel its use. It was made imperative in law proceedings, and became the language of the court. But the mass of the population never adopted it, although a few French terms crept into our language of which the traces remain. In time even the upper ranks abandoned it. We may further infer from all this that it was in the upper ranks chiefly that new blood was infused, and that the middle and lower ranks experienced but little change.

Nevertheless, be all this as it may, it cannot be doubted that the Norman conquest was productive of vast influences in various ways, some of which have not ceased to be felt even at the present remote period; new laws and customs, many of them not yet obsolete, were introduced; the martial power of the kingdom was much increased, its commerce was

extended, and its progress in civilization received a considerable impetus. The character of the people, however, was not so much changed as modified and influenced in some particular respects. The invaders who settled here, and who exercised considerable authority over the people, constituted but a very small body as compared with the entire population of the country. Notwithstanding, therefore, the successive invasions of this nation by the Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, the race is in all probability substantially the same as it was when Cæsar landed here. The race, like the language, is of a mixed character—and great authorities tell us that pure races never effect any great achievements,—but it is still, after all, the race of Britons by which this island continues to be peopled.*

* Thompson's *Illust. Great Britain*, vol. ii. p. 296. Diagrams illustrative of this and his preceding papers have been prepared by Dr. Harris, and are deposited by him in the Society's Library.—ED.