



The Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy Volume 1

Thomas Forester

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This is a history of the early church in England and Normandy, both before and after the Norman Conquest under William the Conqueror. From the preface: "There is a peculiar advantage in studying English history from such a point of view, during a period when many of its most eminent characters were playing a distinguished part in both countries. England was surrendering to the invaders her broad acres and free institutions, and the churches and monasteries were being filled and remodelled by Norman ecclesiastics, while she was adopting the feudal tenures, the rules of chivalry, and the habits and manners of the conquerors, and their magnificent architecture was employed in raising stately cathedrals, abbeys, and castles in all quarters. On these subjects, and others connected with the changes then taking place in the social and dynastic system of England, Ordericus was better qualified to throw strong light than any English historian of the time. The advanced stages of his education, and almost all the associations of his maturer life were foreign. His family ties had been somewhat rudely severed, and he was torn from his native country at an age when it would hardly fail to leave some impression on so intelligent a mind; and it appears from several passages in his work that he fondly cherished recollections of it in the land of the stranger. What thus remained of English feeling probably contributed, in combination with his natural honesty and simplicity of character, to the general impartiality of his narrative of English affairs, and the sympathy he betrays for the sufferings of his countrymen and their patriotic struggles against Norman usurpation."

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