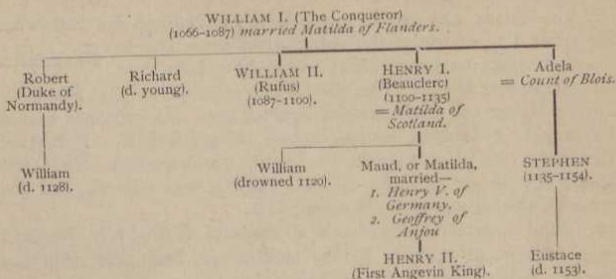


## NORMAN LINE.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY UNDER THE NORMAN KINGS.

1. One of the chief results of the Norman Conquest was the introduction of the *Feudal System* into England. That system was a mode of land tenure largely established throughout Western Europe. The term *feudal* is derived from *feud*, a piece of land given as a reward or "fee" for military service, such land being held by the tenant on condition of rendering such service when required. He who granted the land was called *suzerain*, or "lord;" the tenant was known as *vassal*, or "man;" while the land itself was termed a *fief*. The King was regarded as the ultimate owner of the soil, and those who held directly from him were called "tenants-in-chief." These often sublet their lands to other tenants, on condition of receiving service similar to that which they themselves owed to the King. As the process of subletting could be carried still further down, the different relations of the same person as lord and vassal often became curiously confused. As Duke of Normandy, the King of England was a vassal of the King of France. When Lothian was transferred to Scotland, the Kings of Scotland became vassals of the Kings of England in respect of that district.

2. A vassal acknowledged submission to his lord by a ceremony called *homage* (from *homo*, "a man," because by the act he declared himself to be his lord's "man"). On the Continent, homage was rendered only to the feudal lord from whom the vassal directly held his lands. This tended to increase the power of the barons, by making them, in respect to the service of their tenants, independent of their supreme lord. The Conqueror, on establishing his rule in England, wisely decreed that every tenant, however low in