

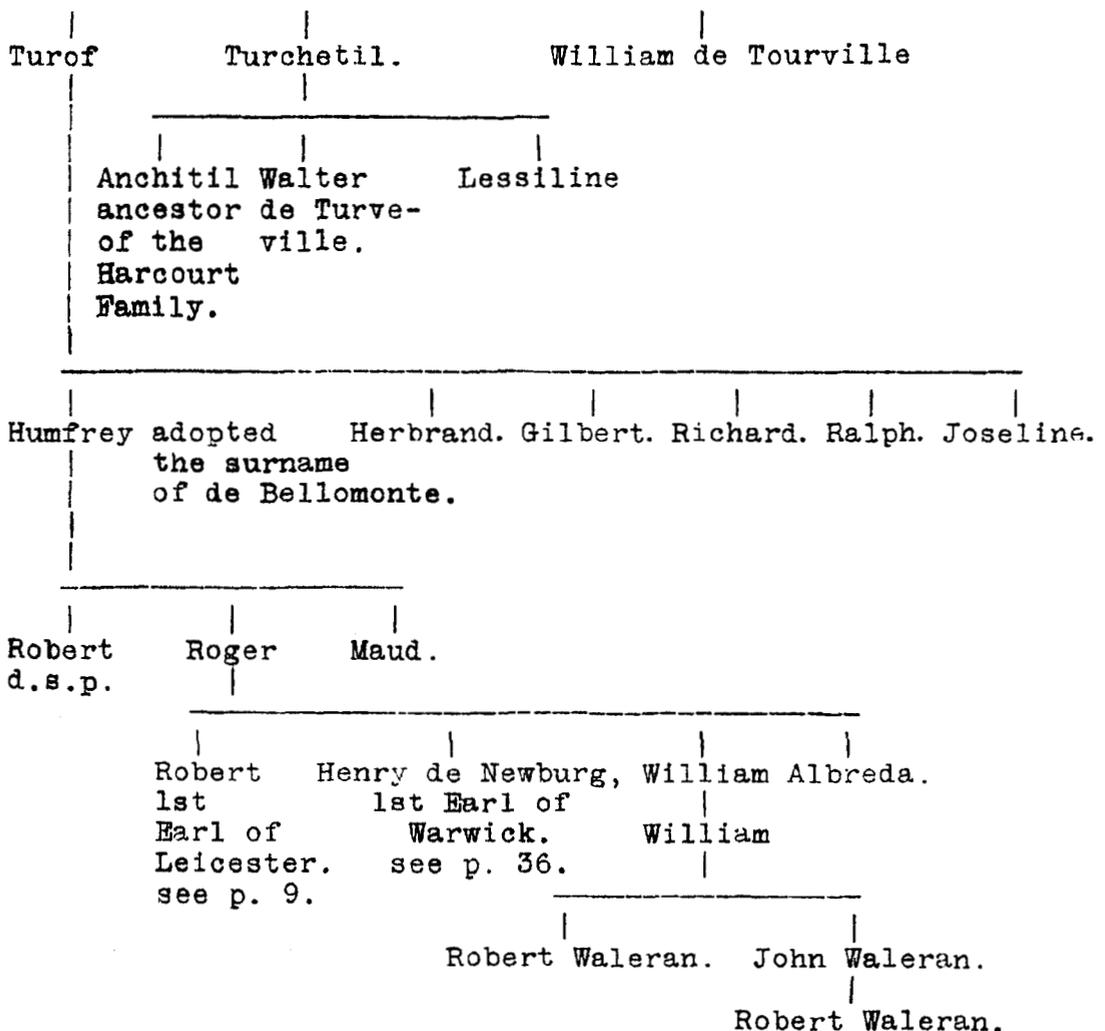
## CHAPTER I.

## THE NORSEMEN.

"Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us."  
Ecclesiasticus, xliv. 1.

## GENEALOGICAL CHART.

Bernard, a descendant of one of the Kings of Denmark, joined  
under Rollo in the raid into France A.D. 876.  
Turfus (Flanchè, I. 204).



In the last half of the ninth century, a tribe of Scandinavians came forth from their native wilds on a marauding expedition and with the view of finding a more congenial climate, thus following in the footsteps of the Gothic and Vandalic tribes who had preceded them. These men were known as Norsemen. They gradually wended their way along the Danish and Flemish coast until they reached in about the year 876 the mouth of the Seine, they built a fortress at Rouen and settled down for a time but the old Norse spirit of adventure was so strong within them that they could not live at peace with their neighbours, and during the following forty years they carried out a number of raids in the surrounding country (CHRONICLES HENRY OF HUNTINGDON, 135, Ed. Thomas Forester.) In 912 Charles II, surnamed the Simple, King of France, made a treaty with Rollo, their leader at S. Clair on Epte whereby he ceded the whole of the rich and fertile province of Neustria, subsequently known as Normandy, on condition that Rollo kept within his own borders, and ceased from ravaging the adjoining territory, and in order to further curry favour with him, he created him the first Duke of Normandy and at the same time on his submitting to the rite of baptism, he gave his daughter Gisela in marriage to the Duke (Sir J. Mackintosh, HIST. ENG. I, 93). Rollo died in 932 and was buried at Rouen. He was the son of Rognevald, the Jare of Moere, who was one of the most powerful Norwegian nobles, being directly descended from the ancient Kings of Norway through his grandmother. He is said to have been a very tall and heavy man, so much so that he had to walk wherever he went as no horse was strong enough to carry him.

The history of the Beaumonts begins with Bernard surnamed the Dane, born about the middle of the ninth and died in the second Quarter of the following century. He was a descendant of one of the Kings of Denmark and a near kinsman, possibly a brother or son of Rollo, or possibly he may have been an outlaw from the West coast of Norway. He was second in command of the expedition into France, and when Rollo divided up the new Duchy amongst his chieftains, Bernard received as his share the Lordship of Harcourt, together with a large tract of country lying between the rivers Sarthe and Rille in the province of Maine, now known as the Departments of Mayenne, Orne and Sarthe.

After the death of Rollo, he became Regent and chief councillor of Rollo's son William "Longsword" and subsequently guardian of his grandson during his minority.

He married c. 912 Sphreta de Burgundie, a lady of the royal house of Burgundy and sister of Rollo's wife and had issue a son, Turfus.

**TURFUS**, or Torf known as the Rich, gave his name to the town of Tourville and added Torcy, Torny and Pontatou to his paternal inheritance. He married in 955 Ermengarda de Brigenberg daughter and heiress of Launcelot de Briquebec of Pont Audemar, and had issue three sons:

I. Turof, heir.

II. Turchetil, Lord of Turqueville, he is said to have been murdered owing to his attachment to Duke William. He married Adeline daughter of Lord de Montfort sur Rille and had issue.

(1) Anchitil, adopted the surname Harcourt; he is reputed to have been the ancestor of that family (Will. de Jumièges, p. 324). This view is also taken by the writer of the Histoire Genalogique De La Maison De Harcourt 1662 but Mr. G.H. White in N and Q (125 IX. 514) says it is an invention of the pedigree maker. His name appears in the Pipe Rolls of 1130. He married Eva de Boessey, Lady of Boessey le Chastel, and had issue seven sons and one daughter.

(2) Walter de Turqueville.

(3) Lesseline, married William Earl of Eu, Exmes and Montrevil.

III. William de Tourville.

**TUROF** inherited from his mother the Pont Audemar estate which was on the banks of the Risle, ten miles from its junction with the Seine. He married Wevia daughter of Harfust, a Danish nobleman. William de Jumièges says (JEAN MARX ed. 1914, p. 324), that Turof married Duceline De Crepon the sister of Wevia and that the latter married Osberno de Bole Bec. They had a sister Gunnora who was the second wife of Richard the Fearless, Duke of Normandy and thereby became the great grandmother of William the Conqueror (William de Jumièges - GESTA p. 324). Turof had five sons and one daughter, the eldest being:

I. Humfrey de Vetulis.

II. Herbrand of Pontaudemar.

III. Gilbert.

IV. Richard.

V. Ralph Steward of the Abbey of Bernai, and in 1048 Abbot of Mont S. Michel. (Genealogist XXXVII. 59.) In 1088 he witnessed a Charter, made by Robert, Duke of Normandy in

favour of the church at Mont S. Michel granting a market and yearly fair at Ardevon, Le Manche.

VI. Joseline, married Hugh de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury issue I, Roger.

**HUMFREY DE VETULIS** or Vielles, Lord of Pont Audemar, Veulles, Preaux, and de Bellomonte died at Preaux, 1074. There were two manors known as Beaumont on his vast estate, and they are both so named today. The one situated on the river Sarthe is called Beaumont sur Sarthe, it is about fifteen miles south of Alencon and seventy south-west of Rouen; the other on the banks of the Rille in the department De l'Eure some thirty miles south-west of Rouen, is known as Beaumont le Roger, so called from Humfrey's second son. In after years during the wars with France, these estates were frequently lost and regained by the family; on one occasion Roger de Toeni ravaged them but Humfrey's son Roger defeated him in a sanguinary combat. Toeni and his two sons were both killed in the fray (Freeman, NORM. CONQUEST, II, 199).

Surnames were at this time adopted in Normandy although the custom was not in vogue in England until some two hundred years later; they were frequently suggested by the name of the family estate, or from a supposed fitness, or from some accidental circumstance, or perhaps from mere caprice. Humfrey took that of De Bellomonte or Beaumont.

He founded in 1035 two Abbeys - S. Ledger for nuns and S. Pierre de Preaux for monks, both in his own domains on the left bank of the Rille, near Beaumont le Roger (Ord. VIT. I. 383). He married in 1027 Albreda de la Heye and had issue **two sons:**

I. Robert, slain by Roger de Claire during a dispute and skirmish connected with the possession of some lands at Brienne; (Ord. Vit III. 34) this dispute was maintained by his brother Roger. He was buried in the Abbey at Preaux, leaving no issue.

II. Roger, heir to Humfrey.

III. Maud, married Osborn De Cecily.

**ROGER** born c. 1015, died c. 1096 - La Roque, Histoire Genealogiqueae la Maison de Harcourt. He was nicknamed Barbatus or La Barbe from the fact of his wearing a moustache and beard whilst the Normans usually were clean shaven. This peculiarity is recognized in the forty first panel of the Bayeux Tapestry where he is depicted sitting at a feast with Duke William on his left hand, Odo brother of William and Bishop of Bayeux in the centre, and two warriors

on the extreme left; the four laymen are evidently so hungry that they are depicted enjoying the repast, whilst the Bishop is pronouncing the blessing on the food. The tapestry was probably made to the order of the Bishop (G.V. Cox, CRUSADES), and is now preserved in the museum attached to the Public Library at Bayeux.

Planché (1796/1880), (THE CONQUEROR AND HIS COMPANIONS, I. 204,) tells us that "Roger was reputed to have been the noblest, wealthiest and most valiant seigneur in Normandy." Wace the twelfth century historian, says that "at the time of the invasion of England, Roger was summoned to the great council at Lillebonne, on account of his wisdom; but that he did not join in the expedition as he was too far advanced in years." In his ROMAN DE ROU line 11136 Wace further says:

ROGIER DE VILERS SIST MANDER,  
 KI MULT ESTEIT A ENORER;  
 MULT ESTEIT TENU POR SAGE,  
 ET JÀ ESTEIT DE GRANT AAGE,  
 SES FILZ AVEIT JÀ CHEVALIERS  
 BIEN NOBLES HOMES È BIEN SIERS;  
 SIRE ERT DE BELMONT LE ROGIER  
 GRANT TERRE AVEIT À JUSTIFIER.

Sir A. Malet translates the lines (285, p. 56) as follows:-

Rogier de Vilers a counsellor sage,  
 Much honour'd and far advanc'd in age,  
 Was also call'd - Six sons had he,  
 All knights, and worthy their chivalry,  
 Of Belmont le Rogier he was chief  
 Administering a mighty fief.

Although Roger could not fight, he did not hesitate in contributing his share of the cost, for he provided at his own expense sixty vessels for the conveyance of the troops across the channel (Planché I. 205).

Ordericus Vitalis a Norman monk and Chronicler who lived in the middle of the twelfth century, says that "William the Conqueror entrusted the government of his Duchy to his wife Matilda, with the help of a council of wise men, at whose head stood the famous Roger de Bellomonte."

In 1090 he endeavoured to regain the old family castle of Brienne and he offered Duke Robert of Normandy a large sum for it, whereupon the Duke who was in need of money, ordered Robert FitzBaldwin, who had the custody of it, to give it up; the latter replied, "If it be your desire to

have Brienne in your hands, as your father held it, I will make no difficulty in delivering it to you; but otherwise I will keep what is my own inheritance and yield to no man while I live...for I am now in possession of Brienne, and the castle of Ivri the principal seat of my grandfather, and God, supporting my right, I will keep it to the end." When Roger heard this, he collected a body of troops and laid siege to the fortress, which was in the heart of his own domain, he closely invested it and on the ninth day made a vigorous assault. The weather was very warm at the time and there was a great drought, so the besiegers heated the steel points of their arrows red hot and shot them on to the wood roof of the great hall, which was covered with lichen and moss, this was soon on fire and it quickly spread to other parts of the castle, compelling the defenders to surrender. (Planché, I, 207. and Ord. Vit. II. 491.)

Roger's liberality is evinced by the foundation in 1088 of the Abbey of Holy Trinity at Beaumont le Roger. William the Conqueror had promised to assist at the dedication festival, but his death in 1087 intervened. It is interesting to note that the abbey was served by the Canons of S. Frideswide, Oxford. A copy of the charter granted by Roger is preserved in the Mazarine Library, Paris (No. 3417), the original having been destroyed at the Revolution, a printed copy is fortunately preserved in the British Museum. Some remains of the old building are still in existence.

In 1080 he endowed the Abbey of S. Peter's, Preaux with five hides of land at Arlescot, Co. Warwick. A few years before his death he entered this abbey as a monk (Ord. Vit. III. 39.) His piety was further shewn by the gift of the manor of Stowre Pratellis, Dorset, to the nunnery of S. Leger de Preaux; after the suppression of alien priories by Henry VI, this manor was granted to King's College, Cambridge (Thomas Turner, NOTITIA MONASTICA).

Roger evidently spent a great deal of time at Court for his name frequently occurs as a witness on Royal and State Documents, amongst others, we find it on a grant made by Robert the eldest son of William I to the Abbey of Marmontier at Tours in 1066, it also occurs on a confirmation of a grant made by Herbert de l'Epinau of lands at Caumont sur Dive to S. Martin of Troarn; again on the confirmation of a gift made by Waleran son of Ranulf to the Abbey of S. Stephens, Caen, 1069, further he, together with his sons Robert and Henry, witnessed a grant made by the King to the same abbey in 1071 and another in 1079, also a grant in favour of Néel of six churches in Guernsey to the Abbey of Marmontier, 1073, and a confirmation of the foundation gift of Odo Stigand of the Priory of S. Barbe en Ange, in the same year; further examples

are on a charter granted by William I to the Abbey of S. Wandrille, 1074 and one by Odo Bishop of Bayeux giving land to S. Mary's of Bayeux 30th November, 1074 also a grant by the King to the same church, and a confirmation by the King of a grant to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Montivaliers, 1076, together with a gift to the church of S. Pancras, Lewes, by William of Warenne and his wife Gunreda 1079. He witnessed in addition the signature of Roger de Montgomery of a grant to the Abbey at Troarn for the soul of his wife Mabel, 1079, and a charter in favour of the Abbey of Mont S. Michel (ARCHAEOLOGIA, xxvii. 25).

On one occasion, he and other barons supported the King when presiding over a trial at Bonneville sur Touque, a lady named Ulberga de Martrany, had brought an action for the restoration of her child, the sentence of the court was that it should be restored to her, if she passed safely through the ordeal of the hot iron; this was carried out in the Church of S. Vigor, Bayeux and as she came through it unhurt her petition was granted.

At the time of the Domesday inquest Roger held lands in the counties of Gloucester, Dorset and Devon (R.W. Eyton, KEY TO DORSET SURVEY, Domesday).

He married Adelina daughter of Waleran Count of Mellent and Meulan (Guillaume de Jumiege p. 170.) She was heiress to her brother Hugh, who took the habit of a monk in the Abbey of Bec. Ordericus Vitalis says that "She accompanied Matilda, wife of William I to the Abbey of S. Evroul, Normandy, when the latter placed a gift on the altar and presented an albe richly ornamented with orfrais" (orphreys). The priest wore the vestment for the first time when celebrating mass in honour of the gifts, and that "She consecrated herself to God and lived in holiness with her husband". She died in 1081 leaving issue three sons and one daughter.

I. Robert, first Norman Earl of Leicester (see p. 11)

II. Henry de Newburg, first Norman Earl of Warwick (see p. 37)

III. William, possibly the ancestor of the Whitley family (see p. 257). He married and had issue:

(1) William, who had two sons:

1a. Robert Waleran, High Sheriff of Gloucester 1246-1248 and 1250. Governor of S. Braivel's Castle and of Varden, Forest of Dean 1248. In 1246 he owned the manors of Cubbilly, Siston (Trans. Brist. Arch. Soc. xxiii. 64) and Frampton-Cotterell. He was Warden of

the Forest of Dean 1260-63. In 1265 Henry III gave him several estates as a reward for his great services at the Battle of Evesham. He was a Knight Templar and took part in the Seventh Crusade under Prince Henry in 1269.

He married Maud daughter of Ralph Runel of Dyrham, she received this manor as her wedding dowry (Trans. Bristol Arch. Soc. xxiii, 64, 72). She died in 1287 leaving no issue and on her husband's death the estates passed to their nephew Robert Waleran.

(2) John Waleran. He married and had issue a son, Robert Waleran:

1a. Robert Waleran, heir to his father and his uncle; he was alive in 1309 and he married Isabel -

IV. Albreda. She took the veil in the Abbey of S. Leger de Preaux and eventually became the Abbess of S. Etonne.

Roger died in 1096.

The late Revd. Dr. Knight, Rector of Bluntisham, Hunts, possessed in 1745 an old tablet on which was painted the arms of the forty Knights, whom William the Conqueror placed in the Monastery at Ely, after its capture in 1080. These knights lived there for seven years. Amongst the shields was that of Roger de Beaumont. It is supposed to have been contemporary work and to have been executed by one of the monks (Surtees Soc. Publ. lxxx).