# *The Anarchy of Stephen's Reign*

IT is impossible to speak too highly of the additions which Mr. Round and Mr. Howlett have made to our knowledge of the reign of Stephen. They are and will long remain our best guides through this tangled and difficult period of English history. Their knowledge of the materials, both printed and unprinted, is unique, and it would take a bold man to challenge the facts which they have extracted from the most recondite sources, or their estimates of the documents on which they rely. But they are perhaps open to one criticism, which relates rather to their manner of exposition than to the actual substance of what they say. They have taken infinite pains to show how many exceptions and limitations must be admitted before the generalisations of their predecessors can be allowed to stand; and in stating their case they have presumed the existence of more knowledge in the minds of their readers than they are likely to possess. They assume the evidence for the older views to be familiar and do not trouble themselves to restate it. Hence they have not unfrequently been taken to affirm that the exceptions which they prove are really typical instances; that the reign of Stephen was not one of anarchy tempered by efforts to govern, but rather of organised government which broke down for short periods in particular localities. Indeed, it is not going too far to say that Mr. Howlett, in one of his prefaces,[1] is continually hovering on the verge of this paradox, while Mr. Round, in his book on *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, seems inclined to accept the suggestions of Mr. Howlett as proved.[2] Mr. Howlett relies upon the evidence of charters to prove that Stephen maintained the machinery of central government in its entirety; that he always had a chancery, an exchequer, and a royal law court, all three in working order; that he had sheriffs not only in the south and midlands but even as far north as Yorkshire, and that the jurisdiction of his law court extended as far as the power of his sheriffs. Mr. Round follows this lead by limiting the

[1] The preface to the third volume of the *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I.*

[2] *G. de Mandeville*, p. 220.

authority of one of the best-known descriptions of the anarchy, as we shall point out further on.

In weighing the evidence for and against this optimistic view of Stephen's reign we shall not scruple to appeal to the chroniclers so far as they were contemporary with the events which they describe; for the information supplied by the charters, which Mr. Round and Mr. Howlett have collected so industriously and interpreted with so much skill, is fragmentary, and there is quite as much risk in generalising confidently on this basis as there is in accepting the ready-made generalisations of the English Chronicle or the *Gesta Stephani*. It is true that the broad and sweeping statements of any historical writer must be received with caution. It is probable that he has framed a hasty induction from observations made within a restricted area and under the influence of a bias, political or religious. But where he makes specific statements respecting transactions about which he had the opportunity of collecting information, and where there is no clear reason for suspecting him of carelessness or mendacity, we are bound to accept what he says until the contrary is proved. As a matter of fact the discrepancy between the chronicles and the charters relating to this reign has been exaggerated. The chronicles have not always been used with sufficient care, and one or two highly coloured and declamatory passages have been accepted without reservation as conveying a correct picture of the period. On the other hand the references to law courts, officials, and fiscal institutions which are to be found in a few of the charters of the period have been interpreted as proving not merely that some attempt was made to govern on the old lines, but that the attempt was successful and continuous.

The situation between the years 1138 and 1148 appears to have been as follows. There were two sovereigns in England, of whom each was recognised and generally obeyed in a small group of shires. The empress, or rather her protector, the earl of Gloucester, held sway over a belt of territory in the west which varied greatly in extent from time to time, but of which the nucleus was formed by Somerset, Gloucestershire, the modern Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, and occasionally Worcestershire. Stephen ruled over a district which was roughly bounded, on the west by the Hampshire Avon and the Cotswolds, on the north and north-east by the Welland, the fens in the lower valley of the Ouse, and the river Waveney. Except at the time of his captivity his power was generally established within these limits, and towards the end of the reign it extended further than this; he became the master of Worcestershire, and commanded the support of a powerful party in Yorkshire; and he gradually mastered the castles of his opponents in Wilts and Dorset and the Cotswolds. But to the very end of

the reign the territories of the rival factions interlaced and overlapped. In Devonshire the stronghold of Barnstaple held out for Stephen at a time when all the rest of the shire was for the empress (1142–3),[3] and the king never lost all hold upon the Severn valley; his opponents on their side kept Wallingford to the very last and from time to time acquired temporary possession of castles, such as Bedford and Ipswich, lying even further to the east. This being the case, and the castellan of every castle in England being a potential traitor to the cause which he had momentarily embraced, it is clear that a strict or stable government was impossible on either side. We can see from the charters of Stephen that he did his best to maintain the old forms of administration and justice. He had his sheriffs, who collected royal dues when they could, and paid their receipts into the exchequer when they were afraid to keep them in their own pockets. His Curia did justice, in the intervals of marches and sieges, for those suitors who could be induced to attend it.[4] On the other side it is admitted by the author of the *Gesta Stephani* that Robert of Gloucester endeavoured to govern the west with some show of legality.[5] But Stephen was weak and unreflecting, Robert needy and unscrupulous as to the means by which he replenished his funds and maintained his military strength. Hence their good intentions were rarely translated into practice, and the rulers by whom the people were actually governed were the lords of the castles, new and old, with which every shire in England bristled.

The English Chronicle presents us with a lurid picture of the sufferings which 'the castle men' inflicted on their defenceless neighbours. The passage is so well known that we need not quote it here. But it requires to be noticed because its value has been questioned by Mr. Round. He suggests that the chronicler has in mind the excesses committed in the fen country by the followers of Geoffrey de Mandeville in the years 1143 and 1144; and since the area affected by Mandeville's rebellion was a narrow one, and the rebellion itself lasted for less than a year, we are to infer that the calamities of the reign have been altogether overestimated. Now it may be admitted that disturbers of the peace, like Mandeville, were comparatively rare within the zone of Stephen's influence, and that some few counties—Kent and Sussex, for example—suffered little from the disorders of the reign. But in the face of such circumstantial accounts as that given in the *Historia Eliensis* it is impossible to deny that Geoffrey de Mandeville reduced the country which was his theatre of operations to a condition of unspeakable misery, and we have good reason for believing that other parts of Stephen's territory suffered in almost equal measure with the fen country.

[3] *Gesta*, p. 97. [4] Howlett, *Chronicles*, &c., vol. iii. pp. xxvi ff. [5] *Gesta*, p. 96.

To begin with the evidence of the chronicles. We learn from the *Gesta Stephani* and from William of Malmesbury that the country lying between Winchester and Bristol was for several years the scene of perpetual war. In the Flemish adventurer Robert Fitz Hubert, whose attempt to make Devizes the centre of a feudal principality is described in the *Historia Novella*,[6] we have an exact counterpart to Geoffrey de Mandeville. William of Malmesbury, as a near neighbour of Devizes, may be trusted for the specific facts which he gives about the misdeeds of Robert Fitz Hubert; and, although we might suspect a Wiltshire writer of exaggeration in regard to transactions which so nearly affected his own neighbourhood, it might be remembered that Fitz Hubert attracted the particular attention of the Worcester annalist,[7] who lived at a sufficient distance from Devizes to see the episode in its true perspective. Nor was Robert Fitz Hubert a unique phenomenon in the western counties. The history of the Thames valley, from the moment when Wallingford declared for the empress in 1139 down to the time when final peace was made between her son and Stephen, is a monotonous record of castle-building and sieges, of raids and counter-raids, in all of which the non-combatants were the chief sufferers. The strong terms in which the doings of two successive castellans of Cricklade, William of Dover and Philip of Gloucester, are described in the *Gesta Stephani* deserve the more credence because the author is inclined to say what good he can of men who afterwards distinguished themselves in the second crusade.[8] Their raids reached as far as Oxford, and beyond Oxford the country was at the mercy of their allies in Wallingford. When, finally, we have allowed for the effects of the military operations which took place round London and Winchester in the year 1141, we are forced to conclude that nearly every part of Stephen's country suffered severely at one time or another. In estimating the damage done by a siege or the march of a hostile army in the twelfth century we must remember that the methods of warfare then in vogue were peculiarly destructive. Fixed battles were extremely rare. The supporters both of the king and of the empress were unwilling to risk a decisive encounter; it was the exception for either side to concentrate its forces for any length of time; and, when armies met in the open, the side which was numerically weaker usually retreated to its nearest stronghold. Hence the war resolved itself into a succession of sieges, and as the defensive side of military engineering had reached a high point of perfection, while mines, engines, and other means of assault were defective, a siege usually degenerated into a blockade. If the blockade proved a long process the attacking army moved off, leaving a garrison in one or more counter-forts. During the siege

[6] §§ 470, 485 (R. S.) [7] Contin. Flor. Wig. 1140. [8] *Gesta*, pp. 109, 113.

the attacking army lived by plunder, and usually, before it withdrew, destroyed all the means of subsistence which were still to be found in the neighbourhood. The garrisons both of the castles and of the counter-forts maintained themselves by forays, in which they ranged further and further afield. Consequently every castle which had been the object of attack stood at the centre of a circle of desolated country.

We now take the evidence of the first extant pipe roll of Henry II[9] so far as concerns Stephen's sphere of influence. The figures for the danegeld in each shire give a test by which to compare the sufferings of the various shires. Of course it must be remembered that the devastations from which they had suffered were committed at rather different periods, and that the rate of recovery must have varied in different instances. Thus Surrey enjoyed a period of uninterrupted peace after the year 1141; the worst period for Cambridge

| Shires and Boroughs | Danegeld and *Donum* due | *In thesauro* | *In perdonis* | *Et debet* | *In waste* | Proportion of Waste to Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | |
| Cambridgeshire | 114 14 9 | 38 8 0 | 34 19 6 | 7 9 3 | 34 3 0 | One-third |
| Cambridge | 12 0 0 | 5 15 0 | 0 5 0 | *Nil* | 6 0 0 | One-half |
| Huntingdonshire | 70 5 0 | 35 7 6 | 19 8 0 | 1 9 0 | 14 0 6 | One-fifth |
| Huntingdon | 8 0 0 | 4 0 0 | *Nil* | *Nil* | 4 0 0 | One-half |
| Oxfordshire | 249 6 5 | 44 6 1 | 103 4 4 | 5 13 2 | 96 2 10 | About $\frac{2}{5}$ |
| Oxford | 20 0 0 | 11 16 8 | 1 10 0 | *Nil* | 6 13 4 | Above $\frac{1}{3}$ |
| Bucks & Beds | 316 6 8 | 118 8 5 | 81 4 6 | 7 19 6 | 107 14 3 | Over $\frac{1}{3}$ |
| Berks | 205 11 4 | 77 6 0 | 88 0 0 | 12 8 9 | 77 16 7 | Over $\frac{1}{3}$ |
| Wilts | 389 18 0 | 199 10 5 | 80 18 1 | 9 7 9 | 99 16 9 | About $\frac{1}{4}$ |
| Essex | 286 8 0 | 98 6 0 | 76 18 0 | *Nil* | 61 4 0 | About $\frac{1}{4}$ |
| Herts | 110 1 3 | 45 12 7 | 29 11 4 | 5 0 0 | 29 17 4 | Nearly $\frac{3}{11}$ |
| Hertford | 5 0 0 | 2 0 0 | *Nil* | *Nil* | 3 0 0 | Three-fifths |
| Surrey | 184 16 0 | 105 3 2 | 37 6 6 | 11 13 7 | 30 12 9 | Nearly $\frac{1}{6}$ |
| Guildford | 5 0 0 | 3 5 0 | *Nil* | 1 15 0 | *Nil* | No waste |
| Southwark | 5 0 0 | 3 4 0 | *Nil* | 1 16 0 | *Nil* | No waste |
| Middlesex | 85 0 6 | 39 7 6 | 35 13 0 | *Nil* | 10 0 0 | Nearly $\frac{1}{8}$ |
| London | 120 5 10 | 55 10 6 *Et in soltis* 30 0 0 | 14 15 4 | *Nil* | 20 10 0 | One-sixth |
| Kent | 105 16 10 | 88 15 0 | 16 7 3 | 0 6 7 | 0 8 0 | Nearly $\frac{1}{170}$ |
| Canterbury | 13 6 8 | 13 2 8 | 0 4 0 | *Nil* | *Nil* | No waste |
| Rochester | 10 0 0 | 5 0 0 *In soltis* 1 13 4 | *Nil* | *Nil* | 3 6 8 | One-third |
| Sussex | 216 10 6 | 157 12 4 | 33 7 0 | 16 19 2 | 9 2 0 | Nearly $\frac{1}{15}$ |

[9] Ed. Hunter, 1844.

and Huntingdon ended with the death of Geoffrey de Mandeville in 1144; but Suffolk and the counties round Wallingford were exposed to marauders until the last year of Stephen's reign. Again, London, Cambridge, and other urban centres may reasonably be expected to show fewer signs of impoverishment than rural districts; for a drain on mercantile capital is repaired more quickly than one upon the stock of the agriculturist. Subject to these reservations our figures at least give us the means of a rough comparison. We place at the head of the list the figures for Cambridge and Huntingdon, in order that these may serve as standard examples of counties which had been roughly handled; then the remaining series in descending order, those which had been the chief sufferers standing first: the list ends with Kent and Sussex, which had almost escaped from the consequences of the anarchy. Boroughs paying *auxilium* or *donum* are added to the list, under the counties in which they occur, since this contribution was in their case the equivalent for danegeld. Hampshire is omitted because of the lacunae in that part of the roll; so too is Suffolk, because the entry respecting the danegeld of this shire is so worded as to leave it doubtful whether there had or had not been a remission for waste. The only Suffolk entry which suggests extensive waste is the large sum of 74*l.* 18*s.* 10*d.* for restocking royal manors. With these words of explanation we may leave the reader to judge for himself how far the sufferings of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire were exceptional. So far as the figures go the four shires of Oxford, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Bedfordshire seem to have suffered as much as Wiltshire, and almost as much as the two which came first in our list. We think that with these figures before us it is legitimate to accept as substantially true the picture which the clerk of Winchester who wrote the *Gesta Stephani* has given of the debatable land in the Thames valley and the south-western shires at the moment when the war was most fiercely waged on either side—that is to say, in the summer of 1143:

> With some men the love of country was turned to loathing and bitterness, and they preferred to migrate to distant regions. Others, in the hope of protection, built lowly huts of wattle-work round about the churches, and so passed their lives in fear and anguish. Some for want of victuals fed upon strange and forbidden meats, the flesh of dogs and horses; others relieved their hunger by devouring unwashed and uncooked herbs and roots. In all the shires a part of the inhabitants wasted away and died in herds from the stress of famine, while others, with their wives and children, went dismally into a self-inflicted exile. You might behold villages of famous names standing empty because the country people, male and female, young and old, had left them; fields whitened with the harvest as the year verged upon autumn, but the cultivators had perished by famine and the ensuing pestilence.[10]

[10] *Gesta*, p. 99.

Though the expression *ubique provinciarum* sounds as though the author intended to give a picture of England at large, the words with which he introduces his description make it clear that he really has in mind the districts with which he was most familiar, the main theatres of the war between Stephen and the earl of Gloucester.

Passing from the south-eastern shires, where Stephen's influence was predominant, let us see how the territory of the empress compares with that of her rival. Much might be said about the hard lot of the English and Flemish settlers in South Wales, whom both Stephen and the empress left to fight their own battles as best they might. From the beginning of Stephen's reign the southern marches were a scene of confusion. In 1136 an army composed of 'all the French from the Severn to St. David's' was utterly defeated by the Welsh in the neighbourhood of Cardigan Castle. John of Worcester states that, 'without reckoning the men who were carried off into captivity, there remained 10,000 women whose husbands, with numberless children, were either drowned or burned or put to the sword.'[11] The result of the battle is described, no doubt with rhetorical exaggeration, in the *Gesta Stephani*:[12] *Totam provinciam, quae usque ad xxxvi miliaria distenditur, praedando pervagantes, nihil residui in ea reliquerunt.* And in the year 1137 there was another inroad equally destructive, in which Carmarthen and Ros were devastated.[13] Outside Glamorgan there can have been no part of South Wales which was safe for a man of English blood. And, although about the year 1145 the tide was turned by Gilbert de Clare, who rebuilt Carmarthen and some others of the ruined castles, there was another outbreak in the year 1147, which undid the greater part of his work.[14] Naturally enough the tide of migration turned, now that life and property had ceased to be secure; between 1139 and 1148, as we learn from one of Gilbert Foliot's letters,[15] the English settlers in Wales had begun to think of abandoning their adopted land. But it is more important to gauge the situation in the shires on the English side of the border.

Our best source of information for the state of these shires before 1142 is John of Worcester, the continuator of Florence. His annals appear to have been written between the years 1139 and 1143; for he refers under the year 1134 to Henry of Winchester, 'who is now but was not at that time legate of the Roman see,' and an entry describing the sack of Worcester in 1139 enables us to say that he had already in that year begun to write. 'These things,' he says, 'are done on the first day of a winter which will

[11] *Annales Cambriae*; Cont. Flor. Wig.
[12] *Annales Cambriae*; *Annales de Margan.*
[13] *Gesta*, p. 12.
[14] *Ann. Cambriae.*
[15] Migne, *P. L.* cxc. col. 767.

doubtless be very severe for the wretched sufferers.' We have, therefore, good reason for accepting his account of West-country affairs in this reign. It is plain from what he tells us that Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, and Herefordshire suffered almost equally from both parties in the early stages of the struggle. In 1138 Hereford was burned by the men of the empress. A little later the king marched into the neighbourhood of Bristol, and harried all the manors belonging to the earl of Gloucester; then turning northwards in the direction of Dudley he treated the country round that castle in the same way. Though he withdrew in a short time, he left garrisons behind him in several castles, and it is a royalist chronicler who informs us that these exercised an unheard-of tyranny over the common people.[16] Their opponents were not behindhand in following the example. Philip Gay, the castellan of Bristol, earned an unenviable notoriety as the first to make use of torture in dealing with his prisoners. He applied 'torments worthy of Decius and Nero' to those citizens of Bristol who declined to recognise the empress as their sovereign. He it was who began the practice of kidnapping non-combatants and holding them to ransom. His plan of operations is described in the *Gesta Stephani*. His men sallied out into the highways, often in disguise, and mixed in public gatherings until they had found a suitable and unsuspecting prey. The victim was then carried off by force to Bristol with his eyes blindfolded and a gag in his mouth; when once in the castle he was tortured or starved into paying down his last farthing in ransom. In the neighbourhood of Bristol such a panic was created by these proceedings that whoever saw a stranger approaching him on the high-road took to the woods or any other convenient hiding-place until he was sure that the coast was clear. The garrison of Gloucester were hardly less formidable. In 1139 they sacked Worcester, and, not content with ordinary plunder, carried off all the captives on whom they could lay their hands, chaining them in couples and driving them like beasts to imprisonment in Gloucester; those were fortunate who could afford to pay a ransom. In the following year Winchcomb was attacked in the same way; and although the magnanimity of Miles of Gloucester is specially praised on this occasion, because he declined to take captives and spared the abbey, still the town was thoroughly sacked. The generous earl declared, on his departure, that he had *scarcely ever* made such another conflagration, either in Normandy or England.[17] No doubt matters were a little better in and after the year 1143, when the earl of Gloucester began to restore law and order within

[16] *Gesta*, p. 60.

[17] *Ibid.* p. 40. For Winchcomb compare the statements of its *Landboc* (ed. Royce), i. 65, 83.

his sister's territory. From that time to his death the garrisons of the empress may have been content to oppress the lands and subjects of the king. But the small district controlled by the empress was heavily burdened to maintain her military strength. The common people were incessantly called upon to render forced service in the building of her castles, or to furnish the infantry for her decreasing armies.

How little of real government there was in the west may be inferred, first from the success of Stephen's raid on Worcester in 1150, and secondly from two documents connected with the monastery of Gloucester. In the correspondence of Gilbert Foliot there is a letter, written while he was abbot of this house (1138–1149), which shows that the house of Gloucester could not protect its most important friends. Gilbert Foliot had an uncle, William Chesney, who was one of Stephen's stoutest supporters; we find the nephew being blackmailed by the uncle and obliged to submit, with a bad grace, as may be imagined. 'We suppose,' writes Gilbert, 'that your pressing necessities prevent you from drawing a distinction between your friends and other persons;' and he forwards fifteen marks with a tart request that William Chesney will be contented with that sum, and will reflect upon his sins.[18] William Chesney was a man of mark, and Gloucester Abbey possessed outlying estates in dangerous proximity to royal strongholds. But we find that Gilbert Foliot was obliged to bribe disturbers of the peace who were far more obscure than his peccant uncle. In the *Gloucester Cartulary* there is registered an agreement between Foliot and three relatives of a deceased monk, by which the abbot surrenders to them all the lands of their kinsman in Llancarvan and Pennant on condition of receiving fealty and a guarantee of 'lasting peace,' so far as they are concerned, for the dependents of the abbey.[19] Our second document belongs to the last six years of Stephen's reign, a period which Mr. Howlett describes as one of practically unbroken peace. We may admit that the military operations of that year were insignificant, but can we say that peace prevails when it is necessary for monks and their tenants to obtain a special safe-conduct from the king? Yet this is a precaution which Gilbert Foliot's successor at Gloucester thought expedient, if not absolutely needful. The safe-conduct, dating from the years 1148–1154, is printed in the *Cartulary*.[20]

[18] Migne, cxc. col. 783. The letter was probably written before 1146; Mr. Howlett (*Chronicles*, &c., vol. iii. p. l) shows that William Chesney was sheriff in Norfolk during the years 1146–9.

[19] *Gloucester Cartul.* ii. 138.

[20] *Op. cit.* ii. 70. 'Stephanus rex, &c. Sciatis quod Hamelinus abbas Gloucestriae et omnia sua sunt in meo salvo conductu, et in mea firma pace: quare volo et praecipio quod ipse et omnia sua et omnes sui habeant salvum ire et stare et redire per totam pacem meam.'

On the whole, therefore, we should not expect to find that the territory of the empress was, in 1156, left much more prosperous than the most unfortunate of Stephen's shires. And we may now bring together the evidence respecting the west which is to be found in the pipe roll for that year. In this case we may neglect the boroughs; for no waste is recorded in their case, if we except the unfortunate Winchcomb, which had been sacked thrice within the years 1140–1153; once by Miles of Gloucester, as related above, then again by Stephen in 1146, and again by Henry in 1153.[21] Of 5*l.* due as *auxilium* in 1156 Winchcomb could only pay 12*s.* But Hereford, so far as the information of the pipe roll goes, appears to have recovered completely from its disasters in the early course of the war; the same is true of Worcester, which had been sacked as recently as 1150; and Gloucester and Bristol had never been taken. The towns of the west had therefore some reason to be grateful to their rulers. It is otherwise with the open country.

| Shire | Danegeld due | *In thesauro* | *In perdonis* | *Et debet* | Waste | Proportion of Waste to Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | |
| Somerset . | 277 10 4 | 179 5 10 | 42 7 6 | 1 12 0 | 54 5 0 | Nearly $\frac{1}{5}$ |
| Gloucester . | 184 1 6 | 107 18 0 | 16 10 0 | 10 15 0 | 59 8 6 | Nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ |
| Hereford. . | 93 15 6 | 72 15 6 | 1 16 6 | *Nil* | 19 3 6 | Over $\frac{1}{5}$ |
| Worcester . | 102 5 9 | 71 2 0 | 8 9 6 | *Nil* | 27 14 3 | Over $\frac{1}{4}$ |

The condition of the midland shires, which were not as a rule under the direct government of either faction, deserves to be considered, because here perhaps more than in any other part of England we may expect to find the normal effects of feudal government. They were held in large part by Robert Beaumont, earl of Leicester, by his brother, Waleran of Mellent, by Simon of Senlis, earl of Northampton, who was brother-in-law to Robert Beaumont, and by Roger, earl of Warwick, who was brother-in-law to Waleran. Their political sympathies were of various shades. Robert Beaumont and Simon of Senlis were faithful to Stephen; Waleran of Mellent was at first on the same side, but deserted after the battle of Lincoln; Roger of Warwick was a firm adherent of the empress. But the policy of all alike seems to have been directed to keeping the war out of their dominions. The occasions on which battles were fought or sieges conducted within their sphere of influence are comparatively rare. The magnates of the midlands appear to have been granted or to have usurped the rights of royal justiciars and to have used the powers thus obtained for the maintenance of the peace.[22] It is therefore interesting to find that their pacific intentions failed to save their territories from devastations

[21] Howlett's note to R. de Monte, p. 174, and Ramsay, *Foundations of England*, ii. 449.

[22] See Howlett, *Chronicles*, &c., iii. 39 ff.

which in some cases exceed those recorded in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. The following table for the midland shires is compiled, like those already given, from the pipe roll of the year 2 Hen. II. The names of boroughs are omitted, because the only record of waste in connexion with any of them is that for the two boroughs of Nottingham and Derby. Their joint *auxilium* is reduced from 15*l.* to 7*l.* 10*s.*, presumably because Nottingham had not yet recovered from the raid of 1140 and the fire of 1153. The names of the shires are given according to degree of waste, in descending order.

| Shire | Danegeld due | *In thesauro* | *In perdonis* | *Et debet* | Waste | Proportion of Waste to Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | |
| Warwick. . | 128 12 6 | 82 4 6 | 15 17 0 | *Nil* | 80 11 0 | Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ |
| Notts and Derby . | 112 1 11 | 38 5 5 | 15 5 0 | *Nil* | 58 11 6 | Over $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Leicester . | 99 19 11 | 25 7 6 | 22 8 3 | 0 16 0 | 51 8 2 | Over $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Northampton | 119 10 9 | 55 0 0 | 25 18 8 | 0 5 0 | 38 12 1 | Nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ |
| Stafford . . | 44 1 0 | 25 5 6 | 10 0 6 | 0 7 0 | 8 8 0 | Nearly $\frac{1}{5}$ |

In view of these figures we think that the optimistic language used by Mr. Howlett about the condition of the midlands in this period should be considerably modified. So far as they are concerned the chronicles appear to have underrated the distress of the reign. The history of the midlands between 1139 and 1154, as told in their pages, may be compressed into a few sentences. Nottingham was burned twice in this period—in 1140 by the earl of Gloucester, in 1153 by the men of William Peverel.[23] In 1141 the army of the earl of Gloucester marched across England to the relief of Lincoln. It passed, apparently, through Warwickshire and Leicestershire,[24] and may have done considerable damage on the way. In 1147 the earl of Chester besieged Coventry, and Stephen retaliated by taking some of his castles, which probably lay in the midlands.[25] And in 1153 Stamford was besieged by Henry of Anjou.[26] From the terms in which Henry of Huntingdon notes the death of Earl Simon of Senlis it may be that his hand lay heavily upon his subjects in Northamptonshire; we are told that Simon was *plenus omnium quae non licebant, omnium quae non decebant.*[27] We know also that Roger Clinton, the bishop of Lichfield, acquired for himself an evil reputation in the worst days of the anarchy, about 1143, as one of those prelates who, while they professed to take up arms only in defence of ecclesiastical property, were really more unmerciful to their neighbours than any professional evildoers.[28] All this we hear; but the chroniclers have no sensational stories of prolonged oppression in the midlands. The sufferings of

[23] Cont. Flor. Wig.; H. Hunt, p. 288.
[24] *Gesta*, p. 126.
[25] H. Hunt. *l.c.*
[26] Miss Norgate, *Angevin Kings*, i. 316.
[27] R. de Monte, p. 174; H. Hunt. p. 288.
[28] *Gesta*, p. 101.

these shires passed without much remark, and yet, as we see from the pipe roll figures, they suffered in the long run as much as the one or two districts in the east or west which we are asked to consider as rare exceptions. We must infer that, even where there was no startling oppression, the tyranny of the 'castle men' and apprehension of hostile armies had paralysed industry.

The next pipe roll to that already cited in which we get figures for a new danegeld is that of the eighth year of Henry II; and we are struck at once by the fact that the item of 'waste' has practically disappeared. We also find that boroughs like Nottingham and Huntingdon have sufficiently recovered from the effects of the civil war to pay their full *auxilium*. Six years of ordered government had sufficed to restore prosperity. Bearing this in mind, if we look back at the figures for waste as they stood in the second year of King Henry, we are forced to one of two conclusions. Either the assertion that there were virtually peace and settled government in England from 1148 onwards is mistaken, or else the damage done in the previous period must have been so enormous as to justify the most strongly worded generalisations of the chroniclers.

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