

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR'S MARCH THROUGH HAMPSHIRE IN 1066.

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What happened to Hampshire in 1066 is a point of interest to us, the treatment of which by Freeman and others is unsatisfactory.¹ After his victory over Harold on October 14, William returned on the 15th to Hastings and stayed there four nights (*quinque dies*); going on to Dover, which surrendered at once, he was there seven nights (*octo dies*); then, apparently on the 27th, 28th or 29th² he marched for Canterbury, but received its submission on starting, and camped next day at "the Broken Tower," where he was taken ill. This "Tower," if two marches from Dover, would seem to have been close to Canterbury.³ Thence he marched to a position south of London, while a detachment of horsemen advanced to London Bridge, drove back the English who issued out to meet them, and burnt Southwark. After this he marched to Wallingford, and then east again, north of the Thames, to London.

Freeman makes William demand and receive the submission of Winchester while he was still at or near Canterbury, quoting the *Carmen de Bello Hastingsensi* attributed to Guy, Bishop of Amiens, which, omitting turgid epithets and phrases, runs thus (the tenses are confused):—

¹ Freeman, *Norman Conquest*, iii., 540; Sir J. Ramsay, *Foundations of England*, ii., 17.

² William himself would not need more than one day, or two, to get from Hastings to Dover; probably the van of his army started for Romney before the 19th, and the rear had not reached Dover when it surrendered.

³ Perhaps it was at Sandwich or Richborough as suggested by Mr. W. G. Turner (*Eng. Hist. Rev.*, April, 1912), but that is only 10 miles from Dover.

"Canterbury, fairest of cities,
 First sent (*lulit*) messengers with tribute.
 Then (*post*) many others also . . .
 . . . bring (*ferunt*) gifts,
 Put their necks under the yoke
 And kneel to kiss his feet.
Per spatium mensis he stays (*perendinat*) there ;
 Then (*post*) he goes (*vadit*) elsewhere to camp.
 He sent (*misit*) to Winchester ; bids (*mandat*) the city chiefs
 Bring him tribute as did others.
 This city the Queen (Edith) holds, a marriage gift
 From Edward ; in courtesy William
 Does not go to seize her city ;
 Requires only tribute and fealty.
 The city chiefs consult her, she consents.
 So William turns his march toward London."

But this account does not agree well with Freeman's version of it. The simple and natural meaning of the *Carmen* appears to put the sending of a summons to Winchester, not while William was at Canterbury, but at some time or other (*post*) after he had left Canterbury and gone elsewhere (*vadit alio*). In harmony with this are the lines which follow "In courtesy he does not go to seize her city, &c.," which suggest that he was within reach of the city when he summoned it, not 100 miles away at Canterbury.

Freeman apparently wanted to find some work for William during a "month's delay" at Canterbury, but there seems to be something wrong about this interpretation of "*per spatium mensis*." William of Poitiers says positively that, when the Duke fell ill at Broken Tower, "he refused to rest there for his own comfort lest the army should suffer from lack of necessary supplies," but pressed on towards London (*intrepide appropians*). Freeman (iii., 540, note 3) suggested that, though the Duke soon left "Broken Tower," he did not for a month get far from Canterbury; but this attempt

to reconcile the two stories is a very lame one and entirely ignores the lack of supplies, which would prevent an army which lived on the country from staying so long in one neighbourhood. The two stories cannot be reconciled. Moreover, if William had not left Canterbury till December 1st, 2nd or 3rd, he could not well have marched to Wallingford and back to London in time for his coronation on December 25th. The distance was 160 miles—by the line he took much more—and we must allow a few days at London before the coronation and probably one or two near Wallingford and elsewhere. Even if we say that the "month" of the *Carmen* was poetic and stood for only three weeks, it is still directly contradicted by William of Poitiers. Either the *Carmen* is altogether wrong as to this delay of a "month" near Canterbury, or its "*per spatium mensis*" must mean, not "through a whole month," *i.e.*, through November, but "through the month," *i.e.*, over the end of the month (of October), say from October 28th or 29th to November 1st or 2nd. This latter seems to be the probable explanation, but in any case, whether William stopped near Canterbury for one day or for thirty, the natural meaning of the *Carmen* puts the summoning and surrender of Winchester at a later stage, *after* he had left Canterbury.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells us that all through his march from Hastings to Berkhamstead William "wasted the country that he passed through." This could not fail to happen along the march of an army which lived on the country it passed through, as all armies did in those days. Florence adds that William "wasted Sussex, Kent, *Hampshire*, Surrey, Middlesex and Hertfordshire" (not, of course, in that order nor those Counties only, for Berkshire is omitted). It appears, therefore, that from his position south of London William marched to Wallingford, not through the whole length of Berkshire, but at some distance from the river through North Hants and so to Wallingford through the western end

of Berkshire. Being not yet master of London it would be natural for him to march on Winchester, the older capital, even if it had already surrendered, much more as so far it apparently had not. This line would also best facilitate communication with the coast, and we shall see presently that his ships had probably moved to the harbour at Chichester.

Through the "wasting" spoken of by the Chronicle we may probably trace the line of his march more closely, for Domesday Book generally ends its description of each manor thus:—"value [yearly] in King Edward's day $\text{£}a$, when received (or 'post') $\text{£}b$, now $\text{£}c$," giving us a triple valuation (1) in 1065, (2) in 1067-8 when granted to a Norman lord after the conquest, (3) in 1086 when the Domesday survey was made. Now, in the south-western counties there are many cases in which the middle value $\text{£}b$ of 1067-8 is very much less than $\text{£}a$ and $\text{£}c$, the values of 1065 and 1086. Temporary reduction in value between 1065 and 1087 might be due to various causes, but the "wasting" along William's line of march must have been one cause, and a very important cause, of such losses of value just after the conquest, if not the chief cause. Such evidence must be used, like other evidence, with judgment and there must be some element of conjecture, but when, in a district through which we know or might fairly expect William to have passed, we find (1) a string of manors, not necessarily consecutive, but at intervals of about ten miles or a day's march, which suffered heavy but temporary loss of value between 1065 and 1067, or (2) a group of such manors, we may fairly presume that (1) marks the line of his march and (2) a place where he stopped for a day or more. The point can be tested in Kent; there Domesday Book shows large reduction of value between 1065 and 1067 in a number of manors near Dover, where we know that he stopped for a week, while round Hastings, where he stayed for three weeks after his arrival on September 29, the manors were in 1067

practically waste and, for the time being, had no value at all.

The old Roman road to Hampshire from London ran south-west (w.s.w.) through Staines to Silchester and then south (s. by w.) to Winchester. William might have reached this road by the fords over the river at Brentford or Hampton,⁴ but there were twenty miles of heath between Staines and Silchester or Basing, so that this line was not attractive to an army living on the country it passed through. On the evidence of the valuations in Domesday Book, William would seem to have marched from his position south of London by another line, which from that point was quite as short as the one by Staines and would be in better connexion with his ships at or near Chichester. The line starts along the old "Stane Street" leading to Chichester, passing through Cuddington near Ewell, valued in 1065 at £11, in 1067 at only £5, but in 1086 at £9½, past Ashtead, valued at £10-£6-£10, and Leatherhead (Tornecrosta), valued at £5-3-5; then turning west along the downs on the line of the old track, later called the Pilgrim's Way, past Gomshall (£15-10-20), Albury (£10-5-9) and Shalford (£16-9-20) near Guildford. Thence still west along the Hog's Back past Compton and Wanborough (together £15-9-15) to Farnham (£55-30-47). From Cuddington the Normans could march either along the old track, which ran along the flank of the downs, or along the down land above it, which would be firm and open, going down to a village for the night and raiding other villages as they passed for supplies—sheep, cattle and corn.

From Farnham the shortest line to Winchester was up the left bank of the River Wey (the eastern side was unsuitable) which was later followed by the Pilgrim's Way. But this line may not have been very good for marching in November and December, or William may have wished to place himself between Winchester and London. Anyway, from Farnham

⁴ Mr. Turner, *ubi supra*, makes him follow this line. From the evidence of the Domesday values, probably some part of the army did cross by one of these fords, but I think later.

he appears to have preferred to follow the line of the old track known as the Harrow Way (? hara, hoar, old), passing south of Crondall (£24½-12-32, in three entries) and north of South Warnborough (£12-6-10); then to have diverged to Nately and Basing (together £14-9½-19); thence to have turned south through Ellisfield, Nutley, Farley and Dummer (together £33-14-25) to Micheldever (£60-40-93). It was probably at this stage, not while he was still far away at Canterbury, that William demanded and received the submission of Winchester.

At this stage, too, he would seem to have been reinforced from his ships; there had been time to gather fresh troops in Normandy since the battle at Hastings, and the Chronicle speaks of reinforcements "which came to him from over sea." In the western end of Sussex, west of the Arun, forming in Domesday Book the "Rape of Earl Roger" (except the two eastern hundreds of Isewerit and Riseberge), practically every manor had lost in 1067 from a third to half of its value in 1065 (except near Selsey in the hundred of Sumerleg or Westeringes).⁶ All this damage suggests that, to land reinforcements and to provide a refuge, if necessary, while he marched from London to Wallingford, William had moved his ships from East Sussex to the harbours west of Chichester, and that the crews and reinforcements had been living on the country round. The adjoining corner of Hants was mainly covered by the forest of Bere, but we find damage in the islands of Hayling and Portsea, and at Charlton (Ceptone 44 b 2), Catherington, &c., the values being together £56 in 1065, and £35 in 1067.

The reinforcements would appear to have reached him through Fareham (£18-10-16), Wickham (£10-4-7), Bishop's Waltham (£31-10½-30), Droxford (£26-20-26), Exton

⁶ The royal manor of Bosham and Stigand's manors, Pagham, Tangemere and Lavington, show no loss, but perhaps these had been specially protected, or the values "*post*" of Stigand's manors may belong to a date after his deposition in 1070 or his death in 1072; see the entry for Pirton, Domesday Book, 157 a-2.

£(16-12-20), Warnford (£22-14-22), West Meon (£20-16-30), East Meon (£60-40-60), Alresford (£40-20-57), Easton (£34-12-34), and Headbourn Worthy, close to Winchester (£25-10-15); it looks as if William may have joined them at Easton. After the surrender of Winchester the Normans seem to have marched on in two columns; the left and stronger one going by Crawley (£35-28-42), Clatford (£20-15½-20), Fifield, west of Andover (£5-2½-5), Tidworth (£10-5-10), and then, probably through the eastern end of Wiltshire, to Lambourn in Berkshire; while the right column went from Micheldever by Sutton Scotney (£12-8-10), Hurstbourn (£36-26-40), Upton (£4-2-4), Easton Crux (£6-3-6) and Highclere (£12-7-11). Then the army swept on through the western end of Berkshire, where the damage is so wide as to suggest a day or two's delay before crossing the Thames.

Whether these reduced values in 1067 were mainly due to loss of plough-oxen, taken for food by the Normans on their way, or to deliberate destruction, is not clear. The Chronicle seems to imply that they deliberately set themselves to waste the country they passed through,⁷ but that might naturally be the view of its English author. As the loss in 1067 along the line of march is seldom more than 50 per cent., while round Hastings no value at all was left, it looks as if the Normans could have done much more damage on their march, if they had set themselves deliberately to do all the damage they could. Moreover, it is difficult to see what object the reinforcements could have in such a policy between Fareham and Winchester, for it would be altogether against their own interests to waste the country between themselves and their port at Chichester more than was necessary to provide for their own needs of food and firewood.

⁷ Besides the statement given above, the Chronicle repeats after the submission of the English at Berkhamstead that, though William promised he would be a kind lord to them, "yet (the Normans) wasted all they passed through."