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Cardiff castle, Glamorganshire.

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Pembroke Castle.

Interior of the Great Court.

CARDIFF CASTLE,

Glamorganshire.

CARDIFF, a neat and well-built town, stands at the mouth of the river Taafe, from which it probably derives its name.* Its chief ornaments are the church and the castle—the latter a structure of great antiquity, and now converted into a modern residence, in which the features of a Norman stronghold are made to harmonize with the embellishments of a refined age; and where, instead of prancing steeds and bristling spears, the *ballia* are lined with wallflower, shrubberies, and all those tranquil emblems, which indicate the reign of peace, and the cultivation of taste. Such innovations and refinements, however, are rather out of character with the place.

The town, when such protection was necessary, was surrounded by a wall, flanked with towers, and fit to resist and repulse an army of besiegers; but these warlike appendages, like those who built them, have passed away, and left behind them little more than the tradition of their massive strength and number. The towers, as well as the castle, were the work of Fitz-Hamon, who, as already noticed, possessed himself of Glamorganshire at the close of the eleventh century, and divided the spoils among his retainers. The following account of his expedition—somewhat different from the chronicle above quoted —is from Caradoc of Llancarvan:†—About the same time also died Cadifor, the son of Calhoyn, lord of Dyfed, whose sons, Llewellyn and Eineon, moved Gruffydh-ap-Meredith to take up arms against his sovereign prince, Rhys-ap-Tewdor, with whom they joined all the forces they could levy among their tenants and dependants; and then passing with their army to Llandydoch, boldly challenged Rhys to fight; who thereupon gave them battle, and after an engagement, maintained with great resolution on both sides, the rebels were

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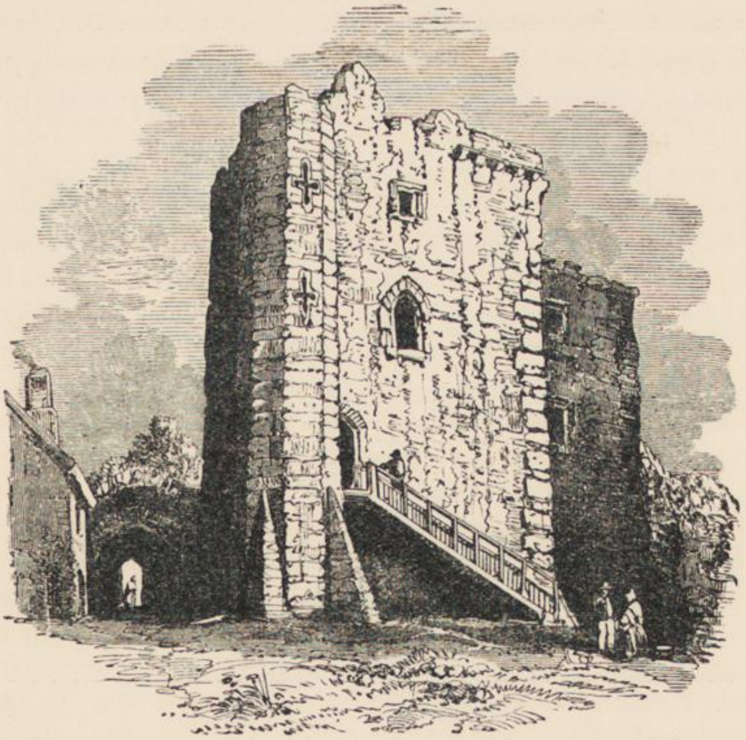
* *Caer-Tyf*—Castle or fort on the Taafe.—See Warner, p. 46.

† Powel's Hist. p. 111; also, Warner's Tour, p. 47

at length put to flight, and so closely pursued that Gruffydh was taken prisoner, and executed as a traitor. But his brother Eineon making his escape, and not daring to trust himself to any of his kindred, fled to Jestyn-ap-Gurgant, lord of Morgannwc, then in actual rebellion against **Prince Rhys**. And, to ingratiate himself the more in Jestyn's favour, he promised, on the performance of certain articles—one of which was, that he should receive his daughter in marriage—that he would bring over to his aid a considerable body of Normans, with whom he was intimately acquainted, from the fact of his having served with them in England. These articles being agreed to, Eineon hastened across the frontier, and soon prevailed on Fitz-Hamon and his knights to take up the cause of Jestyn. Early in the spring they arrived in Glamorganshire, and joining Jestyn marched with their combined forces into the dominions of Prince Rhys, where, without the least show of mercy to his countrymen, **Eineon**, by his own example, encouraged the Normans to destroy all that came before them. The prince, then more than ninety-eight years of age, and sadly grieved to find his people and territory so unmercifully harassed, speedily raised an army and marched against the invaders. They met near Brecknock, and there, after a most sanguinary engagement, the venerable prince fell at the head of his army, and left his country a prey to Norman domination. Having discharged their stipulated service, and received the promised reward, **Fitz-Hamon** and his army prepared to embark for England. But before they set sail, Eineon made his complaint that Jestyn had ungratefully affronted him, and absolutely refused—now that the Normans were dismissed—to make good the conditions previously agreed upon between them; and such was the malignity of his revenge, that he resolved rather to see his country pass under the yoke of the Normans, than continue under the dominion of a chief who could thus forget the hand that had procured him the victory. He therefore made use of every argument most likely to influence the Norman spirit, and prevailed. They returned from their ships and prepared for another campaign; and great was the surprise of **Jestyn** when he learned that the friends whom he had so lately dismissed laden with the reward of their services, and satisfied with his liberality, were again on shore with the avowed intention of engaging him in mortal conflict. He now lamented his folly in having so rashly broken his promise with Eineon; but that was an error which it was now too late to rectify. The Norman standard was once more waving from the adjoining heights. The soldiers were animated with the prospect of another victory—the rich spoils they were to share—and charmed with the accounts which Eineon had promulgated among them, as baits to their cupidity, of the fertile settlements that here awaited them. The conflict was brief. Jestyn had little to oppose to men who were resolved to possess themselves of the country. Unable to protract the contest, he abandoned his lordship of Glamorgan to the invader, and retired into obscurity—there to meditate on his own folly, and the degradation to which it had reduced him.

The Normans, as usual, took the "lion's share." They divided the best portions of the soil—all that was most pleasant and productive—among themselves; and left only the mountainous and craggy ground to Eineon, with whatever enjoyment a sense of gratified revenge, and the voluntary subjugation of his country, was calculated to furnish. From this moment the Normans were established in Wales; and soon began to erect those monuments of their sway, which it is our present object to notice and illustrate.



Curthose Tower.—The apartment where Prince Robert was confined by his unnatural brother, is traditionally known as "Curthose's Tower." So in Chepstow Castle, the keep is distinguished as "Marten's Tower;" but between the fate of the two prisoners, who have left their names thus associated, there is no resemblance. The more illustrious the captive, the more dismal was the cell in which he was immured. It must have been at all times a wretched dungeon, such only as a malignant fiend would have assigned to its human victim. A ray of light, barely sufficient to distinguish the difference between night and day, is admitted by a small square hole perforated through the wall upwards; and the mere fact of his having existed in this dreary cell for the long period of twenty-six years, proves that Robert Curthose must have possessed no ordinary degree of fortitude and resignation. But the courage inspired by conscious innocence is proof against the machinations of Fortune—

> "He that has light within his own clear breast,
> May sit i' th' centre and enjoy bright day;
> But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,
> Benighted walks under the mid-day sun—
> Himself is his own dungeon."

The sufferings inflicted upon Robert in this dismal prison, are a theme on which the old chronicles dilate with painful minuteness. It would be a relief to imagine that the acts of wanton cruelty practised upon the defenceless victim, may have been, like many other points of history, exaggerated or misrepresented; but, taken in connection with other deeds of the time, there is but too just grounds to conclude that the story of Robert's imprisonment, and the tortures with which it was accompanied, is no fable, but one of those tragical dramas of real life, to which the force of imagination can impart no additional horror. The subject, although referred to in the previous volume of this work, may justify a few more extracts:—

"But long it was not ere Duke Robert, weary of this unwonted duresse, sought to escape; and having to walke in the Kinge's meadows, forests, and parkes, brake from his keepers without any assisters, or meanes for security; who being missed was presently pursued and taken in a quagmire, wherein his horse lay fast. Whereupon the King hearing of this attempt, considering that woods were no walls to restrain the fierce lyon, and that to play with his claws was to endanger the state, commanded him not onely a greater restraint and harder durance, but also—a thing unfit for a brother to suffer, and most unworthy for Beauclearke to act—both his eyes to be put out. To effect this truly barbarous act, he caused his head to be held in a burning basin—thereby avoiding the deformity of breaking the eye-balls—until the glassie tunicles had lost the office of retaining their light."

But at last, after twenty-six years' imprisonment, "through griefe conceived at the putting on of a faire new roabe—(too little for the Kinge himselfe, and therefore, 'in kindnesse,' says the Chronicle, 'sent to Duke Robert to weare')—he grew weary of his life, as disdaining to be mocked with his brother's cast cloaths; and cursing the time of his unfortunate nativity, refused thenceforth to take any sustenance, and so pined himselfe to death."

Cardiff, in later times, was a point on which Owen Glendower discharged his vengeance. The inhabitants of Glamorganshire, as descendants of the Norman conquerors above named, were pre-eminently distinguished for their loyalty to the King, and their oppression of the natives. But now they were to feel "the dire resentment of an irritated injured countryman." The visit of Ivor Bach to Fitz-Hamon was not more welcome than this of Owen to his descendants. "Ivor Bach, a Briton," says Camden, "who dwelt in the mountains, a man of small stature but of resolute courage, marched by night with a band of soldiers, and seized Cardiff Castle, carrying away William, Earl of Gloucester, Fitz-Hamon's grandson by the daughter, together with his wife and son, whom he detained prisoners until he had received full satisfaction for all former injuries." The residence of this renowned Briton was Castell Goch, an outport of Cardiff. He was attached to the daughter of Jestyn-ap-Gwrgant above named; and being rejected as a suitor for her hand, he stormed Cardiff Castle, carried her off by force; but, being overtaken in his retreat near a valley called Pant-coed Ivor, he fell under the swords of his pursuers.

To return to Glendower: "Having burnt, pursuant to his desolating system, the Bishop's palace of Llandaff and other houses, he proceeded to Cardiff, which he also consigned to the flames." The town in these days contained many religious houses—"a goodly priory founded by Robert, the first Earl of Gloucester; a priory of Black Monks, or Benedictines; a house of Black Friars in Crokerton Street; a house of Grey Friars, dedicated to St. Francis, under the custody or wardship of Bristol; and also a house of White Friars." None of these houses experienced any favour from Glendower except the Franciscans, who, having been firm adherents to King Richard, and on good terms with Owen, escaped the conflagration; for the whole town was burnt down except the street where their monastery stood. In this destructive raid through Glamorganshire, he demolished the ancient Castle of **Penmarc**, which belonged to Gilbert Humphreville, one of Fitz-Hamon's knights, before named; and which has remained in ruins ever since.* But we need not prosecute these records of a barbarous age further than our subject demands.

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* Tanner's Not. Monast.; Thomas's Mems. of Glendower; Coxe's Tour.