

discovered lands. It was safer, as Boniface VIII had done in the bull 'Unam Sanctam,' to base the papal domination on divine authority than on the grant of an earthly potentate.

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KING STEPHEN AND THE EARL OF CHESTER.

THE attitude of Randulf, earl of Chester, in the great struggle under Stephen would seem to have never been made the subject of systematic study. Dr. Stubbs truly says that 'the earl of Chester, although whenever he prevailed on himself to act he took part against Stephen, fought rather on his own account than on Matilda's.'<sup>1</sup> His policy could not be expressed more tersely or more accurately. But, as I have urged in my 'Geoffrey de Mandeville,' the great feudal magnates displayed a method in their madness; they took advantage, when unscrupulous, of the anarchy to sell their support in turn to the two contending factions, in the well-grounded hope that they would outbid each other. Of this policy Geoffrey himself affords the most perfect illustration; but the devious career of the earl of Chester has much in common with his own. Nor will it be unprofitable to attempt some explanation of the tangled skein presented through the whole reign of Stephen by the actions of a man who, as the 'Gesta' reminds us, held for a time beneath his sway about a third of the realm. For Randulf's power, it is essential to remember, was by no means limited, as some might suppose, to his own earldom of Chester. In Lincolnshire he inherited the great fiefs of his own father, Earl Randulf, and of the latter's kinsman and predecessor Earl Richard. In the same county a great estate had been held by his father in right of his wife, and was now held by his half-brother and close ally William de Roumare, her son. In the north Carlisle, with its honour, which his father had formerly held, was a special object of his desire. The real springs of his policy are found in Carlisle and Lincoln. Stephen's concession of the former, at the very beginning of his reign, to the Scottish king and his son threw the earl into discontent, while the geographical disposition of his strength between Cheshire and Lincolnshire set him, as it were, *à cheval* across England, and made it the special object of his ambition to reign at Lincoln as he reigned at Chester, and unite these strongholds by a string of fortresses securing his dominion from sea to sea. It was jealousy of Henry the Scottish prince that made Randulf withdraw from court in the spring of 1136, and, according to John of Hexham, it was his failure to waylay Henry and his wife, on their way back from Stephen's court in 1140, that led him, in despair, to surprise and seize Lincoln castle at the close of

<sup>1</sup> *Constitutional History* (1874), i. 329

the year.<sup>2</sup> It is necessary to remember the relative wealth and importance, at that period, of Lincoln, in order to understand the importance attached by the king to its recovery and by Randulf to its retention.

The real *crux* is the elaborate charter of which an abstract is preserved among the duchy of Lancaster records, and englished in Dugdale's 'Baronage' (i. 39). As neither the place at which it was granted nor the names of its witnesses are preserved, there is no certain clue to its date, on which, however, much depends. The one thing that is quite clear is that Stephen wore his crown at Lincoln, Christmas 1146, having forced the earl that year to surrender the castle and city by seizing him, somewhat treacherously, at Northampton, and making the surrender of his castles the price of his liberation.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Howlett implies that the charter I have spoken of, by which Lincoln *inter alia* was given to the earl, was of earlier date than this, and that it accounts for Randulf, when arrested, being in possession of the castle.<sup>4</sup> My own view, on the contrary, is that Randulf had held Lincoln ever since he surprised the castle at the close of 1140. I can find no evidence of his losing possession within that period; and he was certainly in possession in 1144, when Stephen tried in vain to recapture the city.<sup>5</sup>

What happened, I believe, was this. After Stephen's re-coronation, Christmas 1141, at Canterbury, his resolve to go north to York compelled him to pass through the spheres of influence of the earl of Chester and his half-brother the earl of Lincoln. He was anxious not only to secure his communications, but also to win over, or at least to neutralise, now that he was once more on the throne, these two magnates. If he had tried to enforce their submission, or had insisted on the surrender of Lincoln, he would only have thrown them into the arms of the empress, which is precisely what he wished to avoid. On the other hand, her fortunes for the moment seemed at so low an ebb that the two earls would be glad to temporise and meet Stephen's overtures halfway. I assign, therefore, in my 'Geoffrey de Mandeville' (p. 159), to this date—the beginning of 1142—the interesting Stamford charter of Stephen by which he granted to the earl of Lincoln the great manor of Kirton-in-Lindsey, held, in 'Domesday,' by the crown, and confirmed him in possession of Gainsborough Castle, part of the forfeited fief of Geoffrey de Wirce, important from its bridge over the Trent, on which several Lincolnshire roads converged. On the other hand Miss Norgate<sup>6</sup> and Mr. Howlett<sup>7</sup> both

<sup>2</sup> Sym. Dun. ii. 306.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 325; Hen. Hunt. p. 279; *Gesta Stephani*, p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> *Chronicles, Stephen*, &c. iii. xlii.

<sup>5</sup> Hen. Hunt. p. 277

<sup>6</sup> *England under the Angevin Kings*, i. 336.

<sup>7</sup> *Gesta Stephani* (Bolls edition), p. 117.

independently assign to 1146 the meeting of Stephen at Stamford with the brother earls. The chronology at the close of the Peterborough chronicle is, unfortunately, so confused that one cannot positively say to what date it assigns the Stamford meeting, which it places just after Stephen's release (1141), and before his seizure of Randulf (1146), but also before the siege of Oxford in 1142. All I contend for is that my charter must be assigned to this meeting, and that the charter, from the names of its witnesses, certainly seems to belong to the beginning of 1142.

From this date I pass to 1146. This was another turning-point in the struggle, the fortunes of war inclining very definitely in Stephen's favour. The supporters of the empress were losing heart, and Randulf clearly thought it was time to make terms with Stephen, who, it seemed likely, would be soon in a position to call him to account for his usurpations. My view is that during the period since the beginning of the year 1142 the earl had occupied a position of armed neutrality, not siding with either party, and with no wish to oppose the king so long as he was left in possession of Lincoln and the other portions of crown demesne of which he had obtained possession. He now (1146) openly embraced Stephen's cause, and even gave him active support. By this means, doubtless, he hoped to keep all that he had wrongfully acquired.\* Are we to assign to this occasion Stephen's great charter to him, of which I have already spoken? I shall not do so, first, because it expressly stipulates for his recovery of his castles, which he had not yet lost; secondly, because it grants him the honour of Lancaster, a provision I shall explain below; thirdly, because its extravagant concessions prove it to have been given on some occasion when Stephen was hard pressed. This brings me to my special point—namely, that I believe we have in this treaty the cause and explanation of Randulf's conduct in 1149, when he so suddenly and so mysteriously abandoned his allies King David and young Henry of Anjou.

The earl's determination not to part with any of the castles or lands he held had brought matters to a crisis in 1146, and ended in his seizure at Northampton, while at Stephen's court. Regaining his liberty by the surrender of his castles and by undertaking to keep the peace, he broke out at once, like Geoffrey de Mandeville when in similar plight, into wild revolt, hurling himself, on one side, against Lincoln, from which he was repulsed by its citizens, and on the other against Coventry, which, I suspect, was, like

\* 'Comes siquidem Cestrie, qui tertiam fere regni partem armis praevalentibus occuparat, supplex et mansuetus regem adivit, crudelitatisque et perfidiae, quam in eum egerat, cum et manus in Lincolnensi captione in regem et dominum extendit, et regales possessiones sibi usurpando latissime invasit, tandem poenitens, veteris amicitiae, renovato inter eos foedere, in gratiam rediit.'—*Gesta Stephani*.

Lincoln, one of the royal castles he had seized and had now been obliged to surrender.<sup>9</sup> John of Hexham is here altogether at sea. He places the earl's seizure and the surrender of his castles *after* the knighting of Henry at Carlisle in 1149, and makes him, in his fury and despair, appeal to 'Duke' Henry to come over and espouse his cause, which Henry accordingly did.<sup>10</sup> Yet his story may well preserve this much of truth: that when Henry came, in 1149, it was on the understanding that Earl Randulf would join him against Stephen heart and soul. This would explain why the earl brought himself to give up at length the claim on Carlisle he had cherished so many years, and to receive the honour of Lancaster in its place. He was even reconciled with his old opponent Henry of Scotland, undertaking that his son should marry one of Henry's daughters.

The triple alliance then formed at Carlisle between the Scottish king, Earl Randulf, and young Henry of Anjou is known to have seriously alarmed Stephen, who hurried north to York and prepared for action. For the moment the prospects of the Angevin cause had undoubtedly revived, and the earl, by throwing his weight into the scale, had not only enabled Henry to recommence the struggle, but had connected David and his son in the north with the Angevin party in the west. If Stephen could but detach him from his allies, the whole scheme would at once collapse. Randulf certainly was detached, for he failed to join his allies, as he had promised, at Lancaster, and they consequently found themselves forced to abandon their design. That some sudden and strong motive must have caused this change of plans is evident enough; he would not have lightly thrown away the revenge for which he had schemed, and which seemed at length within his grasp. I believe, therefore, that Stephen must have offered him, at this crisis, the terms embodied in the charter I have so often referred to. These included, first and foremost, the castle and city of Lincoln, which he was to hold as a pledge for the restoration of the castles he had lost and of his lands in Normandy. He was further to receive Tickhill Castle, with the honour of Blythe and all the (escheated) honour of (the 'Domesday') Roger de Busli; Belvoir Castle, with all the lands of its lord, William de Albini; all the fief of Roger de Poitou, with the lands 'between Mersey and Ribble' (this was to be his compensation, we have seen, for the honour of Carlisle); Torksey, in Lincolnshire, above Gainsborough, on the Trent (of which it commanded the passage), an important royal borough in 'Domesday'; Grimsby, which gave him a port on the east, corresponding with Chester on the west; Newcastle-under-Lyme, another stronghold, in Staffordshire; the extensive soke of Rothley,

<sup>9</sup> The curious treaty (see Dugdale) between the earl of Leicester and himself implies that, when it was made, Coventry was in his possession.

<sup>10</sup> Sym. Dun. ii. 325.

in Nottinghamshire; the even larger one of Mansfield (both of them crown demesne in 'Domesday'), in Warwickshire; Stoneleigh and its appurtenances—also crown demesne—near Coventry. Among the other lands conceded to him was 'Derby,' which Dugdale identifies with West Derby, in Lancashire; but, as that place would certainly be included in his Lancashire grant, one is tempted to see in it nothing less than the borough of Derby itself.

Study of the map of England reveals his sphere of operations. It was, broadly speaking, a triangle, with Chester at its apex and Lincoln and Coventry at the extremities of its base. Halfway on the line between them stood Belvoir Castle, of which he had obtained possession. Derby, indeed, was as a wedge driven into his territory; but the terms of his treaty with the earl of Leicester imply that Earl Ferrers, of Derby, was his friend and ally. Now, just as, in 1149, Stephen had, on my hypothesis, won him over by concessions, so in 1153, when Henry of Anjou came again, and parties were evenly divided, Randulf once more held the scale, and Henry had to lure him back by grants exceeding even those of Stephen. The Devizes charter of the young duke does not, indeed, mention Lincoln, but the castle and town of Nottingham are now added, and, more important still, Stafford and all Staffordshire, with a few specified exceptions, clearly as an addition to his palatinate of Cheshire, to be held on similar terms. In Normandy likewise the Avranchin was to be made a kind of palatinate for him, evidently on the ground that he was great-nephew of Hugh of Avranches, earl of Chester, while in England fief after fief was promised as an addition to his dominion. Among them was that of William Peverel, which proved a fatal acquisition, for to poison at his hand was attributed the death of the earl this very year.

No one can study the extravagant character of Henry's grants in this charter without feeling well assured that the young duke had no intention of observing a day longer than he could help conditions which he must have felt were extorted from him by force, and were only intended to secure, as they did, the support of the earl at this crisis. That he joined the duke is proved by his presence with him, at this period, both at Gloucester and Wallingford.<sup>11</sup>

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#### THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE WYCLIFFITE BIBLE.

It has hitherto been accepted without question that we owe the first English Bible to Wyclif and his followers. It has come down to us in two versions, which have been printed in parallel columns in the monumental edition of Forshall and Madden. According to the editors the earlier translation was mainly the

<sup>11</sup> *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, p. 419.