

**THE SCOTTISH HOUSE OF ROGER,
WITH NOTES RESPECTING THE
FAMILIES OF PLAYFAIR AND
HALDANE OF BERMONY**

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CHARLES ROGERS

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THE
SCOTTISH HOUSE OF ROGER

WITH NOTES RESPECTING

*THE FAMILIES OF PLAYFAIR AND HALDANE
OF BERMONY*

BY THE

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THE
SCOTTISH HOUSE OF ROGER,
ETC.

SEVERAL centuries before the introduction of surnames, and its adoption as a family designation, the name of Roger was common over Europe. Derived from the Latin words *rudis* a rod, and *gero* I bear, the mediæval designation was *Rudiger*, signifying seneschal or chamberlain. About the ninth century the name was abbreviated Roger; a form in which both as a name and surname it has been used in all European countries.*

Rolf, Rollo, or Rou, a Danish sea-king, founded the Norman dynasty at Rouen, to which place he gave name, and where he reigned sixteen years (A.D. 927 to 943). He was progenitor of William the Conqueror, and of that illustrious race who have since the Conquest borne the English sceptre. During the century following the reign of Rolf at Rouen we find Roger de Toesny, who claimed descent from Malahuc, uncle of Rolf, fighting valiantly against the infidels in Spain, and achieving great victories, not without cruelty and violence. Roger married the daughter of the widowed Countess of Barcelona, "a princess," remarks Mr Freeman, "whose dominions were practically Spanish, though her formal allegiance was due to the Parisian king. This marriage," Mr Freeman adds, "was

* Out of the List compiled by M. Leopold Delisle of the Companions of William the Conqueror (*Herald and Genealogist*, vol. for 1863), no fewer than twenty-seven bear the name of "Roger."

doubtless designed as the beginning of a Norman principality in Spain, but the scheme failed to take any lasting root.* On his return from Spain, Roger de Toesny rebelled against William, the future Conqueror, and sent his son, Roger de Bellomont or Beaumont against him. A battle ensued, in which Roger de Toesny and his two sons were slain.†

The latter portion of Mr Freeman's narrative differs from other accounts of the Beaumont family. According to some Norman writers, Roger à la Barbe gave name to the little town of Beaumont le Roger, beautifully situated on the Rille in Normandy. Above this town rises a limestone hill, richly wooded, at the base of which is a fountain named *La Fontaine Roger*. The latter is mentioned in the *dotalitium*, or deed of dower of Countess Judith, wife of Richard, second Duke of Normandy, who bestowed the domain on the Abbey of Bernay, from which it passed into the possession of Humphrey, Seigneur of Vieilles; which was the head place of the fief till 1040. Roger à la Barbe‡ was the son of Humphrey; he built a castle on the summit of the rocky eminence, and his Christian name thereafter became the family designation of his House. Beaumont le Roger was besieged and captured by Henry I., afterwards by Richard Cœur de Lion; it was stormed and burned by Philip Augustus, and more than once was made an appanage of the Royal Family of France. Given to Charles the bad, King of Navarre, it was captured by Bertrand du Guesclin, and demolished. Pillaged by Henry V. in 1417, it was in 1651 ceded to the Duke of Bouillon in exchange for the principality of Sedan.§ Roger à la Barbe was one of the Conqueror's chief nobles, and his best counsellor and friend. When William left Normandy to conquer Eng-

* Freeman's Norman Conquest, vol. i., pp. 460, 461.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 197. See also sheet pedigree prefixed to the Lives of the Lindsays for some information regarding the De Toesnys.

‡ In his Nobiliaire de Normandie, 1666, folio, M. Jacques Louis Chevillard has presented the armorial escutcheon of Roger du Mont Boumonville. The shield is *argent*, on a fesse *sable* three roses of the field; in base three lions rampant of second two and one; all within a bordure *gules*.

§ Normandy, its History and Antiquities. Lond.

land, he associated Roger with Matilda, his queen, in the government of his kingdom. Roger helped to plan the expedition, and furnished no fewer than sixty ships for transporting the Norman army. He married in 1045 the heiress of the Count of Mulan, through whom he obtained high power in France as well as in his own kingdom. Robert de Bellomont was one of the sons of Roger à la Barbe; he is described as grandson of Turolf of Pont Andemare, by Wevia, sister of Gunnora, wife of Richard, first of that name, Duke of Normandy, great-grandfather to William I. He accompanied the Conqueror into England, and mainly contributed to the triumph at Hastings. Robert inherited the earldom of Mellent in Normandy from his mother Adelina, daughter of Waleran, and sister of Hugh, who took the habit of a monk in the Abbey of Bec, both Earls of Mellent. Of the conduct of Robert de Bellomont at Hastings, William Pictaviensis writes: "A certain Norman young soldier, son of Roger de Bellomont, nephew and heir to Hugh, Earl of Mellent, by Adelina his sister, making the first onset in that fight, did what deserveth lasting fame, boldly charging and breaking in upon the enemy with that regiment which he commanded in the right wing of the army," for which gallant services he obtained sixty-four lordships in Warwickshire, sixteen in Leicestershire, and one in Gloucestershire, in all ninety-one. He did not, however, attain the dignity of the English peerage before the reign of Henry I., when that monarch created him Earl of Leicester.*

Besides Robert de Bellomont, founder of the noble House of Leicester, another member of the Beaumont family took part in the Norman Conquest of England. His name of Rougere, or Fitz Roger, is entered on the roll of Battel Abbey.† Of this person, or his son, we have obtained some particulars in the *Chartulaire de la Basse-Normandie*, and also in a collection of documents relating to Normandy, transcribed from the Norman archives, and deposited in the Public Record Office. To a Latin instrument dated 1076, setting forth the

* Dugdale's Baronage, vol. i., p. 83.

† Lower's English Surnames.

independence of the church of St Leonard against the pretensions of the Bishop of Sieux, Count Roger and Roger de Bellomont appended their names, along with William the Conqueror, Matilda, his queen, and other notable persons. Of this instrument we give the following translation :

“Because the memory of men, like the men themselves, quickly passes away, there are some things which ought to be committed to writing. We, therefore, taking provident care for the future interests of this church, have thought it right to record in this document an event which we are desirous that our successors should be made acquainted with. It happened then, on a certain festival of St Leonard, that Count (Earl) Roger was present, with some eminent persons of both orders, whom he had invited out of respect to himself and to do honour to this church. At the joint request of ourselves and the Count, the Bishop of Sieux sang mass, and coveting the offerings, tried to appropriate them. Observing which, and horrified at it as something monstrous, we forcibly, and with reproaches, seized them from the person—one of his clergy—to whose keeping he had intrusted them. Enraged at this, he declared he would excommunicate both us and our church. He fulfilled his threat, and before Count Roger could complain of the bishop's proceedings to the Archbishop of Rouen, we, in order to smooth matters, betook ourselves on a set day to Rouen, and there, in the palace and in the presence of the King and Queen of England, Count Robert charged the Bishop of Sieux of having without just cause presumed to excommunicate the church of St Leonard. The bishop retorted that we were to blame, as he had a clear and legal right to all the offerings collected in his diocese, and that we had done him a wrong by taking from him ours. On this the king and queen conferred with Count Roger on the state of his church, when he, together with those present, clearly narrated how that William de Bellasis had built the aforesaid church for the remission of his sins, and how that by an order of Pope Leo, of blessed memory, it had been constituted free and independent, and that from the day of its dedication neither archbishop nor bishop had any customary right in it, nor in any way over it, the power of excommunication. They asserted, moreover, that very old men who had seen and heard all this were ready to corroborate these statements to the satisfaction of the king's judg-

ment. Hearing this, the king and queen gave orders that John, the archbishop, Roger de Bellomont, and many other barons, should give sentence according to the evidence. And they, counsel taken, judge that a church of such high authority, and with rights conferred by so many illustrious ancestors, had been free, and that having enjoyed its liberty for so long a time, it ought to enjoy it in perpetuity; that the bishop had not only done an injury to Count Roger, but also to the king, of whom he held the church. John, the archbishop, further said that there were some churches in his own diocese in which he had no rights at all. Accordingly Robert, Bishop of Sieux, had to atone for the crime with which he was chargeable against the king and Count Roger in invading the privileges of the aforesaid church. It was also there decreed that if either archbishop or bishop should hereafter presume to disturb it, he should by apostolical and royal authority be separated from the communion of the faithful till such time as he had made satisfaction. This have approved William, King, and Matilda, Queen; John, Archbishop of Rouen; Robert, Bishop of Sieux; Count Roger; Robert de Bellasis; Roger de Bellomont; Curvisus, William, and Hascuin, canons; with Arneland, and many others."*

Roger, son of Thorold, or Torold, is celebrated in a document, preserved in the archives of Normandy,† of which we present a translation :

"Donation to the (house of the) Holy Trinity of Rouen, by permission of William, King of England.

"Roger, son of Torold, about to travel with Count William to parts beyond the mountains, gave for the health of his soul three acres of land in Southvill to the monks of the Holy Trinity of Rouen, reserving no feudal rights, but dying on the passage, and being thereby prevented from confirming his grant, it was graciously confirmed in his stead by one William Trenchefoil, knight in his train, William, King of the English, assenting. † The seal of King William, † the seal of William Trenchefoil, † the seal of Bernard the Forester.

"Witnesses, Richard Osbern and Roger the bishop †."

* Chartulaire de la Basse-Normandie, vol. i. p. 49, vol. i. p. 80. (Plaisirs royaux ver l'année 1076. Archives d'Alençon.)

† See Transcripts of Charters and other Documents, from various Archives of Normandy, in the Public Record Office, London.