

## 2. WILLIAM II. 1087-1100

34. **The barons rebel against the king.**—Two weeks after the death of William the Conqueror, William Rufus was crowned king of England. There was no opposition to his coronation, supported as he was by the authority of Lanfranc and the church. But in a few months a conspiracy was formed among the barons to dethrone the new king, and to put his brother Robert in his place. Many of the barons held land both in England and in Normandy, and they did not wish to pay homage to two overlords. In the event of war between the brothers, they would be forced to choose on which side they would fight, and so would be in danger of losing their land in either the one country or the other. The barons also felt that under William they would be kept in subjection, while under Robert they would be able to do very much as they pleased. The conspiracy spread, and before long nearly every baron in England, with his vassals, was in arms against the king.

William, on his part, had no intention of giving up his crown. He had the powerful support of the church, and he now called on the English, who formed the great mass of the nation, to come to his aid. The English were ready to support him and rallied to his side. Against the united power of the king, the church, and the English, the barons were powerless. The rebellion lasted only a few months. A few of the leaders were punished, but the greater number were pardoned by the king.

35. **Oppressive rule of William.**—The chief object of William Rufus during his reign seems to have been to extort as much money as he could from the barons, the church, and the people. The barons were compelled to pay to the utmost the feudal dues, while the people were oppressed with so heavy taxes that many of them died of starvation. The church, too, felt the heavy hand of the king. He not only seized upon church property, but, what was very much worse, he gave her abbacies and bishoprics only to men who would pay him well.