

“I daresay it’s a French mouse, come over with William the Conqueror.” P. 26.

England had in fact been invaded by the French – William the Conqueror – and English memory is fixated on the word “Hastings” and numbers “1066” and on images of the fleet crossing the English channel

In a few more pages in the Alice books, when mouse lectures, he is even more closely associated with William the Conqueror. See p. 30, fn. 1 and the text below.

Background: “ During the reign of Queen [Elizabeth I of England](#), Archbishop [Matthew Parker](#) saw the Conquest as having corrupted a purer English Church, which Parker attempted to restore. During the 17th and 18th centuries some historians and lawyers saw William's reign as imposing a "[Norman yoke](#)" on the native Anglo-Saxons, an argument that continued during the 19th century with further elaborations along nationalistic lines. These various controversies have led to William being seen by some historians either as one of the creators of England's greatness or as inflicting one of the greatest defeats in English history

[Norman conquest of England](#) in 1066. The rest of his life was marked by struggles to consolidate his hold over England . William built a large fleet and invaded England in September 1066, decisively defeating and killing Harold at the [Battle of Hastings](#) on 14 October 1066. After further military efforts William was crowned king on Christmas Day 1066, in London. He made arrangements for the governance of England in early 1067 before returning to Normandy. Several unsuccessful rebellions followed, but by 1075 William's hold on England was mostly secure, allowing him to spend the majority of the rest of his reign on the continent.

William's final years were marked by difficulties in his continental domains,and threatened invasions of England by the [Danes](#)... His reign in England was marked by the construction of castles, the settling of a new Norman nobility on the land, and change in the composition of the English clergy.... William remained in England after his coronation and tried to reconcile the native magnates. The remaining earls – Edwin (of Mercia), Morcar (of Northumbria), and [Waltheof](#) (of Northampton) – were confirmed in their lands and titles..... In 1068 Edwin and Morcar revolted, The king marched through Edwin's lands and built a castle at [Warwick](#). Edwin and Morcar submitted..... The impact on England of William's conquest was profound; changes in the Church, aristocracy, culture, and language of the country have persisted into modern times..... How abrupt and far-reaching the changes were is still a matter of debate among historians, with some such as [Richard Southern](#) claiming that **the Conquest was the single most radical change in European history between the Fall of Rome and the 20th century**... During the reign of Queen [Elizabeth I of England](#), Archbishop [Matthew Parker](#) saw the Conquest as having corrupted a purer

English Church, which Parker attempted to restore. During the 17th and 18th centuries some historians and lawyers saw William's reign as imposing a "[Norman yoke](#)" on the native Anglo-Saxons, an argument that continued during the 19th century with further elaborations along nationalistic lines. These various controversies have led to William being seen by some historians either as one of the creators of England's greatness or as inflicting one of the greatest defeats in English history. Others have viewed William as an enemy of the English constitution, or alternatively as its creator."

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Mouse's Lecture was based on the following pages from one of the books studied by the Liddell children: Havilland Chepmell's *Short Course of History* (1862):

HOUSE OF NORMANDY.

WILLIAM I.

A.D. 1066. *William I.*

1067. The English begin to revolt.

1069. Danish Invasion. William ravages the north of England.

1070. The Saxon prelates deposed.

1071. Edwin killed. Morcar taken. Hereward submits.

1075. Rebellion of the Norman Barons.

1076. Execution of Waltheof.

1087. Revolt of Robert. War with France; Death of William.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR, whose cause was favoured by the Pope ⁸, was soon submitted to by the English; who wanted leaders, and had been of late much accustomed to

ciation of ten families. In these tythings, each householder, besides being surety for his fellows, was responsible for the conduct of his family, his slaves, and his guests. This served the purpose of a police.

In the court, or *mote*, of the Hundred, before the ealdorman, clergy, and freeholders of the district, offenders were tried on the presentment of the *Reeve* and the twelve oldest thanes; civil causes were decided; and contracts made. In important cases, and when the parties belonged to different hundreds, a court of the *Lathe* (a union of neighbouring hundreds), or even of the *Trything* (the third part of the county, a "*Riding*"), was held.

Causes which related to the Church or the Crown, and matters of weight, were decided in May and October, in the *Shire Mote*, in which the Bishop and the Earl jointly presided, and the *Shire-Reeve* (sheriff) and the chief thanes sat as assessors. The Sheriff had to arrest delinquents, and to collect the king's rents and fines. Appeals were made to the king's court, in which prelates and nobles sat.

At Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, and on extraordinary occasions, the great spiritual and temporal lords assembled in the *Witena-gemote* (meeting of the wise men), their consent being required for making laws.

⁸ Though William showed great firmness in opposing the encroachments of the Pope, the influence of Rome was greatly increased in England by the Conquest.

usurpation and conquest. *Edwin* and *Morcar*, the earls of *Mercia* and *Northumbria*, declared for him; and even *Stigand*, the patriotic archbishop of *Canterbury*, found it advisable to go with *Edgar Atheling*^o, to meet *William* and offer him the crown.

William's conduct at first was moderate. But the insolence of his Normans gave rise to a series of rebellions which he mercilessly punished¹:—in fact, he had almost to reconquer his new kingdom. Enraged at the welcome which *Sveno* and the Danish invaders met with in the north of England, A.D. 1069, he laid waste the whole country between the Humber and the Tees; so that by fire and sword, and cold and hunger, upwards of 100,000 people perished. Near Winchester, which was his chief residence, he also ruined a large tract of land since called the New Forest, in order that he might enjoy the pleasures of the chase, to protect which he enacted his cruel Forest Laws².

With the help of the Pope, he managed to depose *Stigand* and most of the Saxon prelates, A.D. 1070: he also encouraged the use of the French tongue; and would allow

Edgar afterwards fled to Scotland, where he found a refuge, and his sister *Margaret* married *Malcolm III*. The children of *Harold* fled to Ireland: like *Edgar Atheling*, they fruitlessly invaded England.

¹ *Edwin* and *Morcar* revolted, and were pardoned. But *William's* mistrust led him to try and seize them, A.D. 1071; on which, *Edwin* was killed as he was fleeing to Scotland, and *Morcar* took refuge with the Saxon hero *Hereward*, who held out in the isle of *Ely*. The outlaws were overpowered, and *Morcar* became a prisoner for life. The gallant *Hereward* escaped; he soon afterwards made a fair peace with the king.

² The penalty for killing a stag or boar was loss of eyes. Game was then doubly valued, as being the only fresh meat to be had in winter: for the unskilful farmers, at a loss to find food for all their cattle at that season, killed and salted, about *Michaelmas-tide*, beasts enough to supply the demand till the summer.

no Englishman to hold any office of trust. Most of the land in England³ was confiscated, and granted to Normans to be held as FIEFS. But though he established the FEUDAL SYSTEM⁴ in his dominions, he checked the power of his barons by making their tenants swear allegiance to himself, instead of being only responsible, as on the continent, to their immediate lords⁵.

A dangerous revolt, however, broke out among these Norman nobles, when the earl of *Norfolk* had married the earl of *Hereford's* sister in spite of the king's prohibition, A.D. 1075. The rebels were overpowered; and, to the terror of the English, Siward's son *Waltheof*, the Saxon earl of *Northampton*, was beheaded at Winchester for having concealed a plot in which he had refused to join⁶.

William had also a war with his eldest son *Robert*; who had tried to make him give up Normandy, but for five years had been an exile, A.D. 1087⁷. He also invaded

³ He caused an exact account of the land to be made, which was called the *Domesday-book*.

⁴ When the barbarians settled in conquered districts, they allotted among themselves the land which they had seized, assigning a large share to their king. The king and the great nobles were in the habit of maintaining their servants, or "*vassals*," by assigning them grants of land, called "*fiefs*," for their support. These fiefs soon became hereditary. They were, however, subject to certain burthens, and on failure of heirs reverted to the original lord, to whom they always owed military service. This was called the *feudal system*.

A number of vassals bound to serve them in the field, made the great lords and barons troublesome to their neighbours, and dangerous to the crown. On the continent, where private warfare was allowed, many of the counts and dukes became independent princes.

⁵ William took care not to give several neighbouring estates and earldoms to one man, a practice which had been so dangerous to the power of the last Saxon kings; and, except in counties palatine, the king's courts overruled all feudal jurisdictions.

⁶ He was betrayed by his wife *Judith*, the Conqueror's niece.

⁷ Robert had begun the war when roused to fury by his brothers

the territories of *Philip I.*, the French king, who had instigated Robert, and had joked about his being fat. But while he was burning the town of Mantes, his horse, stepping on some hot ashes, plunged, and he was bruised by the pommel of the saddle; an injury which caused his death. Normandy was inherited by Robert; and *William*, the Conqueror's younger son, was, by his father's wish and the aid of archbishop *Lanfranc*, elected to the throne of England, Sept. 1087.

WILLIAM II.

A.D. 1087. *William II.*

1088. Revolt of Odo and the barons.

1001. William makes peace with Robert. War with Henry.

1093. Malcolm of Scotland killed at Alnwick.

1095. Council of Clermont; First Crusade. Anselm flees to Rome.

1097. Expedition into Scotland.

1100. William killed in the New Forest.

WILLIAM RUFUS, or *the Red*^s, took advantage of the hatred of the Saxons against the Normans, to put down an insurrection of his barons in favour of Robert⁹, A.D. 1088. He afterwards invaded Normandy; but, at the suggestion of the barons, many of whom held lands under both brothers, it was agreed that there should be a peace, and that the surviving prince should inherit the other's terri-

William and Henry; who had emptied a pitcher of water on his head. When he now renewed it, the father and son fought together without knowing each other, and William was wounded in the hand, and his horse was killed. They were afterwards reconciled.

^s From his complexion: his hair was *flaxen*, and he was short and fat. Robert, who was also short, was called by his tall father, *Gambaron* and *Courthouse*, that is, Round and Short Legs.

⁹ It was stirred up by *Odo*, bishop of *Bayeux* and earl of *Kent*, the Conqueror's turbulent half-brother, who had just been released from prison.