

CHAPTER I

THE EARLS OF CORBEIL TO ROBERT DE CORBEIL OR DE PESHALE, FIRST LORD OF PESHALE

ROBERT DE PESHALE, the first of that name, and the first Lord of Peshale, was the son of Guilbert, a younger son of Rainaud, the fifth Earl of Corbeil, Normandy.¹ This Guilbert de Corbeil accompanied William the Conqueror on his final expedition into England in 1066.² His son, Robert, who probably came over with him, was granted the Lordship of Peshale by Robert de Stafford about the time of the compilation of the Domesday Book, as will be shown later in Chapter II.

The Corbeils were a powerful Norman family descended, in common with the Dukes of Normandy, from Rollo, the Viking leader of the Danish founders of Normandy. The origin of Rollo is obscure, but Norse tradition, as given by Snorri Sturluson, makes Rollo to be one Hrólfr, son of Rögnvaldr, Earl of More, who led a Viking life in the West of Scandinavia, in the reign of Harfager, King of Norway.

According to various Sagas quoted by Du Chaillu in *The Viking Age*, Rögnvaldr was the son of Eystein Glumra, son of Ivar Uppland Jarl, son of Halfdan the Old. He assisted King Harald in the conquest of Norway, and

¹ Anderson's *Genealogical Tables*, 490.

² How and Holinshed's *Chronicle*, vol. i.

received in return for his services the two Maeris and Raumsdal. He married Ragnhildr, daughter of Hrólfr Nefja, by whom he had three sons, viz., Ivar, who fell in the Hebrides, whilst on an expedition with King Harald; Hrólfr, or Rollo as he was afterwards called by the French; and Thörir the Silent, who married King Harald's daughter Arbot, by whom he had a daughter, Bergljot, mother of Hakon Jarl the Great, the hero of the battle of Goms-viking.

Rollo, the second son, was expelled from Norway in the latter half of the ninth century for making a raid on the coast between Norway and Gothland, contrary to the King's commands. On being outlawed, he first retired with his ships among the islands of the Hebrides, whither the flower of the Norwegian nobility had fled on the conquest of the Kingdom by Harald. Those warriors readily accepted Rollo as their leader, and soon began reasserting their old habits of raid and plunder.

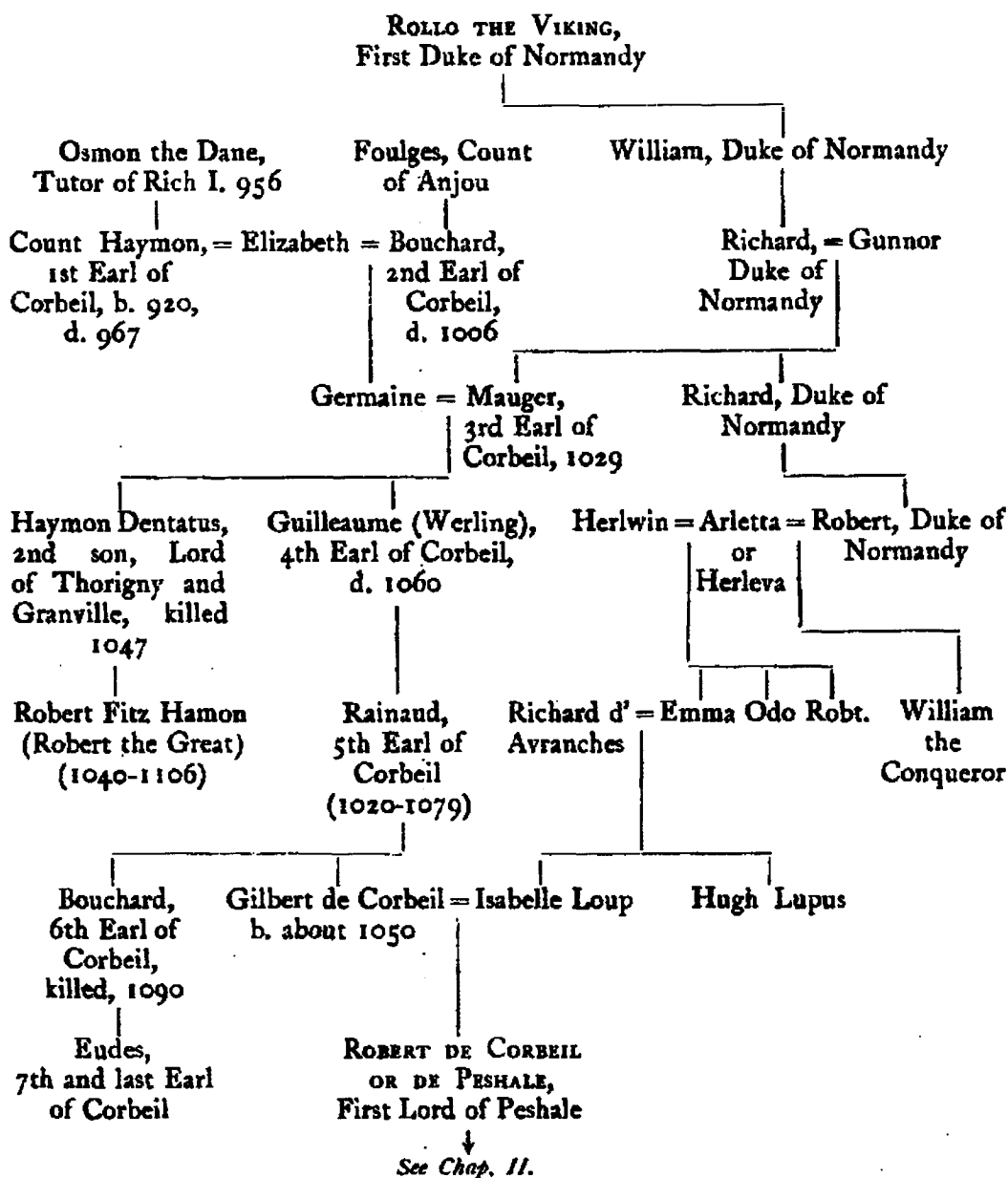
Towards the end of the ninth century, Rollo and his followers made several attacks on French coastal towns, culminating in the siege of Paris of 886 when the City was successfully defended by Count Odo. In 911, however, Charles the Simple, then King of France, saved the country from further attacks by the Northmen by the Treaty of Clair-sur-Epte. By that Treaty, the district of the Lower Seine, now called Normandy, was given to Rollo and his followers, who rapidly adopted the French language, manners, and religion, and came to be known as the Normans.

Duke Rollo appears to have been baptized into the Christian faith in the year 912, and in 919, he was married to his old love Popei, daughter of Beringer, Earl of Bessin and Bayeux, whom he had taken captive at the fall of Bayeux in 890. He was already married to her '*more Danico*,' but this Christian marriage rendered legitimate, in the eyes of his Christian subjects, the two children he had

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had by her, namely, William and Gerloc or Gerletta, who received the name of Adela at her baptism, and afterwards became the wife of William, Duke of Aquitaine and Poitiers.

In 926, Rollo, owing to his extreme age, handed over the cares of government to his son William, and on his death some five years afterwards, was buried at Rouen. A tomb with inscription erected to his memory, several hundreds of years afterwards, is to be seen there still.

Dean Spence in his *Homes of the Norman Dukes*, writes of Rollo as follows :

‘The thirty wild years as a rover by land and sea, thirty years of rapine and of cruel deeds done to well-nigh defenceless cities, villages, and monasteries, would seem a strange preparation for one who was to organize an important nation, who was to weld together men of various races, who was to lay the strong ground stories of a mighty realm, destined in a few short years powerfully to influence the history of the world. Yet this is what Rollo the Viking, the wild Northman freebooter, did in Rouen and Bayeux, between A.D. 911 and A.D. 927. The first of the seven mighty Dukes of Normandy must have been more than sixty years old when he began his curious, but enduring work. For enduring it indeed was. What he began his six successors went on with and developed—the strong and firm government, the respect for the Christian faith, law and order, the gradual restoration of the old ruined religious houses and their great educational and other works, the curious welding together of Dane and Frenchman which produced the Norman,—all these changes were the care of the old freebooter Rollo the Viking, his children and children’s children for six generations, so that in less than a century and a half after the grim old Dane was laid in his tomb in the Rouen Minster that he had restored, his Norman land was famous for its new school of architecture, for its lovely minsters, its vast monasteries, its flourishing

cities ; was (still more remarkable) famous for its matchless schools, and even for the wealth and beauty of its "Romance" or French literature. For three generations, that is during the reigns of the first three Dukes, a period of some ninety eventful years, the old Norsk religion—in which Thor and Odin were worshipped, and the wild banqueting hall of Valhalla looked to as the glorious goal of the unconquered fighting hero—struggled with Christianity in the hearts of the great Norman Dukes and their faithful companions in arms. Rollo and his two successors were more than nominal Christians, as we shall see ; nay, at times his son and grandson were even fervent devotees to the Christian faith ; yet ever and anon the spirit of the old loved Paganism of their fathers influenced them and their followers. This was especially noticeable in their marriages. The aversion of these brilliant and successful men to the Christian marriage tie is remarkable, and the first three Dukes made no concealment of their dislike to the princesses to whom, mainly for political reasons, they were united by Christian rites. Their love and affection all belonged to the partners whom they had chosen for themselves, and to whom some Pagan rite loosely bound them, and not to those high-born women, whom, without pretending to love, they had married with all the ceremony of the Christian Church.'

Rollo's son William, surnamed Longsword, is said to have been a man of culture and refinement, as well as a warrior unrivalled in horsemanship and the use of arms. He was a strong Churchman, and during his reign rebuilt the Abbey of Jumièges. With all his zeal for the new faith, however, he did not appreciate the Church's teaching of the sanctity of marriage, and, like his father, contracted a 'Danish' marriage with one Espriota¹ (daughter of Herbert, Earl of Senlis, and sister of Bernard the Dane), by whom he had a son Richard his successor. Soon after the birth of Richard, William was persuaded by one of his Counsellors to enter

¹ St. Alleis, Guillaume de Jumièges.

into a Christian marriage with one Luitgard, daughter of Herbert Count of Vermandois, but there was no issue of this marriage.

In 936, Duke William, accompanied by Hugh the Great, Herbert Count of Vermandois, and others, received at Boulogne, on his landing from England, Louis d'Outremer, the new King of France, son of Charles the Simple, who acquired his nickname by having been educated at the English Court. William conducted him to Laon and assisted at his coronation. Three years afterwards, however, he quarrelled with him and entered into a formal league against him with Hugh the Great and Herbert of Vermandois. The remainder of his life was occupied in invasions and political disturbances, and he was assassinated in the year 942,¹ after a reign of less than twenty years.

Upon William's assassination, Bernard the Dane, the brother of Espriota, fetched from Bayeux William's only child Richard, then barely ten years old, in order that he might be solemnly invested with the ducal sword and mantle and to receive the homage of the Normans. Dean Spence describes the scene as follows :

'The Norman chieftains gathered round William Longsword's coffin. They included old grey-headed companions of Rollo, with their sons and grandsons, men who were the ancestors of the future conquerors of Italy and Sicily ; men, whose children's children fought and won on the stricken field of Hastings ; men, whose descendants became the foremost Crusaders, the fathers of the proudest Houses of the mighty Anglo-Norman kingdom, and in their midst, standing by his murdered father's coffin, the little fair-haired boy with ruddy cheeks, whom they had fetched from Danish Bayeux. One grey-headed chieftain held the ducal coronet on the boy's head, one kissed the little hand, and the others swore eternal allegiance and fidelity to their child Duke Richard, who in sorrow and perplexity stood gazing on his

¹ Anselme and Guillaume de Jumièges.

father's coffin. It was the last great service Rollo's son could do his people and the land, this welding together by his coffin the varied interests of his mighty chieftains. In this solemn moment the Norman Dane and the Norman Frenchmen forgot their jealousies, their antipathies, the conflicting interests of the old religion and the new, in their stern resolve to avenge their master's death by raising the throne of their master's son higher than the thrones of any of the Princes of France.'

Acknowledged by the Norman chiefs, Richard next received a formal investiture from the French King. Louis, however, under the pretence of educating the young Duke at his own court, persuaded the Normans to allow Richard to accompany him back to France. Soon after, Richard was imprisoned at Montleon, and Louis sought to recover Normandy for himself. A Norman esquire, Osmund or Osmon the Dane, had been allowed to accompany Richard to Montleon as his tutor however, and with his help he escaped and joined his Uncle Bernard. Thereupon Louis, with the aid of Hugh the Great, in the year 945, made war upon the Normans. Bernard called to his assistance the King of Denmark, and Louis was defeated. Peace was concluded, and Richard received a further grant of territory. Osmon then skilfully arranged a marriage between the young Duke and Esmé, daughter of Hugh the Great, then Count of Paris and the most powerful man in France.

With the celebration of this marriage commences the history of the Earldom of Corbeil. The occasion is described by Le Paire, in his book on the *History of the Town of Corbeil*, published in Paris in 1901. Referring to the marriage of Richard and Esmé, this author states that the betrothal ceremonies were carried out at Paris in 956. All the nobility of Normandy were present at this festivity, amongst them being Haymon, son of Osmon, a young man of much promise, 'beloved and made much of by the ladies.' In the French Court was a lady equally prominent by name, Elizabeth, a

near relative of Avoye, wife of Hugh the Great and sister of the Emperor Othon. These young people fell in love with each other, and the match being approved by the statesmen on both sides, Elizabeth was married to Haymon in the following year, viz. 957. As a wedding gift, Hugh the Great gave Haymon the Earldom of Corbeil and the Manor of Gournay on the Marne. At this time Hugh the Great was at enmity with the Emperor Othon, and hoped by these intermarriages to keep the support of Normandy.

This marriage of the young Duke with a daughter of Hugh the Great was not pleasing to Louis, and shortly afterwards he allied himself to Othon of Germany, and attacked Normandy. Othon and Louis penetrated as far as Rouen, where Hugh the Great had withdrawn with Richard, Duke of Normandy, now his son-in-law. Here they were repulsed in battle by the two princes and compelled to retreat.

Haymon, the first Earl of Corbeil, was naturally a strong supporter of Richard, and it is recorded that he and his followers greatly distinguished themselves at this battle. After depositing his booty in his castle at Corbeil, Haymon set out to avenge himself on certain nobles who, under cover of the foreign invasion, had offended him. Amongst these was the Count of Pallnau,—Pallnau being a small castle situated at the junction of the rivers Etamples and Essonne, above the bridge of Gomiers. In this castle were preserved the relics of two patron saints, St. Exupere or St. Spire and St. Leu, both Bishops of Bayeux. Haymon took the castle by storm and slaughtered the defenders. The relics he retained as his own portion of the booty, and resolved to build a church at Corbeil in which to place them.

The booty taken during the war and the ransom of his prisoners provided funds for the building of the church, and these were supplemented by property left him by his father, Osmon. The church was built and the relics installed

therein, and provision was also made for the upkeep of four priests to celebrate Holy Mass daily in the church. According to the Abbé Lebœuf, the building was completed in the year 963.

About the same time the relics of St. Guenault, Abbé of Landevenne, were brought from Courcouronne to the Castle of Corbeil, and placed in the care of Count Haymon. It is recorded that the Count received them with great ceremony, and later placed them in a chapel situated in St. Jacques, just outside the town. This chapel, with its grounds, he gave to the monks, and we find that the Priory of St. Guenault was enjoying this heritage as late as the year 1630.

According to Dom Guillaume Morin, the old bridge of Corbeil was also built by Count Haymon. This bridge spanned the Seine, thus connecting Old Corbeil on the right bank with New Corbeil on the left bank, which included Count Haymon's castle and the church.

Louis d'Outremer died in 956, and Hugh the Great shortly afterwards. Their sons and heirs, Lothaire and Hugh Capet respectively, were on friendly terms, and Count Haymon took advantage of the peace to go on a pilgrimage to Rome. He died, however, on the road, not far from Corbeil, on the way home from Italy. The Countess Elizabeth had the body brought to Corbeil, where it was buried in the Church of St. Spire. There is no contemporary inscription giving the date of the death of Count Haymon, but La Barre estimates that he died in 967, ten years after his marriage. For some time afterwards, the anniversary of his death was solemnly observed on the 28th of May in the Church of St. Spire, but the exact date of his death is uncertain. A tomb, raised to his memory, still exists in the church, and is of great interest on account of its antiquity.

A good description of the church and of Count Haymon's tomb is given by M. Pinard, member of the Société

Française (for the preservation of historical monuments), in his *Monograph on the Church of St. Spire, Corbeil*. St. Spire, or St. Exupere as he should be called, was, says M. Pinard, a missionary sent from Rome to preach the faith to the Gauls. Nothing is known of his life, except that he was the first bishop of Bayeux, and that he died towards the end of the fourth century. He was buried, it is said, in the Church of St. Jean at Bayeux, and it is not known how his remains came to be transferred to Pallnau. The second patron saint of Corbeil, St. Leu, commonly called St. Louis, is said to have been the third bishop of Bayeux. He died at the end of the fifth century. As related above, the relics of this saint were brought to Corbeil by Count Haymon, together with those of St. Spire. M. Pinard is of the opinion that Count Haymon died before the completion of the church, and that it was Count Bouchard, his successor, who actually performed the pious duties of depositing the precious relics in the church. The church constructed by Haymon, however, did not exist long, for it was burned about the year 1019, and was afterwards rebuilt on the same site. This new building was also burned down between the years 1137 and 1144. The Cartulary of the Church of Notre Dame in the same town preserves contemporary evidence of this disaster. Some parts of the present edifice were certainly constructed at this time, but considerable additions have been made since then. The reconstruction must have been slow, since the consecration did not take place until October 10th, 1437. The powder factories established at Essonnes in 1688 caused much damage to the churches in Corbeil, more particularly to St. Spire, which was the nearest to them. The violent shocks produced by the frequent explosions had most serious effects, and the iron bands, which it was found necessary to place round the pillars, still exist in the present edifice.

A Charter of 1029 refers to the 'Castellum Sancti

Exuperii,'¹ and one hundred and fifty years later we find it designated 'Sanctus Exuperius de sub castro forti,'² but in recent times the name has come to be abbreviated to St. Spire.

In describing the monuments, M. Pinard points out that whereas Count Haymon's tomb is now in a side chapel, it was originally in the cenotaph. This monument is believed to have been erected to his memory at the commencement of the fourteenth century, that is, nearly 350 years after his death. The statue is in the form of an armed man lying prostrate; it is of stone of a very fine grain, while the head, neck and hands are of white marble. The veins and muscles are reproduced in a remarkably fine manner. The body is clothed in a coat of mail, over which there is a cloak edged with fur. The baldrick is large and of an unusual form, and on it is represented, alternately, the head of an angel or child, and a griffin with two heads. Although coats of arms were not much worn before the Crusades, yet his shield has on it a coat of arms consisting of a lion salient on a red background. The costume, likewise, is somewhat of an anachronism. 'Gules, a lion salient,' were the arms of the later Earls of Corbeil, and it is probable that these were chosen for that reason. At the foot of the statue is a dragon with two heads, which, tradition says, represents a monster much feared in the country, and from which Haymon delivered it. In a street of Corbeil, namely, the Trou-Patrix, there is an old covered drain entering into the river Essonne, and, according to tradition, this place was the den of the dragon. The legend doubtless indicates that Count Haymon did much to better the health of the town and to rid it of disease. In the base of the monument was at one time a black marble panel with the following inscription beautifully inlaid in white marble mosaic: 'Cy gist le cors de hault et noble homme, le comte Hémon, jadis comte de

¹ 'Church of St. Exuperius.'

² 'St. Exuperius near to the castle.'

Corbeuil, qui fonda cette église et plusieurs autres. Dieu ait l'ame de luy. Amen.'¹

Returning to Le Paire's *History of Count Haymon*, the writer states that Thibauld, at first Abbé of Cormery in Touraine, and later Abbé of St. Maur, is generally considered to have been a son of Count Haymon, but it is difficult to believe that, if Haymon had an heir, he should have persuaded him to enter in his youth the monastery of Cluny, as did Thibauld.

However this may be, Haymon's actual successor was Bouchard,² son of Foulques the Good, Count of Anjou. Bouchard received the Earldom on his marriage with Elizabeth, Haymon's widow, who was still comparatively young, and is said to have been very beautiful at this time. From his youth, Bouchard had been brought up in the royal house, together with Hugh Capet, son of Hugh the Great. He naturally became his friend and confidant, and was later invested by him with many titles and honours. At the news of the death of Count Haymon, Hugh immediately thought of marrying his widow to his favourite Bouchard, and, succeeding in his designs, he invested Bouchard with the Castellanies of Corbeil and Gournay-sur-Marne. The Count later received also the Earldom of Paris, but by right of office only, as it was by this title and position that the Capets had succeeded to absolute royalty.

In 982, Bouchard went to Arras to demand in the name of the King, from Count Arnould, the relics of the saints which he had taken from the monks. He succeeded in his mission, and acquired great popularity in Flanders, and renown for holiness. The Abbé Lebœuf writes: 'A Charter of this Count, given in favour of the Abbey des

¹ Here lies the body of the high and noble man, the Count Hémon, formerly Count of Corbeil, who built this church and many others. May God receive his soul. Amen.

² See *Life of Bouchard, Count of Melun and Corbeil*, by Endes, a monk of the Abbey of St. Maur des Fosses.

Fosses, finishes thus: *Actum publici in Curia Nostra Corboli anno Incarnationes Dominicae MVI (1006)*—which shows that the Counts of Corbeil had a palace there from this time.'

Another exploit of Count Bouchard was in connection with the monastery of St. Maur. Scandalized at the worldly conduct of Magenart, then Abbé of St. Maur, he succeeded, with the aid of Hugh Capet, in reforming the monastery, and later gave to it, with the consent of his wife Elizabeth, the Lordship of Neuilly-sur-Marne, and the Lordships of Lisse, near Corbeil, of Siaux-en-Gatinais and of Couresaux en Melunais.

Hugh Capet's successor, Robert, who came to the throne in the year 996, granted the same friendship and confidence to Count Bouchard as had his father, and both were equally zealous in religious matters. During the difficult period of the separation of the King and his wife Berthe, and of the marriage of the King with Constance, Bouchard was a faithful supporter of Robert.

Amongst the Nobles who had taken up the cause of Berthe, was Eudes, son of Eudes, Count of Chartres and of Blois, and of Berthe herself, who had married Robert after the death of Eudes. Under the influence of Eudes the son of the abandoned Queen, one Gaultier, guardian of the castle of Melun, took possession of the town and delivered it up to Eudes. Thereupon, Bouchard, with the support of the King and Richard, second Duke of Normandy, besieged the town with such success that the defenders were obliged to surrender.

Bouchard's last exploit was the quashing of the rebellion of Reinart, Count of Sens. Reinart wished his son Brunon to be elected Archbishop, and on Geotheric being chosen, Reinart took up arms against him and forced him to take refuge with Regnaud, Bishop of Paris, said by some to be a son of Bouchard. Instructed by the King to restore order and punish the rebels, Bouchard set out against Reinart, who narrowly missed being captured.

After this expedition, Bouchard became ill and retired to the Abbey of St. Maur, where he undertook all the duties of a novice, even to carrying the candlesticks in church. Thibaud, then Abbé of Saunt Maur, is said to have protested against Bouchard performing this humble office, and Bouchard is stated to have replied in the following words: 'Si lors que j'étais Capitaine suivi de gens d'armes et de noblesse, j'ay fait gloire de porter la chandelle devant un roy terrien, à plus forte raison je me dois humilier devant la Majesté de Dieu, et porter les chandeliers en sa maison, et, selon mon pourvoir, aider a célébrer le Service divin.'¹

Bouchard did not long endure these hardships, however, for, according to the Chronicle of St. Denis, he died on March 1st, 1007. The obsequies were magnificently carried out in the presence of all his family, and he was buried in one of the chapels of the Abbey. On his tomb, the following epitaph was engraved:

'Hic vir magus quondam, dom Corpore vivit,
 Nomine Bucardus, per mundi climata notus,
 Celsus erat meritis distisfactisque modestus.
 Pauperibus largus viduis per cuneta benignus,
 Ipsius en corpus tumulo requescit in illo,
 Martuis ostendit obiisse Kalendus.'²

According to Gaignières, the tomb represented the statue of a knight lying prone on a pedestal which was let into the wall.

Elizabeth, the widow of Count Bouchard, and formerly wife of Count Haymon, died, according to the Chronicle of St. Denis, on January 18th, 1008, and was buried in the

¹ 'If, while I was a Captain followed by the common soldier and by the noble, I took glory in carrying the torch before an earthly King, how much the more then ought I to humble myself before the majesty of God, and carry the candlesticks in His House, and according to my power, help to celebrate Divine Service.'

² 'Here, in this tomb, lies the body of a man great during his life, named Bouchard, renowned throughout the whole world, of a high merit, kindly in his speech and in his actions, generous towards the poor, liberal in his charities. He died on the first of March.'

same chapel, her tomb, according to Gaignières, was that of a lady lying likewise on a pedestal. The epitaph inscribed on the tomb was as follows :

‘Hoc placuit Domino conjungere vivos,
Et poliendræ simul jungere sic voluit,
Hoc qui cunque legis persolve carmina Psalmi,
Spiritus ut valeant sexudere regna poli.’¹

Both these epitaphs were transcribed by the Monk Oddes in 1508, and at the time of writing he said that the epitaphs were already half destroyed.

Before he died, Count Bouchard confirmed in writing all the pious gifts of his predecessor Count Haymon, and it is stated by the old historians, that he also completed the Church of St. Pierre at Melun.

According to La Barre, Bouchard had by his wife Elizabeth an only daughter, Germaine, who was married to Maugis or Mauger, a Norman Prince, son of Richard first Duke of Normandy, who received thereby the Earldom of Corbeil in the right of his wife, and so became the third Earl of Corbeil.

Richard, first Duke of Normandy, surnamed ‘The Fearless,’ reigned from 945 to 996, during which time the province of Normandy increased steadily in strength and prosperity. As already stated, in 956 Richard, at the age of fourteen, had married Esmé, daughter of Hugh the Great. There was no issue of this marriage, and on Esmé’s death, Richard married his mistress, Gunnora, or the ‘Lady Gunnor,’ who is described as sister to Herfaste, a Dane of noble birth. Dudo calls her ‘une très belle femme, très adroite et de grand esprit, et une femme, accomplie, et d’une famille de Dannemark de haute noblesse.’² By this

¹ ‘Just as it pleased God to unite them during their life ; so in the same way it has pleased Him to reunite them in death. Whoever ye be that read this, remember the verse of the Psalmist, “Souls such as these transcend the Kingdoms of the Earth.”’

² ‘A very beautiful woman, very skilful and of great intellect, an accomplished woman, of a noble Danish family.’

marriage, Richard's several children by Gunnor were made legitimate.

According to Guillaume de Jumièges, Duke Richard had three sons, namely, Richard the Good, his successor as Richard, second Duke of Normandy; Robert, who became Archbishop of Rouen; and Mauger or Maugis,¹ who married in 1012, Germaine, the daughter and heiress of Count Bouchard, thereby coming into the Earldom of Corbeil. This Mauger is not to be confused with Mauger, son of Richard the Good, Archbishop of Rouen in the time of William the Conqueror.

Richard's daughter Emma, the 'Flower of Normandy,' was twice crowned Queen of England, having married, first in 1002, King Ethelred, and second in 1017, King Canute. By her first husband she became the mother of Edward the Confessor, and by her second of King Hardicanute. According to various authorities, Richard had, besides the above, two or three illegitimate children.

Richard the Good, fourth Duke of Normandy, was not the equal of his forefathers, but during his reign the province enjoyed continued prosperity. He married first, Judith, daughter of Geoffrey, Earl of Brittany, by whom he had three sons; Richard, who succeeded as the fifth Duke; Robert 'le Diable,' the sixth Duke, who, by Arletta or Herleva, had William, the seventh Duke and the Conqueror of England. The third son was William, said to have become a monk at Fécamp. By his second marriage with Estrite, Princess of Denmark, Richard the Good had no issue, but by his third wife Papia, he had a son, Mauger, who, as mentioned above, was Archbishop of Rouen, 1037 to 1056. Richard the Good died in 1026.

With Mauger, third Earl of Corbeil, the family of Corbeil begins, and it was his descendant, Robert de Corbeil, who settled in England and took the name of Robert de

¹ Dudo, p. 137. Guillaume Gemmet, *Hist. Angl. Scripta*, in British Museum, 2070, d. p. 458. Speed, p. 413.

Peshale. Mauger's wife, Germaine, was celebrated for her beauty and grace, and the marriage is said to have been strongly advised by Bishop Regnaud, Chancellor of France, who wished to maintain the alliance between the Dukes of Normandy and the Counts of Corbeil. Mauger rendered great services to King Henry of France in the struggle for the crown against the King's mother, Constance, and became one of his greatest friends. As a reward for his services he received the county of Mortmaigne. He died about 1030, leaving by Germaine two sons. The elder, named Guillaume, succeeded him as Earl of Corbeil and Mortmaigne, while the second son, Hamon, nicknamed Dentatus¹ (from having been born, it is said, with teeth), received the seigneuries of Thorigny and Granville.

Little is known of Hamon Dentatus, but according to Robert Wace's *Roman de Rou* he took part in the rebellion of the principal Norman barons against Duke William, and was slain in the celebrated battle of Val-es-Dunes. He is recorded to have struck down King Henry, who was assisting the young Duke against the rebels, and this story is confirmed by William of Malmesbury in his narrative of the battle.² Freeman, describing the fight, writes: 'The King presently encountered one of the three great chiefs of the rebellion; another thrust, dealt by the lance of Hamon, again laid Henry on the ground; but a well-timed stroke from a French Knight more than avenged this second overthrow; the Lord of Thorigny was carried off dead on his shield like an old Spartan. The King honoured his valiant adversary, and, by his express order, Hamon was buried with all fitting splendour before the Church of our Lady at Esquai on the Orne.'³

¹ William of Malmesbury (ii. 230) introduces him as 'Haimo Dentatus, avus Roberti quo nostro tempore in Anglia multarum possessionum incubator exstitit.' [Hamon Dentatus, father of Robert, by whom in our own time Anglia was deprived of many possessions.]

² William of Malmesbury (iii. 120).

³ *History of the Norman Conquest*, vol. ii. p. 257.

Haymon Dentatus left two sons. The first, Robert Fitz-Hamon, joined Duke William on his expedition to England, and later fought against the Welsh on behalf of King William Rufus. He was afterwards styled Prince of Glamorgan. He had no son, but one daughter, Mabel, who married Robert, Duke of Gloucester, natural son of King Henry I. According to William of Malmesbury (v. 398) Robert Fitz-Hamon died of a wound received at Tinchebrai, 1106. He was buried in a chapel, founded by himself, in the Abbey of Tewkesbury. On a plate erected in 1397 in the chapel is inscribed, 'In ista Capella jacet Dominus Robertus Filius Hamonis, hujus Loci Fundator.'¹ His arms are depicted as 'Azure, a Lion rampant, guardant, Or.' It is interesting to note that a lion salient was depicted on the shield of Count Haymon on the tomb erected to his memory in Corbeil in the fourteenth century, and further that the arms of the Peshales of the thirteenth century consisted of the Swynnerton Cross with an escutcheon bearing a lion salient.

On the death of Robert Fitz-Hamon, all his titles and property descended, according to Norman law, to his brother Richard de Granville, the ancestor of the present Granvilles and Grenvilles.

Guillaume, Earl Mauger's eldest son, besides being Earl Corbeil was also Count of Mortagne. He is identical with the count called de Verlange or Werling by the Normans, and is so referred to in Freeman's *Norman Conquest*. The first manuscript in which Guillaume is mentioned is a deed dated 1040, in which he confirms the gift by Nantier, his viscount, made to the monastery of St. Pierre des Fossés, of the Church of St. Jean, newly built, 'juxta murum Corbeili,' which proves that Corbeil was already a fortified town. In 1048, at Sens, in the palace of the King, he took part in a meeting composed of seven bishops; of Robert, Duke of Burgundy; of Rainard, second Count of Sens; and of

¹ In this chapel lies Duke Robert, son of Hamon; he was the founder of this place.

Raoul, third Count of Valois. At this meeting King Henry granted a Charter authorizing the establishment of the priory of St. Ayoul. In a Charter of 1050 he is mentioned as 'Guillelmus Miles nostri Castri Corbeili.'

Shortly after this, however, Duke William, natural son of Robert of Normandy, who was at this time strengthening his position by despoiling all his foes of their possessions, and bestowing them on his own kinsmen, took advantage of a treasonable remark of Count Guillaume to deprive him of his title and property as Count of Mortagne. Count Guillaume was obliged to leave the country temporarily, and went to the wars in Apulia in Italy, attended by a single esquire, but he soon returned and took up his residence at Corbeil. The county of Mortagne was bestowed by Duke William upon his half-brother, Robert, the son of Herlwin and Herleva, whose connection with the Duke is referred to later.

It is recorded of Count Guillaume that he had had a stormy youth, that he loved fighting, that he had a violent temper, and was always ready to do ill rather than endure anything. In spite of all this, however, he was by disposition inclined to piety and devotion. Doublet remarks that Guillaume assisted at the opening of the Hunt of St. Denis in 1050, and was one of the noblemen who affixed their seal to the record of this ceremony.

Tired by his labours in the war, and his dissolute youth, Guillaume, already old, decided to give his county of Corbeil to his son Rainaud, and to retire to the Abbey of St. Maur les Fossés. He obtained a Charter from the King dated 1058, giving him the same rights as the Count Bouchard had in the possession of the abbey, and devoted much time and expense to reforming and redecorating it. La Barre, writing about the year 1430, states that in his time there was in the Chapel of St. Babolim, at St. Maur, under the image of the Virgin, a tablet on which was written in French the following: 'During the time when King Philip

reigned in France, in the year 1060, there was a count at Corbeil-le-Chatteau, rich and powerful, but neither devoted nor pious, who, being attacked by a cruel fever and fearing to die, and thinking of his grievous sins, entered this house, in devotion, and proposed, if it pleased God to give him his health, that he would take the habit in this house. His petition was favourably accepted and he was cured, in thanks for which he distributed his goods amongst the poor and improved the Church.'

La Barre also relates the following quaint story: 'It happened one day that, walking in the church, Count Guillaume perceived that the sacred images were worn and falling to pieces, and took upon himself the expense of renewing them. To this end, he obtained the services of a workman named Rumolde, an expert in his work, who prepared everything necessary to make an image within the Chapel of St. Denis. Just as he was about to commence the work, he heard a voice calling him by name. Rumolde, thinking it was the Count, left his work to go and see what he wanted, but he could not find the Count, although he searched for a long time, asking the monks, in vain, whom he met whether they had seen him. When he returned to his work, he found the image of Our Lady quite finished by the Grace of God, and of the glorious Virgin Mary. Rumolde related this miracle to the Count and to many others, who thanked God for it.' La Barre adds, 'Of that which is written above, each one may believe as much as pleaseth him.'

Guillaume died in the Monastery of St. Maur about the year 1060.

According to all accounts, writes Le Paire, Rainaud, son of Guillaume and the fifth Count of Corbeil, was one of the favourites of Philip I. of France. At the Court of the King, he affixed his seal to the act of dedication of the Church of St. Martin des Champs, made in 1067. Count Rainaud is there described as 'Rainaldus, Comes Curbuli-

ensis,' and one of his kinsmen is referred to as 'Fredericus de Curbuilo.' Little else is known of Rainaud, except that he left several sons. Bouchard, probably the eldest, succeeded him as the sixth Earl of Corbeil.

One of the younger sons of Count Rainaud was Gilbert de Corbeil, whose son, Robert, was the first of the Peshales. Guilbert de Corbeil married Isabella Loup, daughter of Richard d'Avranches, a Norman nobleman in high favour with Duke William. Isabella Loup's brother, Hugh Loup, became the first of the Norman Earls of Chester, and was known as Hugh Lupus, or Hugh the Wolf. He bore on his shield the head of a wolf, which later became the crest and arms of the Peshale family. The descent of the house of d'Avranches is traced back through Ansfrid the Dane to Hrollager, a son of Rögnvaldr the Viking, and a brother of Rollo, first Duke of Normandy.¹

Richard d'Avranches' father, Thurstan, had rebelled against William, Duke of Normandy, shortly before the latter's invasion of England, and had forfeited the whole of his possessions, which were then given to the Duke's mother, Arletta. Richard, however, proved a loyal servant to William, and later obtained his father's pardon. He further set matters aright by marrying Emma or Emmeline de Conteville, Arletta's daughter by her later husband, Herlwin de Conteville, who brought him back all the lands that his father had lost.²

Arletta, or Herleva, the Consort of Robert, Duke of Normandy, and mother of William the Conqueror, was a daughter of Fulbert de Crey, a tanner of Falaise. She captured the young Duke's heart, and was received into the Court at the Castle of Falaise.³ William, her only son by Robert, was born in 1028. The Norman writers look upon Herleva as Robert's only consort, lawful or unlawful, but no

¹ *Duchess of Cleveland's Battle Abbey Roll*, vol. i. p. 45 *et seq.*

² *Ibid.*, and Anderson's *Royal Genealogies*, p. 741, second edition.

³ *Freeman's Norman Conquest*, vol. i. p. 203; vol. ii. p. 176, and Appendix U.

writer asserts any actual marriage except the Tows Chronicler in *Bouquet X* 284, who marries Herleva to Robert soon after William's birth.¹ Former Dukes of Normandy had contracted this irregular kind of union (already referred to as a marriage *more Danico*), and following the examples of his ancestors, Robert later raised the kinsfolk of his consort to high honours. Herleva's father, Fulbert, the tanner, was granted the post of ducal Chamberlain.

After Robert's death in 1035, Herleva married Herlwin de Conteville, and became the mother of two sons, Odo and Robert, and of a daughter, Emma or Emmeline, who married Richard d'Avranches as related above. Odo and Robert followed the Conqueror and attained to great distinction; the former became Bishop of Bayeux² and the latter received the County of Mortagne, in the Diocese of Avranches.³

Robert de Corbeil, who later was known as Robert de Peshale, is described in an old deed (page 49) as the son of Guilbert de Corbeil and Isabella, his wife, but it is not known whether there were any other children by this marriage. Robert de Corbeil's marriage, and his occupation of the Lordship of Peshale are discussed in Chapter II.

Before concluding this chapter, a few paragraphs may be added on the history of the Earls of Corbeil, subsequent to Guilbert's father, Rainaud. Bouchard, called the Superb, sixth Earl of Corbeil, married Elizabeth de Crecy, daughter of Hilduin, the third Count of Montdidier, in 1030. He had by her two children; a son, named Eudes, who succeeded him about 1092, and a daughter, named Alix, who married Hugues de Puiset. Bouchard built the cloister of St. Spire at Corbeil in 1071, and granted great privileges to the Canons of the Church; and the documents confirming

¹ Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, vol. i. p. 203.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 210 *et seq.*

³ This Moretolium or Moretonium must be carefully distinguished from Mauretania, Moretonia, or Mortagne-en-Perche, in the Diocese of Seez (Freeman's *Norman Conquest*, vol. ii. p. 290).

these privileges, signed by King Phillip and many prelates, still exist.

At this time King Phillip was growing in disfavour amongst the nobility, chiefly on account of his passion for Bertrade de Montfort, which, in 1094, was the cause of his excommunication and interdict from the kingdom. Bouchard, discontented like the rest, did not hesitate to rebel against the King, though this act of hostility against royalty by a Count of Corbeil is the first to be recorded. Bouchard, moreover, haughty, proud, and ambitious as he was, had the audacity, Le Paire tells us, to aspire to the crown of France. He prepared an army, and set out against the King. Suger tells the following story of the Count : ' On the morning of the battle, Bouchard refused to take his sword from the hand of his equerry, but demanded it from the hand of his wife, to whom he said in a gay and gallant manner, " Noble Countess, give cheerfully this sword to your noble baron, who will receive it from your hand under the title of a Count, but will bring it back to you to-day as King of France." But the fortunes of the day went otherwise than he had expected, and the unfortunate Count was killed by a blow from the lance of Etienne, Count of Chartres, then allied with the King.' His death quieted the rebellion and peace was re-established. This was in the year 1092.

Bouchard's son Eudes succeeded him as seventh Earl of Corbeil, for the King did not deprive him of his inheritance, in spite of the rebellion of his father. His mother, Elizabeth de Crecy, was still young, beautiful, and rich, and was sought in marriage by various noblemen. Marriage for her was a necessity on account of the embarrassment of her possessions, and on account of the hostility of her neighbours who had been offended by the arrogance of Bouchard. Very soon afterwards she was again married. Her second husband was Guy, surnamed le Rouge, Count of Rochefort en Yveline, a great friend of Prince Louis, son of Phillip, and later twice Seneschal of France.

The seventh Earl, Eudes, married Eustache de Beaumont, who survived him, and was married again to Gilbert de Garlande, Bouteiller de France. On the death of Eudes, the title of Earl of Corbeil appears to have descended to Hugues de Puiset, husband of Eude's sister Alix, and Vicomte de Chartres. Hugues, however, appears to have been imprisoned by Louis the Great, and forced to surrender to him the title and County of Corbeil. Hugues was thus the eighth and last Earl of Corbeil.