

CHAPTER TEN

ROBERT FITZ GILBERT DE CORBEIL Eighteenth in Ancestry

Section 1, Family of Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil—Section 2, Robert de Stafford—Section 3, History.

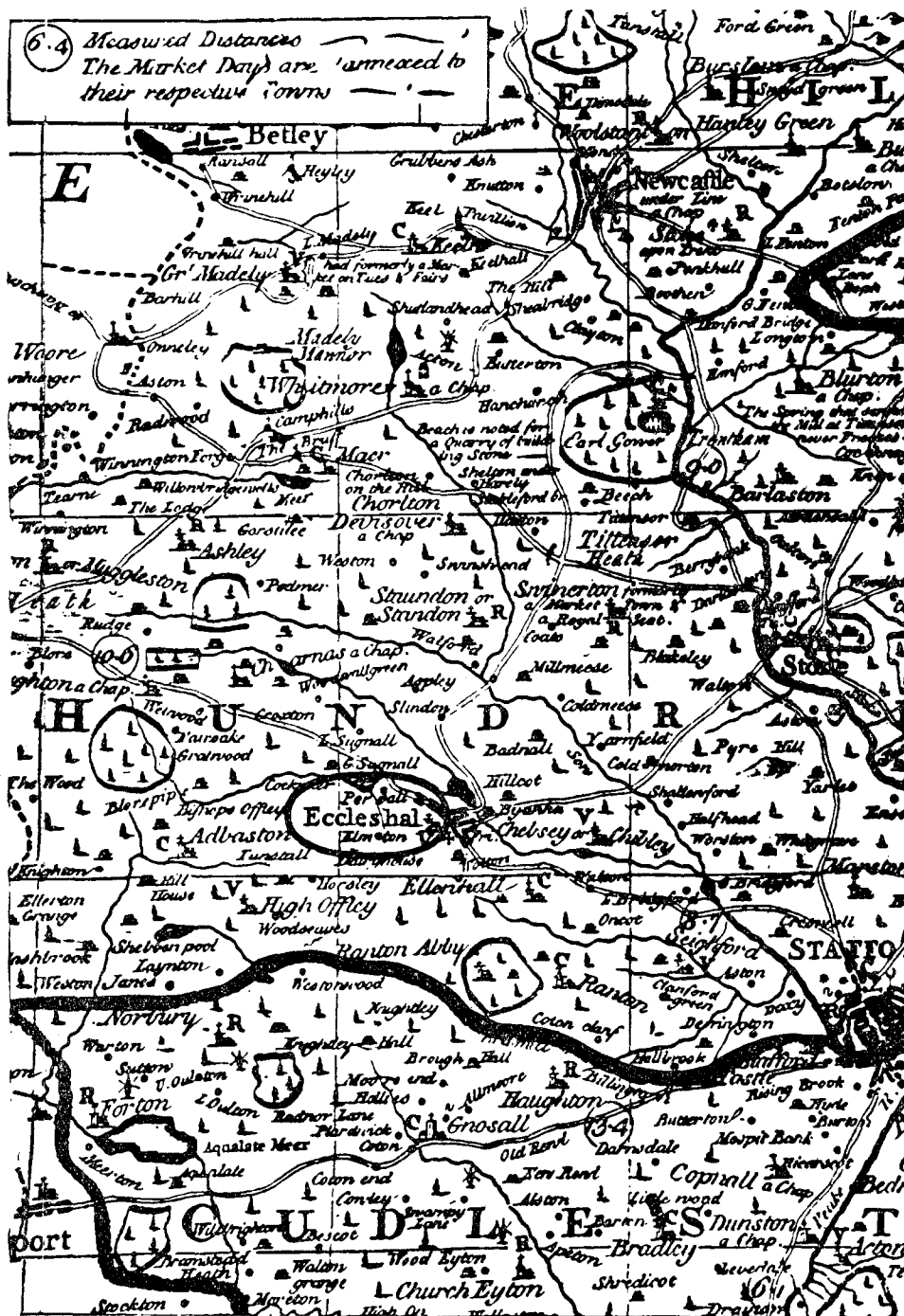
SECTION 1.

*18. ROBERT FITZ GILBERT DE CORBEIL, son of Gilbert de Corbeil, Chapter 9, Section 1, and his wife Isabella Lupus, daughter of Richard de Goz and his wife Emma, half-sister to the Conqueror. Married ———. Child:—

1. *17. ROBERT DE PESHALE DE LUMLEY, Chapter 11, Section 1.

In the Dictionary of Family Names of the United Kingdom, by Mark Anthony, M.A., F.S.A., it appears that Pearsall is an estate in Co. Stafford, now written Pearshall or Pershall. The family are of Norman origin, having been founded at the place referred to by Robert a follower of Robert of Stafford, early in the reign of the Conqueror. He was son of Gilbert, son of a Count of Corbeil in Normandy.

Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil was the first of our ancestors who owned the Manor of Peshale. He married into one of the families who formed the colony of emigrants from Northumberland and who settled near Stone Priory in Staffordshire. At this time Staffordshire was almost an unbroken forest with only here and there clearings which had been made by the English prior to the Conquest. Among these clear and cultivated spots in the forest was that of Peshale, which had been forfeited from its English owner and which was now included in the holdings of Robert de Toesni, de Stafford. The deed of confirmation discloses that his manor was purchased by Gilbert de Corbeil for his son Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil. Thither the young man journeyed with his bride to begin life in a country as undeveloped as was the great forest of New York and Pennsylvania at the close of the Revolutionary War. It is known in English History as a wilderness, and the whole country teemed with wild life from the great wild ox of Brittany and the terrible forest wolf to the smallest varmint, and there was game in abundance of all kinds for food for the successful hunter. Instead of the Indians of the American forest, there was the Welsh-man, who although a white man of good ancestry, had been forced to become a lurking savage. Therefore life was filled with continued and bloody encounters between the newcomers and the Cymry, the latter being a foeman much more formidable than the Indian ever was. Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil was a soldier and held his land of Robert de Stafford by military service, particularly as to the wars against the Welsh, so that his time was largely occupied by attendance with de Stafford in active warfare. This was the frontier of the English kingdom and as there was much fighting and playing at war, there was but little time to make



SECTION OF STAFFORDSHIRE

Note Towns of Persall and Eccleshal in Center Oval

even the few records that have come down to us, except those contained in the chartularies of the churches, of which that of Stone Priory and Kenilworth have proven rich in information concerning our ancestors and their connection with the other Norman and Northumbrian families.

They had brought with them all the customs and traditions of their old north home land, and this became the land that is now filled with the legends of Robin Hood, which had their beginning in the old north home. Says an old couplet:

I kan rymes of Robyn Hood
and Randolf, Earl of Chester.

This nobleman was a special friend of Fulke Fitz Warine, and this coupling of names is the earliest known mention of Robin Hood.

John de Fordun, who died in 1386, describes Robin Hood as a very religious sort of person, who frequented Harnisdale. Then Andrew Wyntoun, about 1420, says:

Lytell Ihon and Robyne Hude
Waythmen (1) ware commendyd gude;
In Yngilwode and Barnysdale
Thai oysyd (2) all this tyme thare trawale (3).
[1. read sportsmen; 2. used, frequented; 3. travel, work, labor.]

Later the circulation of Robin Hood ballads became common. Robin Hood was no myth, but there was a succession of them. The first being one Dan Waryn of Northumberland, and he had so many imitators that it is almost impossible to follow even the history of the man who first took to the road to right the wrongs of the poor and oppressed. In the reign of Henry VIII., the May day sports of Robin Hood and Maid Marian formed a Court festival. It is said of Dan Waryn "Fulke, nor any of his, during the whole time that he was outlawed would ever do hurt to any one except to the king and his knights."

There was a Robin Hood of Redesdale. Redesdale is an extensive district of Northumberland through which ran the old Watling Street, straight on from the Roman Wall, near Newcastle-on-Tyne, across the hills to the Firth of Forth, so it was a favorite track of the northern Caterans into England, whence they could easily make their raids, inroads or forays. The whole of this district was granted to the Norman race of Umfraville, to keep the land clear "from enemies and wolves." Umfraville of course displaced an English nobleman who was compelled to leave all his possessions and begin life among the lowly. Of course he became an outlaw until he had forced some recognition of his right to live, whereby he became a vassal of some of the great overlords, and thus quiet and order was restored and peace prevailed again.

So we could go through the whole of Northumberland. Every house of English ancestry had its legend of the highwayman who fought the authorities, and protected the poor against extortion, and relieved them from their distress and poverty. When sifted down all these legends of Robin Hood tell eloquently the story of the English noble families of Northumberland, who had been hounded by the Conqueror, until they became outlaws living alone in the forest, hunting and being hunted like wild animals, and obeying the law of the wild to kill only

the lawful prey of their kind. Dan Warrene was only a name that somehow or other came to be fastened upon the legends of Robin Hood. It all, however, tells more eloquently than human description could possibly do of the terrible harrowing and wasting the Conqueror gave Northumberland, and explains why our ancestor came with the others to Stafford-Shropshire. We will understand this better after we have read chapter 11 of this work. The history of our family did not produce any legends of Robin Hood simply because we were at first supporters of the Conqueror. Later he turned against us, and we wisely sought the seclusion of our Stafford-Shropshire manor, where we were out of sight and hence out of mind of the terrible inflictor of evil. There were in our locality other families not so fortunate, hence the Staffordshire and Shropshire folks furnished many imitators of Robin Hood, and many are the stories told truthfully of knights who, upon being outlawed, took to the highways to rob the rich, to revenge the wrongs done by the authorities, and to relieve the poor by distributing to them the booty thus obtained from the rich. But they were only imitators who were without the reason which made Robin so great a character in Northumbrian folk lore. Many of these in Staffordshire-Shropshire were no doubt Welshmen who found this an easy means of securing the assistance and protection of the poor folks, so that the nobility might be robbed with impunity, but some of them were knights of the very best families in all England. All this made very interesting conditions for the man of estate, living in this borderland, who had to leave his loved ones and go forth to fight for the lord under whom he held his land. And even to this day Robin Hood stories are current in Staffordshire, one of the best of the present day writers of Staffordshire folklore says:

William the Conqueror "loved the highdeer as though he were their father." The convicted poacher was lucky if he got off with the loss of an eye or a limb. The starving man poached and then, afraid of terrible punishment, fled to the woods. All found there a safe refuge. True, they were outlaws and might be hanged without pity; but they were willing to chance this in return for a life of liberty. There is nothing very improbable in the story that the bold Robin Hood scoured the great forests of Staffordshire, and became the darling hero of the multitudes who were "tied to the soil" and denied the freedom that Robin held dearer than life itself. Which is very interesting as it discloses how completely the myth of Robin Hood has displaced the historical character. [The Story of Staffordshire, by Mark Hughes, B.A., page 114.]

Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil's coming to Staffordshire is preserved in a deed of confirmation made by the second Robert de Stafford, the grandson of Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil's overlord, the first Robert de Stafford.

It was a principle of the English law down to the reign of Charles II. that a feoffment of land need not be in writing and that its transfer might be effected by the symbolical delivery of a piece of turf or twig or a stone and by many other ways, and this was the method followed by Robert de Stafford in granting the manor of Peshale to Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil.

At a very early date this method was found to be very unsatisfactory, for while there were always witnesses enough to any such enfeoffment, nevertheless time soon brought about their decease, and then the occupant of the land had

great difficulty in proving the exact terms of his tenure or the heir of the lord was thwarted in his inheritance, so it came to be very early the custom to have a new agreement made between the heirs of the grantee and of the grantor, which was set out in a deed of confirmation, made by the lord of the demesne. [History of the House of Arundel, page 78 & History of the Northmen by Henry Wheaton.]

The following is the transcript of such a confirmatory deed which appears in the Chartulary of the Basset family of Drayton:—

'Omnib: p'sentib. & futur. Salut.—Sciatis me Rob'to de Stadforde dedisse & hac Carta mea p'senti confirmasse Rob'to Filo Gilb'ti de Corbeil & Isabelle ux. suo & haeredio: suis totam istam terram meam & Maneri de Peshale, etc., tenend. de me p. feod. I Mil. dat 6 Cal. Jan. Ao. Incar. 1068. Testib. W. de Eyton, R. de Weston, &c.' (ex Vet. Cart. Bassetoru de Draiton. Temp. H. 2.) [Dugdale's Bar. V. I.-158, original notes by Rev. John Persall, London, 1831, p. 225.]

Translation: 'To all present and in the future, my salutations. Know that I Robert de Stafford, have given and confirm by this my present Charter to Robert, son of Gilbert de Corbeil and Isabella his wife, to him and his heirs all this my land and the Manor of Peshale, to be held from me for the service of a Knight's fee. Dated December 27th, A. D. 1068. Witnessed by W. de Eaton, R. de Weston &c. [Dugdale's Bar. v. 1.-158, original notes by Rev. John Persall.]

There is a very interesting record in Staffordshire Historical Collections, which substantially confirms this deed. It reads:—The Bassets of Weledon came to an end in 1408, those of Drayton in 1390, those of Sapecot in 1378, and it was doubtless these changes that led Robert Attorton, Prior of Canwell, to get a Royal confirmation of his charters. This confirmation, dated January 21st, 1411, includes Geva Ridel's foundation charter of Canwell Priory, passed before 1147, to which the following are given as witnesses:—William, abbot of Radmore, Richard, abbot of Leicester, Osbert, the chaplain, Ailsa the priest of Draiton, Thomas de Ses, William de Ses, Walter de Cuili, Adam de Tanworth, Rannulf de Bret, Ivo de Gorges, Robert Bagot, Richard Basset, Maud de Stafford. It includes also a "writing" of Ralph Basset of Drayton, son of "Ralf Basset the palmer," confirming his ancestor's grants, witnessed by Sir Ralph Basset, of Sapecot, Sir Robert de Grendone, Sir William de Lymare, Walter de Berefore, Augustine de Wissawe, and Henry, his son, Henry de Lilleburne, Richard de Thikebrom, Nicholas de Wissawe. All the above named speak for themselves, with the possible exception of "Osbert the chaplain," who was the father of Ormunda, who married Robert de Peshale, the son of Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil. The story of this deed is told in the preceding chapter to which the reader is again referred. Geva Ridel was daughter of Hugh, Earl of Chester. Hence she was a niece of Isabella Lupus, the wife of Gilbert de Corbeil, and therefore first cousin to Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil. Osbert the chaplain, one of the witnesses, was, as just stated, the father of Ormunda, who married Robert de Peshale the son of Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil. Thus we have a record which brings together three generations of our ancestry. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 1910, page 312.]



CASTLE AND CASTLE HILLS, BUNGAY.

Referring again to the deed of confirmation made by Robert de Stafford and Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil the terms of the deed and the witnesses would point to Robert de Stafford the third lord of the demesne as the maker of the charter. The date is such a patent error on the part of the scribe who made the abstract that it can be entirely neglected. It is probable that Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil, like his immediate predecessors, lived to an advanced age, and certainly his many living descendants, who are now past 70, would confirm the statement that he was of a long lived line. This then would require that only one figure shall be changed and the year would be 1168, or it may have been earlier. Of course when a mistake has been made in a number it is not possible to say with any certainty exactly what was the real error. But the witnesses fix quite clearly that the year 1168 is not far wrong. There was no Northumberland colony in Staffordshire in 1068. The party with whom we find our ancestor is associated in Staffordshire came from Northumberland about 1075-1080. The second Robert de Stafford lived until 1183. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 2, page 261.]

The Normans were very reluctant to accept the English place names, although in their home land they had followed the system of calling themselves after their landed estates. But they disliked everything English, especially their so called barbarous place-names. It may therefore be stated as a general rule, founded upon the most uniform observation of all the searchers, that the next generation of a Norman family, after the ancestor who came to England, will call themselves Fitz, or son of, the ancestor. In many families they never lost this peculiar distinguishing characteristic, while in others, for convenience sake, they came to call themselves as of their manor names, and where a man held several properties he was called without any apparent rule or reason as of either, or indiscriminately as of, in turn, to all his manors. The English on the contrary did not readily accept the Norman system of place names. It was different with the Normans who had been seated in England at the time of the Conquest, as they more immediately adopted a place name; hence we find Robert de Toeni calling himself Robert de Stafford, he having become mesne lord for a large number of manors in Stafford. On the contrary Ivo Pantulf, brother of Ligulph, and both of the royal line of Bernician-Northumbrian kings and Earls, and his descendants, remained Pantulf although they acquired large land holdings. It would therefore seem most likely that we should find the son of Gilbert de Corbeil calling himself Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil, which is very interesting, as it not only agrees with the deed, but is so stated by the Duchess of Cleveland in her work on the Battle Abby Roll, (1889) which roll was compiled in obedience to a clause in the Conqueror's foundation Charter, that enjoined the monks to pray for the souls of those "who by their labor and valour had helped to win the kingdom." "It appears she says that Pershale is a name interpolated for it was taken from the manor of Pershall, in the parish of Eccleshall, Staffordshire. The family was generally derived from Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil, who held Pershall from Robert de Stafford by the service of a knight's fee."

In the Historical Collections of Staffordshire, vol. 4, part 2, appears the following account of the Parish of Church Eaton, which will serve to throw some light upon the Eaton witness.

The Church of Eyton is an ancient foundation which existed in Saxon times. It was given to the Nuns of Pollesworth, in Warwickshire, towards the close of the eleventh century, or very early in the twelfth century, by Edelina, the Lady of Eyton, and confirmed by her relative and chief lord, Robert de Stafford. As the right of Godwin, the Priest of the said Church, was specifically reserved to him, The Abbess and Convent did not enter into possession of the fruits of the benefice until after his decease. From after that time it appears that they received two-thirds of the income. The Vicar, who served the Church, retained the other third, out of which he had to pay them a further sum of 3 marks annually for the demesne of the church.

It has been stated, in speaking of the manor, that in 1198 a suit was commenced in the King's Court at Westminster, between the Abbess of Pollesworth and Eva de Longford, the granddaughter of Edelina, concerning the advowson of the Church of Eyton, which was decided in favor of the Abbess in 1203. Therefore, the above-mentioned arrangement continued in force till about the year 1260, when the decision was challenged by Adam de Brumpton, the grandson of Eva, who claimed against the Abbess the right to present the Church, then vacant by the death of William de Eyton, the late Vicar.

This dispute was determined by Roger Meuland, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, with the consent of his chapter. By his award, which is dated on 1st April, 1260, it was settled that the Lord of Eyton and his heirs should nominate a fit Clerk to the Abbess and her Convent, who should present the same Clerk, and no other, to the Bishop for admission and institution. The said Clerk, before his institution, was to swear that he would pay to the said Abbess and her Convent an annual pension of 20 marks from the fruits of the benefice in lieu of their claim to two-thirds of the income. This arrangement seems to have been accepted and acted upon for more than two centuries afterwards; but there is no institution of a Clerk recorded in the Diocesan Register till the year 1305. The Church, which was situate in the Deanery of Lapley-cum-Tresel, was valued for Pope Nicholas's Taxation, in 1291, at 30 marks, i. e. 20 pounds. This Edeline de Stafford married Robert de Eyton, who was a son of a marriage between a Pantulf and an Audley, for his descendants bear the arms of both the Audleys and the Pantulfs, and he and his descendants for many generations were tenants of the Pantulfs. Their son was William de Eyton, who witnessed the deed from Robert de Stafford 2nd. to Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil. W. de Eyton was therefore closely related to both the grantor and the grantee. [Eyton Genealogy.]

The Staffords, as we have already stated, belonged to the Toden family, and were settled in England, in Northumberland, prior to the conquest, and held property there. This accounts for Robert de Stafford being lord of so many feudal tenants who emigrated from Northumberland to Staffordshire, particularly those who were located around Stone Priory. [History of the House of Arundel, page 78.]

Walter Chetwynd in his History, fails to speak of Stafford either from want of time or material, but Eyton, Harwood and other writers have done much to throw light on its history. Camden (vol. II, p. 376) preserved the tradition of Betheney, the retreat of Bethelin, a hermit, and disciple of St. Guthlac, being

situated here—but the earliest certain record is that of the Saxon Chronicle, when in 913 A. D. Ethelfleda, the warlike lady of Mercia, built a castle here within the burgh (i. e. a fortified mound) commanding the Sowe—Earls Edwin and Morcar, the grandsons of Leofric, had not opposed the Conqueror, until, in 1069, they were suspected of encouraging the outbreak of a rebellion, which King William so forcibly suppressed—the castle he then built was afterwards destroyed, when the Saxon Earls fled from the Court, c. April 1071, and after William's second visit both town and country remained unsettled and wasted in places—witness the Domesday Survey of 1086—but within the next 16 years a Stafford Castle was founded, and held by William Rufus, which in 1102 was garrisoned by William Pantolf, with 200 men, to prove the base of his operations against Robert de Belseme. The Pantulfs were of the Northumbrian colony settled in Staffordshire and Shropshire. William Pantulf the first of the name was brother to Siward, Earl of Northumberland, and also brother to Ligulph the grandfather of Ormunda, who married Robert de Peshale the son of Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil. Later we shall see the Peshales as military tenants of the Pantulfs. [Staff. Hist. Col., vol. 1914, page 112-113.]

c. 1138-47, Robert de Stafford (II), a partisan of King Stephen, speaks of his castle at Stafford—an old plan of Stafford at the Salt Library, now unhappily lost or mislaid, showed the water of the king's pool, or vivary, covering about two sides of the walled town; with three (or 4) mills—and the Pipe Rolls (H.II.) imply that the King had then a house, at least within the Liberties of the Borough; and furnished with a "vivary," frequently referred to. Repairs carried out by the Sheriff occur in 1156-7 (vol. 1, p. 23). In 1162 and 1180, these are repeated. It was on the Sowe and (vol. II, p. 78) 1198 A. D. shows William Fitz Wymar had the hereditary custody in fee farm—he pays £2 on entry, and was permitted to erect another mill there—soon the cause of disturbance, when (in 1230) a riot was raised in the Market Place against the suit of these mills; and in 1250, with Robert de Stafford and his followers.

The Staffords and the other Northumbrians lived near Stone Priory, at which church the tombs of the Staffords were to be found until their removal to the town of Stafford into a religious house founded for Austin Frier 1344 A. D. by Ralph, Lord of Stafford. Many of the manors were unoccupied, which not only accounts for the absence of the name of the manor of Peshale in the Domesday Survey, but indicates that it was not until later that many of the Northumbrian families actually removed to Staffordshire.

The first of the Northumbrians came into Staffordshire-Shropshire about 1070, but Robert Fitz Gilbert did not come here until about 1100. He was born and raised in Northumberland. The King of England needed good soldiers for his Welsh frontier and they could not be had without giving them lands to support themselves and their retainers. The English soldier was supposed in times of peace to be a master farmer with numerous working tenants under him, each manor being practically a village, supporting in addition to the farmers all classes of mechanics and others essential to life and existence according to the standard of the times. But everything began and ended with the war service, and the proprietor was a lord of the demesne. He held his lands by knight's service. He

bore arms to designate himself and his family, and he wielded arms in the service of his over-lord or perhaps directly for the king. All the lands in England were not good farm lands and this was true so far as this part of Staffordshire was concerned. The soil and climatic conditions were not suited for general farming. When cleared of its timber it was essentially a grazing country, and although it was underlaid with coal and there was a vast deposit of pottery clay, nevertheless war was the real occupation, for nearly six centuries, of the lords of the Staffordshire manors. Here the knight of the old stories lingered until long after he had disappeared from English life nearly everywhere else. Here until only a few generations before our ancestor came to America from England we shall see him as the man of arms; The man who carried the sword at his side ready to be drawn on the slightest excuse; The man ready to fight or to be friendly; The man alert to resent a wrong and valiant in the service of a friend; The warm-hearted gentleman, kindly and courteous to womankind, yet strong and brave, even until death. We shall see our men die without a whimper, and the sons step into their father's place and continue the feud just as calmly as though a time of peace would never come. Into this country came Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil, as has been said in 1100, and here his descendants were to leave an indelible impression as men among men—soldiers among soldiers, of rulers among rulers, so that it is impossible to tell the history of this borderland without recounting the lives of the descendants of Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil.

The note to Walter Chetwynd's History of Pirehill Hundred, under the heading Stafford, fixes quite clearly the date when Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil came to the manor of Peshale. It reads: Earls Edwin and Morcar, the grandsons of Leofric, had not opposed the Conqueror, until, in 1069, they were suspected of encouraging the outbreak of a rebellion, which King William so forcibly suppressed—the castle he then built was afterwards destroyed, when the Saxon Earls fled from the Court, c. April, 1071, and after William's second visit both town and country remained unsettled and wasted in places—witness the Domesday Survey of 1086—but within the next 16 years a Stafford Castle was founded, and held by William Rufus, which in 1102, was garrisoned by William Pantulf, with 200 men, to prove the base of his operations against Robert de Belesme. Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil first came to Staffordshire as a member of the party of Pantulf, his cousin.

SECTION 2.

The deed of confirmation by Robert de Stafford, the third of the family of Stafford, discloses that Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil became a military tenant of Robert de Stafford, whereby he acquired the manor of Peshale. Robert de Stafford was originally named de Toesni, and changed his name to de Stafford upon emigration from Northumberland to Staffordshire. He was therefore over-lord of Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil. As we have previously stated his family traced their ancestry to Malahuc, brother of Rognvald and uncle of Rollo, Malahuc having accompanied Rollo to Normandy at the time of the conquest. Robert de Toesni had at one time been a fugitive from Normandy, and had found

an asylum in Northumberland, where he married a princess of the royal house of Bernician kings, then the earls of Bernicia, whose ancestor, Waltheof I. Earl of Northumberland, had a son Frane, see Chapter 11, Section 3, Division 6 M, who in turn had a son Oswulf, who in turn was father of an only child Elizabeth, who married Robert de Toesni afterwards also de Stafford. Waltheof I. Earl of Northumberland was also ancestor of Ormunda the wife of Robert de Peshale de Lumeley the son of Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil. The sojourn of Robert de Toesni in Northumberland was practically contemporary with the period of banishment of Werlac to Apulia, and of his son Regnault to Northumberland. This Robert de Toesni, or de Stafford, was cousin by marriage with practically all the members of the Northumbrian colony in Staffordshire. The Toesnis were also related to the Albinis in Normandy.

That some of the Albinis are Toesnis or Todenis is quite clear, says Yeatman in his history. [History of the House of Arundel by J. Pym Yeatman, page 75.] The Belvoir records prove that to demonstration. The Todenis of Belvoir, who are known to have adopted the name of Albinis, were great benefactors of St. Albans, a name not very dissimilar, and it has been gravely suggested that they adopted it in veneration for this sacred shrine; but inasmuch as they possessed large estates in its immediate neighborhood, that fact may account for their benefactions, but hardly for the variation in their names, and certainly not for their change of name; for there is a chronological difficulty in the way of this derivation; the Todenis and Albinis became benefactors of St. Albans in succession to a branch of the royal family of Northumberland whose heiress Robert de Todenis of Domesday married.

Prior to the Conquest, Osulf fil Frane, the English Lord of Belvoir, was a patron of the abbey, and it was only after the Conquest, and after the Todenis had acquired his inheritance, that we find any mention of the name of Todenis or Albinis in connection with it. Waltheof I. Earl of Northumberland had a son Frane, who in turn had a son Oswulf, and Oswulf it was whose daughter Elizabeth married Robert Todenis, which would account for their association with St. Albans, as well as with Stone Priory in Staffordshire, and the evidently close family relationship of all those who lived near Stone Priory. As has already been said, St. Albans had been founded and sustained by the royal family of Bernicia.

We learn from the History of St. Alban's Abbey that the twelfth abbot, Leoftan, who was the friend of King Edward and Queen Editha, obtained from one Oswulf and Adelitha his wife, the manor of Stotham, or Great Todham, afterwards held by the Albinis and Todenis; and find that all the Albinis were benefactors of that foundation.

This is the more probable, since Ralf Toesni, junior, married Judith, daughter of Waltheof I, Earl of Northumberland, and the wife of Robert de Toesni of Belvoir was an heiress of the same royal house, the record of Domesday testifying to the fact that the ancestor of Robert Todenis in a great number of his manors was one Osulph fil Frane, a Thane of Edward the Confessor, of great wealth and power, which Frane was son of Waltheof I. [History of the House of Arundel, by J. Pym Yeatman, page 75.]

A charter of the Abbey of St. Evrout, recorded by Ordericus (bk. v., c. 13), shows that Elizabeth was the wife of Ralph Toesni the elder, and that he had at least two sons, Ralf and Roger; and Ordericus further states that Ralf Toesni the elder possessed lands in England, and gave to St. Evroult a farm named Caldecot in Norfolk, and another named Alvington in Worcestershire, which grants King William confirmed. [*Ibid.*, page 76.]

In Normandy the Toesnis and the Albinis were closely allied; in England the first marriage recorded is between William Albin and the heiress of the great house of Toesni of Belvoir, and the history of their possessions at the time of Domesday further illustrates the connection between them.

Robert Todenis held a great number of manors in no less than twelve counties, and in six of these, and probably in some of the others, though the fact is not recorded, Osulf, who is described as his ancestor, previously held them. The six counties in which Osulf is recorded to have previously held Robert Todenis's manors are Leicester, Northampton, Herts, Beds, Bucks, and Suffolk, a compact group; whilst Robert de Todenis also held lands in Gloucester, Cambridge, Suffolk, Essex, York and Lincoln—it will be noticed nearly all Mercian and Northumbrian tenures, and which all or nearly all are connected with Nigel Albin and his ancestors. [History of the House of Arundel, by J. Pym Yeatman, London, 1882, page 76.]

Robert Toesni when he removed to Staffordshire along with the other Northumbrians changed his name to de Stafford. The Toesnis were Normans who came to Northumberland as a place of safety when banished by William Duke of Normandy, later surnamed the Conqueror. While there, they married into the royal family of Northumbria. It would appear that all the members of this Staffordshire colony were cousins, more or less remote, and that by marriage or birth they were all members of the old Northumbrian royal family. The de Staffords were for several generations connected with Stone Priory, which was the nearest religious house to the manor of Peshale. The following are a few among many of their deeds which appear in its chartulary:

Robertus de Stafford omnibus etc., donavi Godwinum de Ulenhale cum mansura etc. H. T. Willelmo, Philippo, Elya Capellanis, Godefrida Bras, Frarico de Cloptona, Roberto filio Hervei, Simone de Camera, Simone de Diacono de Stanis, Radulpho Hendebodi. Robert Stafford to all &c. I have given Godwin de Ulenhale &c. Witnesses: William, Philip, Elya Capellanis, Godefrida Bras, Frarico de Cloptona, Roberto, son of Hervei, Simon de Camera, Simon de Diacono of Stanis, Ralph Hendebodi.

Robertus de Stafford, omnibus, etc. donavi totam terram quae fuit Curtesii in Tisho etc. Haec omnia dedi eis in escambium pro Horselawe quam predicti Canonici mihi reddiderunt quam prius de Waltero de Burminton ad opus Ecclesiae suae de Stanes emebant etc. Hanc autem concessionem feci gratuito assensu et petitione Aviciae uxoris meae de cujus doario est manerium de Tisho etc. H. T: Roberto Bagod, Nicholao de Mulewich, Herveo de Stretton, Wulfrico Camerario, Godefrido Bras, Waltero Preposito, Toma filio Radulphi et Matilda uxore ejus, Herveio Bagot et Willelmo fratre ejus, Bernardo filio Walteri, Johanna filio Noel, Rogero de Edrington, Rogero filio Odonis, Rogero filio Roberti. Rob-

ert de Stafford, to all &c. I have given all the land which was Curtes' in Tisho &c. All this I have deeded to them in exchange for Horselawe which the aforementioned Canons will restore to me as soon as they buy it from Walter de Burminton, for the need of their own church from Stone, &c. I have made this concession with the consent and request of Avicia my wife from whose dower is the manor of Tisho, &c. Witnesses: Robert Bagot, Nicholas de Mulewick, Hervey de Stretton, Wulfric Camerarius, Godefrido Bras, Walter Prepositus, Toma son of Radulph and Matilda his wife, Hervey Bagot and William his brother, Bernard son of Walter, John son of Noel, Roger de Edrington, Roger son of Odonis, Roger son of Robert.

Haec est finalis concordia etc. apud Warwych anno regni Regis Richardi primo etc. inter Alanum de Bladis et Priorem de Stanes de uno mesuagio in Tyso etc.

Omnibus etc. Herveus de Stafford etc. Noverit universitas etc. quod cum ego apud Tysho decidivi in languorem de quo in Curia Domini Regis tanquam languidus me essoniavi contra Dominum H. de Aldithel. Prior et Conventus de Kenilworth ex mera liberalitate et compassione concesserunt mihi et uxori meae et camerariis meis et filiis nostris ibidem juxta talamum meum reverentiam et excellentiam . . . Nativitatis audire divinavi per fratrem et Canonicum suum Petrum, a die Natalis Domini usque Epiphaniam, proximo, sequentem, salva indemnitatem sua in omnibus et Ecclesiae suae de Tisho. Ego vero et heredes mei occasione hujus concessionis nullum jus cantariae in posterum in curia nostra de Tisso clamabimus etc. Hec conventio facta est anno Gratiae MCCXXVI. in crastino Beati Thomae Apostoli. Hii sunt testes: Ricardus Vicarius de Tisso, Robertus Capellanus de Kyn-ton, Magister Marcellus Officialis Domini Wygornensis Episcopi, Dominus Walterus Deyville, W. de Stafford et Robertus frater mei, Nicholas Ursus, et alii. This is a final concord &c. during the years of the reign of King Richard I. &c. between Alan de Bladis and the Prior of Stone concerning one messuage in Tyso &c.

To all &c. Hervey de Stafford &c. Let the whole world know &c. that inasmuch as I in my house at Tysho have decided because of greater weakness on which account I have essoigned (excused) myself, I being weak, to the court of our Lord the King against (the will of) my Lord H. de Aldithele. The Prior and Convent of Kenilworth out of pure liberality and compassion have ceded to me and my wife and my chamberlain and our children in that same place near my reverent and excellent telamon (evidently a vault for burial beside the column which by his command had been sculptured to represent his ancestor in an reverential attitude. The deed is defaced and thus the continuity is lost. The following is evidently the inscription on the column) . . . I have foretold that they would hear of the nativity through the brothers (monks) and their Canon Peter, from the birthday of our Lord to Epiphany next following for their unreserved salvation in all things and for our church in Tiso. Truly I and my heirs will claim &c. in the future no right to an anniversary mass for our dead in the court of Tisso. This agreement has been made in the year of Grace 1226 on the morrow of Saint Thomas the Apostle. These are the witnesses: Richard Vicar of Tisso, Robert Capellanus of Knyghton, Master Marcellus officer of Lord Wygornensis the

Bishop, Lord Walter Deyville, W. de Stafford and Robert my brother, Nicholas Urses and others.

Hec est finalis concordia etc. apud Salop, 6 Henry III., inter W. Priorem de Kenilworde pententem et Ricardum Clement et Emmam uxorem ejus tenentes de 1. virgata terrae in Tysho etc. This is a final concord &c. at Salop 6 Henry III. (1222) between W. the fifth Prior of Kenilworth, and Richard Clement and Emma his wife the tenants of one virgate of land in Tysho.

Universis etc. Robertus filius Nicholai de Stafford etc. me dedisse etc. quandam partem nemoris mei de Olehale pro anuma patris mei et uxoris meae Aviciae etc. H. T.: Ricardo Capellano, Godefrido Bras, Roberto filio Amum, Hugone de Bled; Johanne de Standona, H. de Cloptona, W. du Doversele. To all &c. I, Robert son of Nicholas de Stafford &c. have deeded &c. a certain part of my forest in Olehale for the good (of the souls) of my father and my wife Avicia, &c. Witnesses: Richard Capellano, Godfrey Bras, Robert son of Amum, Hugo de Bled, John de Standona, H. de Cloptona, W. du Doversele.

Robertus de Stafford omnibus etc. me dedisse medietatem Ecclesiae de Wuttona. H. T.: Waltero Decano de Salteford, Roberto Bagod Capellano meo, Willelmo Clerico de Stanes, Nicholao de Clopton et filio ejus Nicholao, Enisano de Bottele, Godefrido Bras, Ricardo de Brall, Radulpho, filio ejus, W. de Perci. Robert de Stafford to all &c. I have given the middle of the church of Wuttona. Witnesses: Walter the deacon of Salteford, Robert Bago my Chancellor, William the priest of Stone, Nicholas de Clopton and his son Nicholas Enisanus de Bottele, Godfrey Bras, Richard de Brall, Radulph his son, W. de Percy.

SECTION 3.

It will be found both interesting and instructive to briefly review the HISTORY of Staffordshire into which county our ancestor had now removed, and which land, together with a part of Shropshire just over the boundary, will be found to have been connected with our ancestors for many subsequent generations. In fact, their descendants are to be found there until this day.

We shall not detain the reader with an account of the very early history of Staffordshire, our interest at this time begins with 1013 when Edmund Ironside and Uhtred of Northumbria ravaged Shropshire, Cheshire, and Staffordshire, because those counties had refused to help them against the Danes. This Uhtred was our ancestor on the maternal line, being the grandfather of Ealdgyth, who married Ligulph, they being grandparents of Ormunda, who married Robert de Peshale.

In three years Staffordshire changed kings three times; for in 1013 it submitted with the rest of England to Sweyn; on his death, with the whole country, it reverted to Ethelred; and in 1016, on the division of the country at Olney, it went with the rest of Mercia to Canute.

In the same year, just before the treaty, both Canute and Edmund harried, burned and slew in the county.

The career of Edric Streona was cut short by Canute, and he was succeeded as earl, for so the ealdormen were now called, of Mercia by Leofwine, who in

turn was followed by his famous son Leofric. He died at Bromley in Staffordshire in 1057, and after Elfgar had been earl a few years, Edwin, the last earl of Mercia, succeeded him some time between 1062 and 1065, and is of interest to us as many of his estates lay in the county. On his death the earldom of Mercia came to an end. For though he had high birth, a handsome person, and winning manners, added to the piety of the age, he was politically worthless. When Harold Hardrada sailed up the Tyne he left the coast unguarded; when King Harold of England was marching south to fight William he hung back. He was one of the first to yield to William. Nevertheless he rebelled against the Conqueror. [Victoria History of the County of Stafford, by William Page, London, 1908.]

We have now reached the turning point of English history. England seemed conquered by the battle of Hastings, but after a brief lull a series of isolated risings took place, which were beaten in detail by William.

In 1069, when the Danes and English took York with the intention of displacing the Conqueror with an English king, Staffordshire and Shropshire broke out in revolt, probably at the instigation of Edwin. This district must have been imperfectly subdued up to this time. Both town and county paid dearly for their outbreak, for William in his northward march conquered them; and the huge confiscations, which were always great in proportion to the resistance to his rule, show that the patriotism of the Staffordshire men had led to a vigorous contest that was punished with merciless severity.

In the autumn of 1069, the news of the fall of his castles at York, of the slaughter of their garrisons, and of the capture of their commanders was presently brought to King William in the west. He had work on his hands there also. It is plain that the tidings of the coming of the Danish fleet had led to risings in various parts of England, even in shires far away from the banks of the Humber and the shores of the German Ocean. While William was in the Forest of Dean, war again broke out north and south of him. Devonshire and Somerset rose once more and there were hostile movements in Staffordshire and Shropshire, a district which must have remained very imperfectly subdued up to this time. [The Norman Conquest by E. A. Freeman, vol. 4, page 181.]

The hopes of the shires of the Welsh border were crushed no less utterly, but it is not equally easy to follow the march of events. The besieging force of Eadric, English and Welsh, disappeared from Shrewsbury, after, it would seem, burning the town. The movement at Stafford, that one of the three which William looked on as calling for his own presence, still remained to be put down. But as yet he had not time to attend to it. The danger in the North, where the Danes were actually in the land, where the castles of York had been broken down and the city itself was little more than a heap of blackened ruins, was the greatest danger of all. William knew when to pause, and he knew also when to act with speed and energy. The over confidence of his commanders in York had for once led him astray, and the fall of the capital of the North had been the result. As soon as the news came, he was moved with grief and wrath, and he at once set orth to avenge the blow which he had not been able to hinder. The nature of the force which he took with him showed that speed was the main object. It

is mentioned in an emphatic way that it was a force of cavalry. Before William could reach the North, the Danish fleet had withdrawn into the Humber, and the ships had been drawn up on the coast of Lindsey. William and his horsemen followed them. The crews were evidently scattered over the country, which William seems to have scoured with his horse. Some were overtaken and slain in the marshes of the district; others were driven out of various lurking-places, of which we have no distinct account, but which would seem to have been some kind of rough and hasty fortresses, which William deemed it needful to level with the ground. But the mass of the invaders made their way to their ships, and crossed over to the Yorkshire side of the estuary. There they were safe for the present. William had no naval force in those waters; so the Danes were left for awhile to devise plans by which they might avenge both themselves and their comrades. [The Norman Conquest by Edward A. Freeman, vol. 4, page 186-188.]

William had thus done all that could be done with the means immediately at his disposal. If he had not crushed the invading host, he had at least made them feel the force of his hand, and he had shown with what speed he could appear even in those parts of his kingdom where his presence was least looked for. As he had no immediate means of reaching the Danes in Holderness, he himself went back to put down the insurgents who still held their ground at Stafford. In Lindsey he left two trusty captains to guard that coast against any attacks from the Danes on the other side of the Humber. One of these was his brother Robert, Count of Mortain and now of Cornwall, who was thus soon called away from his new estates in the west, and who must have been fighting in the flats of Lincolnshire at the very time that the insurgents were besieging his own castle on the Peaked hill in Somerset. With him was joined in command another kinsman, Robert Count of Eu, the loyal son of William and Lescelina, now enriched with vast estates in the South-Saxon land, and who held one of the first fruits of the Conquest as guardian of the castle on the rocks of Hastings. William meanwhile made his way, no doubt with all speed, to put down the enemies to the south-west, whom he had been obliged to bear with for a season. He appeared at Stafford, and there is none of his exploits of which we should be better pleased to have full details. Our one account, if vague and brief, is still emphatic. By an easy success, he wiped out many of the factious party. But the effects of the blow were lasting; many entries in the Survey show how deeply the town and the shire of Stafford suffered, and how much lies hid under the few and pithy words of our story. The wasted houses of the town, the wasted lands of the shire, the vast scale on which the confiscation was carried out, show that Staffordshire must have been the scene of vigorous resistance, and that it was therefore marked out for special vengeance.

(Domesday 246) 'In burgo de Stadford habet Rex in suo dominio xviii. burgenses et viii vastas mansions; praeter has habet Rex ibi xxii mansiones de honore Comitum; harum v. sunt vastae, aliae inhabitantur.' Of the houses belonging to other lords, all foreigners, ninety-five were inhabited, and thirty-six waste. The entry of "wasta" often occurs in the shire, especially in a long list of Crown lands in 246. There are no large English landowners, but there is a list of Thegns at the end, among whom we find the Northumbrian Camel, and many of the inhabitants

of the lands adjacent to the Stone Priory. The genealogy of our family will disclose that there were several inter-marriages between the descendants of this Gamel and those of Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil.

At last the fearful march was over. William and his host came down (1069) into the rich pastures of the land which in after days was known as the Vale Royal of England. Here was the one great city which had not yet bowed to his might, the one still abiding home of English freedom. All the other great seats of royal, ecclesiastical, and municipal power were already his. William was king at Winchester and London, at Canterbury and York, at Glastonbury and Peterborough, at Exeter and Lincoln. But he was not yet King at Chester. The old City of the Legions, the river on which Edgar had been rowed by vassal kings, the minster where the English Basileus had knelt with his vassal kings around him, the walls from which men could look out on the land which Harold had added to the English realm—all still were free, standing untouched amid rounding bondage, like a single perfect column standing unhurt amid the shattered ruins of a forsaken temple. The twelve judges of the city had in old time sat in the name of the King, the Bishop, and the Earl. They must now, in the utter breakup of all national authority, have wielded a power as little amenable to any jurisdiction beyond their own gates as the rulers of any Italian city which barely stooped to own a nominal lord in the Teutonic Caesar. By ancient right the men of the whole shire were bound to repair the walls and the bridge of the local capital, and we cannot doubt that, in the course of the three years during which Chester had maintained its independence of the invader, the labor of the surrounding lands had been willingly given to strengthen the last national stronghold. There is no point in William's history at which we should more gladly welcome the minutest details than in this, the last stage of the real conquest of England. But not a detail, not an anecdote, is preserved; we know only the results. The work which had begun at Pevensey was brought to an end without hard fighting. William had to put down by force the hostile movements of what was now specially the Mercian land. We know not whether the city surrendered or was taken by storm; we know not by what operations the shire and the adjoining lands were conquered. But a siege of Chester would have put the military art of the time to as hard a trial as the siege of Exeter. The Roman town, beneath whose walls the heathen Aethelfrith had unwittingly fulfilled the warnings of Augustine to the stubborn Britons, had been left by him as Aella and Cissa had left Anderida. In the Danish wars of Alfred the walls still stood, no longer surrounding any dwelling place of man, but still capable of being turned to a defensive purpose in the warfare of the time. By the watchful care of the Lady of the Mercians, Chester had been again called into being as a city and fortress; and it was probably by her that the circuit of the Roman wall was extended to take in the mound on which the Norman castle was now to supplant her earlier stronghold. The mediaeval walls of Chester are more perfect than those of any other English city, and traces of their Roman forerunners still remain, enough to show that, except at this point, the line of the Roman fortification was strictly followed. Their circuit takes in the minster of Saint Werburgh, then a secular, but soon to become a monastic house, and which the changes of the sixteenth century had made the seat of the modern

bishoprick. The minster of Saint John, the church chosen for the devotions of Edgar, also a house of secular canons, soon to become one of the cathedral churches of the Mercian Diocese, lies on the east side of the city, without the walls. The fortifications which William had to reduce were doubtless those of the old Caesars as strengthened by the Mercian Lady. They took in a space which in those days must have been peninsular, as it is plain that the flat land which now lies between the river and the west wall of the city, known locally as the Rooddee, was covered by water long after William's time. The bridge on the south side was commanded by the fortress of Aethelfraed, as it has since been by the later castles, and the whole city must have stood as a compact square, well defended by both nature and art. How this last national stronghold fell we know not, but we know that it did fall, and that, as usual, a Norman keep soon rose on the old mound to act as a curb on the conquered city. And we know that the resistance which William met with in this his last conquest was enough to lead him to apply the same stern remedy which he had applied north of the Humber. A fearful harrying fell on city and shire and on the lands round about. From Cheshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, men young and old, women and children, pressed southwards in search of a morsel of bread. It is pleasant to learn that many of them found some measure of food and shelter at the gates of the Abbey of Evesham. The prudence of Abbot Aethelwig, and the favor which he contrived to keep at the hands of three successive kings, had at least not quenched his will to help the distressed, while the yet untouched wealth of his Abbey allowed him the means as well as the will. The houses, the streets, the churchyard of Evesham were crowded with homeless wretches who, well nigh dying with hunger before they reached the hospitable spot, had barely strength to swallow the food which the bountiful prelate offered to them. Every day, five, six, or more of the fugitives died and were buried by the pious care of the Prior Aelfric, to whose immediate guardianship the sufferers were entrusted. Nor was the bounty of Aethelwig confined to those only who, in the very depth of the evil days, amid the cold and hunger of this fearful winter, craved for alms to sustain their lives. Many a man of higher rank, whom the confiscations of William had driven from the lands and home of his fathers, found shelter and help in the holy house of Saint Ecgbine. But little was the help which all the prelates and thegns of England, had every one been as openhanded as Aethelwig, could have given to relieve the distress of a whole people. A hundred human beings, no small portion of the inhabitants of England in those days, are said to have died of cold and hunger in the winter which made William full king over the whole land. The figures are probably a mere guess; they can hardly rest on any trustworthy statistics; we know not whether they are meant to apply to Northumberland only or to all the shires which William harried. Such was the price to be paid for William's conquest. As the painter of his portrait tells us, he was stark that he recked not either men's sufferings or of their hatred. His historians say he had but won his own; and amidst all the woes of the wasted land, he could still give his thanks, and offer his gifts to God and Saint Martin, and to all the saints of Normandy and Gaul, who had blessed his holy work with success, and had girded him with

strength to chastise the perjurer and the rebel. [The Norman Conquest, by Edward A. Freeman, vol. 4, p. 186-212.]

But, at whatever cost, England was conquered. William had yet to struggle against revolts both among the conquered English and among his own people. But the land was won; there was no longer any portion of English ground which could still refuse submission to an invader; future struggles were simply revolts against a government which was now in full possession. The fall of Chester was the last scene of the long battle, the first blows of which had been struck when well nigh four years back, Tostig had first harried English ground by William's license. We ask, but we ask in vain, whether Ealdgyth and her babes were within the walls of the captured city, and whether it was now that William gained possession of the young heir of the house of Godwine, whose life, as long as William lived, was to be the life-in-death of a Norman prison. To questions like these no certain answer can be given. We know only that the land was won, and we know by what means the land which had been won was to be kept. The castle which was built to defend what was left of Chester was entrusted, with the rank of Earl, to the king's own step-son the Fleming Gerbod. William then marched again to Stafford, and took the same means as at Chester, by the foundation of a castle, to keep that dangerous town and shire also in order. The later castle of Stafford stands at some distance from the town, but the probability of the case may lead us to accept the local tradition which speaks of an earlier castle in the town itself, which from an entry in Domesday would seem to have been built and destroyed before the end of William's reign. The castles both of Chester and Stafford were guarded by competent garrisons, and were well furnished with provisions. The king then marched across the conquered country to Salisbury. The royal headquarters were doubtless fixed within the mighty trenches of elder days, on the hill fort where yet another Norman castle was no doubt already rising, and where the Norman minster was soon to rise. The great plain which is now covered by the modern city was well suited for a final gathering and review of the victorious army. On that ground, more than five hundred years before, had Cynric the West-Saxon won one of those great fights, each of which marks a stage in the change of Britain into England. And now William's host gathered on the same spot, to mark the last stage of the change by which England was not indeed changed into Normandy, but was driven to accept the Norman as her master. The Conqueror now gave great gifts to the men who had shared his toils, gifts which, we are told, were reward enough even for all that they had gone through. The conquerors of York and Stafford and Chester, the men who had laid waste English homes and fields, and who had forced their way through the frozen hills and valleys of Cleveland, received from the mouth of their sovereign the praise due to their deeds. They were at once dismissed with all thanks and honor. And those who had forsaken William's banners, or who had quailed under the toils of his marches, received no heavier punishment than to lose their share in the rewards of their comrades, and to be themselves kept under arms for forty days longer. When William could thus send away the troops whom he could really trust, and could keep himself surrounded only by discontented mutineers, it was plain that England was conquered. It was probably at this time that,

according to his custom, William built the castle in the town of Stafford, which was destroyed before the end of his reign, and at the date of Domesday lay in ruins. [The Norman Conquest, by Edward A. Freeman, vol. 4, page 207-212 & vol. 5, page 539-40.]

The displacement of the original landowners of the country after the Conquest was very thorough, no doubt aggravated by the resistance of 1069 and 1070.

When William had closed the campaign the country was a waste. The inhabitants, rich and poor, high and low, who had not been killed became wanderers. The story of that time makes the most pathetic reading in all English history. The lands were then distributed by the Conqueror to his loyal subjects, which accounts for the Northumbrians coming into Staffordshire, their land having also been badly harried. It would seem that the elders remained in Northumberland and the young folks came to Staffordshire, many families thus dividing, and some of the sons remaining in Northumberland, while others came to Stafford. Of the sons of Ligulph, Uhtred and Morkere remained in Northumberland, while Osbert de Stafford and Adam de Audley came to Staffordshire, while Ligulph remained in Northumberland. Gilbert de Corbeil remained in Northumberland, while his son Robert Fitz Gilbert de Corbeil came to Staffordshire, but not until after 1080, as he is not noticed as a Domesday tenant in Staffordshire. In fact he could not possibly have come before the year 1100.

At the time the commissioners of the Domesday Survey visited the county something like half was woodland, and generally speaking it was thinly inhabited, incapable of ordinary taxation, and badly stocked. At this time the greatest landowners in the county beside the king were, first of all, Robert de Toeni, afterwards called de Stafford, who took his name from Stafford, of which he was governor. All that he held in the county had belonged to its last Saxon earl, Edwin, and he was the largest lay owner. He was the younger son of Roger de Toeni, the hereditary standard-bearer of the Conqueror, but in spite of his descent and his great possessions he was not granted the dignity and power of an earldom, because on his maternal side he was a Northumbrian Englishman, and the Conqueror was taking no chance even with a half Englishman. This Robert de Stafford was the founder of the great house of Stafford, whose descendants in the fifteenth century became dukes of Buckingham, and perhaps the greatest landowners in England. It is difficult to state the exact relationship between the family of Robert de Toeni and that of Gilbert de Corbeil, except that they were cousins of quite close degree both by blood and by marriage. This much is certain, Robert de Toeni de Stafford married Elizabeth, daughter of Oswulf, the son of Franc, who was the son of Oswulf I., Lord of Bamborough and Earl of Northumberland. This made him cousin german to Ligulph and to the daughters of Earl Ealdred and their descendants, which is practically to say that he was a cousin by marriage or by birth to every member of that Northumbrian colony in Staffordshire at Stone Priory. Along with Robert de Toeni there came Orm, Pantulf, Osbert son of Ligulph, Adam de Audley, also son of Ligulph, Gamel Fitz Griffin, and Gresley his cousins, Vernon and others of the Northumberland colony who settled at Stone Priory in Staffordshire or Edgmond in Shropshire. Robert de Toeni and Gilbert de Corbeil were cousins in Normandy, in that they

had a common ancestor in Eystein the father of Rognvald, Earl of Mere. It is not so easy to determine the Shropshire colony, but we know that the Fitz Alans, the Mowbrays, and Pantulf, brother of Ligulph, were of that party of Northumbrian colonists. [Victoria History of the County of Stafford, by William Page, London, 1908.]

Some of the members of the Toesni family, including Robert de Toesni, were settled in England prior to the conquest and held property there, part of which they gave to St. Albans in Northumberland. [The History of the House of Arundel, by J. Pym Yeatman, page 71.]

Next to Robert de Toesni as a landowner, came Roger of Montgomery, also at one time a refugee to Northumberland, Earl of Shropshire, one of the four great palatine earldoms. Then came William Fitz Anculf, the owner, among other fiefs, of Dudley Castle, of whom nothing is known except that his entire barony came into the possession of Fulke Paynel, who probably married Fitz Anculf's heiress. Henry de Ferrers, who built Tutbury Castle, was one of the commissioners of the Domesday Survey. His estates were more compact than those of most of the great nobles, whose holdings were split up partly by the policy of the Conqueror and partly by the scattered nature of the lands of their Anglo-Saxon predecessors. Hugh de Montgomery, one of the sons of Earl Roger, and Richard Forester also held estates in the county. Some lands still remained in the possession of Saxon thegns, and ecclesiastical landowners had a goodly share, the Bishop of Chester being the largest, while the others were the abbots of Westminster and Burton, the French abbey of Saint Remy at Rheims, and the canons of Stafford and Handone (Wolverhampton). The castles mentioned at Tutbury and Dudley were most probably like other castles of this period, of very simple construction, and the name does not necessarily imply even the use of stone in their construction. [The Victoria History of the County of Stafford, by William Page, London, 1908.]

After its terrible experience in the early part of the Conqueror's reign Staffordshire had peace till 1102, in which year the great house of Montgomery was in arms against Henry I. Robert of Bellesme, another of the sons of Roger of Montgomery, forestalled Henry's summons to answer for his share in Duke Robert's invasion the preceding year by gathering an army of Welsh and Normans. With these he and his brother Arnold laid waste part of Staffordshire, and thence carried off many horses and other animals, and some men into Wales. At this time we find Stafford Castle, evidently a successor of that which had so short a life in the reign of William I., in the hands of the king under William Pantulf as its governor; and the castle, garrisoned by 200 men-at-arms, was a royal base of operations against Bellesme, whose castles of Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury were captured and he himself driven to Normandy. We know positively that William Peshale our ancestor was a member of this force as the records show that the latter was tenant of William Pantulf. The downfall of this Bellesme, one of the worst examples of the turbulent Norman barons, was hailed in England with delight. His life was spared, but his English domains, which included large estates in Staffordshire, were confiscated. The royal castle after this declined in importance, and like many others degenerated into a gaol, though it was

occasionally dignified with the name of castle, even as late as the reign of Henry VIII. [Victoria History of the County of Stafford, by William Page, London, 1908.]

As regards the commercial and industrial development of Staffordshire, it is quite evident that there was but little progress between the eleventh and the sixteenth century. We know that the county suffered considerably in the civil war of Stephen's day, being for some time, in the campaign of 1153, the headquarters of Matilda's son Henry. The records of the administration of justice in the manorial and other courts, including those of the forest, throw a good deal of light upon the life and customs of the people in mediaeval times. They show us a community mainly agricultural whose misdemeanors are chiefly connected with field and forest. There are innumerable fines for depasturing sheep and cattle, including parts of the forest for purpose of cultivation, and throwing down fences on the lord's land, and so on.

The number of private individuals who had the right to hang thieves on a private gallows as late as the fourteenth century seems to have been considerable and included the priors of Stone, Trentham, and Lapley, as well as the abbot of Burton, whilst the claims of the bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, and of the dean and chapter of Penkridge, were under consideration at the time when Edward I. made his famous inquiry into feudal jurisdictions in the interests of national justice.