

lish king, the lawful successor of Edward, and it would not do for a king to plunder his own people. But frequent revol's of the English soon gave him an excuse.

A few months after his coronation, William returned to Normandy. Thereupon the Norman soldiers began to rob and abuse the English people. When the people appealed to the Norman officers, they were refused protection and justice. They rose in rebellion and began to attack the garrisons. Soon after this outbreak, William returned to England, determined to crush the English, who, he declared, could not be won by kindness.

One after another the rebellious districts were conquered, but not without great difficulty. On one occasion the English called in the help of the Danes, and captured York, where they killed three thousand Norman soldiers. For this William took a terrible revenge. He bribed the Danes to retire and then laid waste the country from the Humber to the Tees. His orders were that every living thing, men, women, children, and cattle, should be slain; that all crops and buildings should be burned; and that farming tools should be broken, so that there might be no means of supporting life. Of the people who escaped to the moors and mountains, it is said a hundred thousand died of starvation. So thoroughly was the work done, that the country north of the Humber remained a desert for fifty years.

For years afterwards, the English loved to honour the name of one of their number who had made the most determined stand against William. This was Hereward the Wake, "the last of the English," as he is called. He had taken refuge with his followers on the island of Ely, which was separated from the mainland by two miles of marsh. William was compelled to build a solid road through the marsh in order to reach the island, and even then it was with difficulty that he forced the English to surrender. Hereward escaped across the swamps and hid in the woods. The king, who admired a brave warrior, offered to pardon him and to restore his estates. Hereward swore allegiance to William and was faithful to him for the rest of his life.