CHAPTER VIII

LORD OF LEINSTER

From one point of view the years passed by William in his lordship of Leinster were a period of exile which takes its importance from the part it played in his quarrel with the king. The earl's arrival in Ireland resulted in an open conflict with Meiler fitz Henry which further complicated his relations with John. A general reconciliation in the spring of 1208 by which the king gained at the expense of both William and the justiciar was more apparent than real. John's feud with William de Briouse and the latter's flight to Ireland caused the quarrel to break out anew. This chapter will be largely occupied with these two acute phases of the estrangement between William and his master. But William must not be regarded solely as the earl of Pembroke in exile in Ireland—he was the lord of Leinster in residence on his sief. The remarkable development of this region while it was under William's suzerainty was a decided tribute to his ability as a ruler. While the earl was engaged in his quarrel with John, he continued the extremely progressive policy which had previously been inaugurated by his seneschals under his direction.

In order to understand William's position in Ireland one must have some idea of the history of the lordship of Leinster which he acquired by his marriage to Isabel de Clare. In the year 1166 Dermot McMurrough, king of Leinster, who had been expelled from Ireland by his enemies, sought aid from Henry II and his turbulent vassals of the Welsh marches. Three years later the Norman vanguard under such leaders as Robert fitz Stephen, Meiler fitz Henry, Hervey de Montmorency, and Maurice de Prendergast arrived in Ireland to aid their ally. The chief of the Irish king's foreign auxiliaries, Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare, earl of Pembroke, reached Ireland in August 1170. A few months later he married the king's daughter, Eva, with the
understanding that he was to inherit Leinster at Dermot's
death.\footnote{The principal sources for the conquest of Ireland are the Song of Dermot
and the Earl (ed. G. H. Orpen), and Giraldus Cambrensis, Expugnatio Hibernica (Opera, V, 205-411). For a full secondary account see Orpen, Ireland under the Normans, vol. I.} Of course this agreement could not be expected to have
great weight with Dermot's subjects, to say nothing of the rival
native kings. When Dermot died a short time after his daugh-
ter's marriage, Earl Richard was forced to maintain his right
by the sword—a feat of which he was perfectly capable.\footnote{Dermot died in the spring of 1171 (Giraldus Cambrensis, Opera, V, 263). For Earl Richard's troubles with his new subjects see Song of Dermot, lines 1735 et esq.} Meanwhile Henry Plantagenet had become alarmed at Earl
Richard's success and decided to visit Ireland in person to pro-
cure its submission to the English crown. When Henry landed
at Waterford in October 1171, the earl of Pembroke surren-
dered his conquests into the king's hands.\footnote{Song of Dermot., 2613-2622.} Reserving for him-
self the cities of Dublin, Wexford, and Waterford with the land
in their immediate vicinities and the coastal region between
Dublin and Wicklow, Henry granted the rest of Leinster to
Earl Richard as a fief.\footnote{See ibid. and Orpen, Ireland under the Normans, for maps.} The territory included in the present
counties of Kildare, Queen's, Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford, and
about a third of King's was to be held by the earl for the ser-
vice of one hundred knights.\footnote{In 1208 John confirmed Leinster to William for the service of 100 knights and Meath to Walter de Lacy for that of 50 knights (Rot. Chart., pp. 176, 178). As Henry II granted Meath to Hugh de Lacy for 50 knights, one may presume that Leinster also owed the same number as in 1208.} In 1173 the city of Wexford was
added to this fief.\footnote{Song of Dermot., 2902-3.} Unfortunately, the charter given to Earl
Richard on this occasion has not been preserved, but its terms,
can be surmised from the one by which Henry gave Meath
to Hugh de Lacy.\footnote{Printed in Orpen, Ireland under the Normans, I, 285-6.} Considering Earl Richard's position as the
conqueror of the country and the son-in-law and designated
heir of the late king, the privileges granted him must have been fully as extensive as those of Hugh de Lacy. The earl was to enjoy all the powers which the king had or could give in return for his homage and service. Thus Leinster was a real liberty in which the lord ruled as absolute master with all the privileges which the law of the time conferred on the king himself. As long as he fulfilled his feudal obligations to his suzerain, Earl Richard was practically king of Leinster.

The marcher lords who had taken part in the conquest of Leinster naturally expected to be rewarded with generous grants of land. They were not disappointed, for Earl Richard supplied them with extensive fiefs from the broad lands given him by King Henry. Thus was created the baronage of Leinster—those who held from the lord in chief. When Richard de Clare died in 1176, this process of subinfeudation was by no means completed, and there was still plenty of land not yet enfeoffed. At Earl Richard’s death all his domains were seized into the king’s hands. In 1185 Henry II created his youngest son, John, lord of Ireland and sent him to take possession of the country. From that time until William Marshal’s marriage with Isabel de Clare, Leinster was in the custody of John as the suzerain of the fief. With a fine disregard for the customs governing his position as the guardian of a minor heir, John granted fiefs in Leinster to many of his own men. It will be remembered that this question arose when William demanded Leinster from John in 1189, and that only John’s butler, Theobald Walter, retained his lands, and he held them as William’s vassal. At that time William did homage to John for Isabel’s Irish inheritance and, in all probability, he received the same palatine privileges that Henry II had given Earl Richard.

When William first obtained possession of Leinster, he sent Renault de Kedeville to seize it in his name. Nothing is

8 *Cum omnibus libertatibus quas ibi habeo vel illi dare possum.*
9 The principal source of information about the sub-infeudation of Leinster is the *Song of Dermot*, 3024-3127. It has been thoroughly worked out in Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, I, 367-395.
10 *Hist.*, 9600-9618.
11 *Hist.*, 9623-9630.
known of this individual beyond the suggestion in the *History* that he did not fulfil his mission loyally. The reign of Richard forms almost a complete lacuna in our knowledge of Irish history—not even the names of the justiciars can be definitely ascertained. Sometime during this period, probably about 1192, William sent to Ireland one of the ranking members of his household, Geoffrey fitz Robert. Geoffrey received a barony centering in Kells, which lay some ten miles south of Kilkenny, and was probably entrusted with the administration of the whole region. By the beginning of the thirteenth century he was styled seneschal of Leinster. In all likelihood it was he who constructed the castle on William’s demesne manor of Kilkenny which the Irish annals say was built in 1192. If he did not actually establish the burghs of Kilkenny and Carlow, he certainly fixed the burgage fees at those places and in the walled town of Wexford. His most important service to the commercial development of Leinster was the founding of the town of New Ross on the river Barrow. This new port served the river traffic on the Nore and the Barrow, and a bridge thrown over the latter stream gave access to the highroad to Kells and Kilkenny. New Ross, or Rossbridge as it was then called, soon became the principal port of south Leinster and diverted a large amount of trade from the royal town of Waterford. Geoffrey was active in the religious as well as the economic development of Leinster. On his own lands he founded the priory of Kells, and as William’s representative he estab-

12 See Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, II, 109 et seq.
13 Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans*, II, 211, 225.
15 *Chartae, Privilegia, et Immunitates* (Irish Record Commission, 1889), pp. 33-4, 37, 47.
16 In William’s charter to Tintern Minor mention is made of “a burgage in Ross on the south side of the bridge.” *Chartae, Privilegia, et Immunitates*, p. 80. This places the foundation of New Ross before the earl’s coming to Ireland.
lished the monastery of Tintern Minor in accordance with his lord's instructions. Geoffrey fitz Robert was a capable administrator who carried on his master's progressive policy with energy and ability.

In the spring of 1204 William sent his nephew, John Marshal, who had served in the French wars under both Richard and John, to take over the seneschalship of Leinster. This action was probably due to the activities of Meiler fitz Henry. As early as 1202 there had been some difficulty over the castle and land of Offaly which Meiler claimed, probably on the basis of a grant by Earl Richard which had later been revoked. In that year Meiler appealed to John's court against Adam de Hereford who held the disputed fief as William's vassal. The question remained unsettled, and some years later the justiciar seized Offaly at the king's command. As John Marshal was a man of decided ability who stood high in the royal favor, William hoped that he would be better able than the barons of Leinster to cope with the justiciar. John was armed with letters patent which directed Meiler to receive him as seneschal of Leinster and forbade him to infringe on the palatine privileges guaranteed by William's charter. Clearly the king had at least outwardly joined with the earl in this attempt to check the aggressions of the justiciar. There is no evidence that John Marshal fulfilled his uncle's expectations—in fact one is inclined to believe that he was not exceptionally loyal to him. While William was in the midst of his quarrel with Meiler, John Marshal accepted from the king the office of marshal of Ireland with a nice fief attached to it. Suspicion of his nephew's reliability may have been a contributing cause of the earl's intense desire to go to Ireland in person. Offaly was in the justiciar's hands, and the seneschal of Leinster was untrustworthy. His lands and his vassals required William's protection.

Early in the spring of 1207 William and his knights landed in Ireland amid the rejoicing of most of his vassals of Leinster.

The *History* asserts that this was his first visit to the great fief which formed so important a part of his wife’s inheritance.\(^{21}\) This statement may not be strictly accurate. According to the Irish annals found in the *Chartularies of St. Mary’s, Dublin*, the earl was caught in a storm on the way to Ireland in the autumn of 1200, and when he landed in safety, founded the monastery of Tintern Minor in fulfilment of a vow made during the voyage.\(^{22}\) Tintern was almost certainly established in 1200, but William’s charter of foundation probably should be placed after 1207.\(^{23}\) The evidence can be read either way. But even if it took place, this first visit was so brief that it has no significance either for the biographer of William or the historian of Leinster.

Immediately after his arrival the earl summoned the justiciar to appear before his court to answer for the seizure of Offaly. As Meiler was William’s vassal and the land in dispute was part of Leinster, this procedure was perfectly proper, but the justiciar declined to obey on the ground that he had acted at the king’s command. In taking possession of Offaly he had acted not as a baron of Leinster, but as justiciar of Ireland. Two of the great Irish lords, Hugh and Walter de Lacy, and a number of the barons of Leinster and Meath addressed a letter of protest to the king against his justiciar’s contumacy. William’s name does not appear, but the petition was in his interest, and he probably inspired it. On May 23rd John sent a stinging rebuke to the petitioners. He was astounded that they dared to found a “new assize” without his consent.\(^{24}\) What they sought was both unjust and contrary to custom. They were immediately to cease bothering the justiciar about Offaly. No

\(^{21}\) *Hist.*, 13316.


\(^{24}\) "novam assissam."
one who seized a fief by the king's command should answer to any one for his action. The letter closed with the suggestion that the petitioners think less about the privileges of their lord and more about the rights of the crown. By this letter John definitely took the part of Meiler in his disagreement with William. But the king still hoped to settle the question peaceably. He summoned William, Meiler, John Marshal, and a number of the barons of Leinster to discuss the matter with him.

The king's summons was extremely disturbing to William, for he was reasonably certain that he soon as he left, the justiciar's men would attack his lands. This danger was made more serious by the fact that the Countess Isabel, who had accompanied him to Ireland, was pregnant and would have to remain there. He therefore decided to leave ten of the eleven knights who had come over from Pembroke with him to guard the countess and defend Leinster from aggression. His most loyal vassal, John d'Erley, was entrusted with the custody of part of Leinster, while Jordan de Sackville was placed in charge of the rest. Jordan was an Irish baron of considerable importance whose lands lay in Ulster. Although he does not seem to have held a fief from William in Ireland, he was his vassal for lands in Normandy and in Buckinghamshire and had been attached to his household during the French wars. In addition to John d'Erley, William left behind Stephen d'Evreux, Ralph fitz Pagan, and Mallard, his standard bearer, with six more of the knights of his household. Henry Hose alone journeyed to England with his lord. Thus he left most of his knights to guard the countess while John d'Erley and Jordan de Sackville were given general charge of Leinster. The earl instructed them to rule by the advice of Geoffrey fitz Robert, Walter Porcel, and Thomas fitz Anthony, powerful and trustworthy barons of Leinster. Finally, he summoned all his vassals to his castle of Kilkenny and addressed them. "Lords, behold the countess, the daughter of the earl who gave you your fiefs when he con-

---

[27] Hist., 13539.
queried this land. She remains here among you, pregnant. Until God leads me back, I beg you all to guard her faithfully, for she is your liege lady, and I have no right in this land except through her." The assembled barons promised to defend their lord's wife, but here and there in the crowd were some whose loyalty was rather doubtful. It was in the little knot of household knights, men who had served him in France and Wales, that William placed his confidence.

After landing in Wales on Michaelmas day, William proceeded at once to John who received him most ungraciously. The king's attitude toward him was even more hostile than before, as he had recently become displeased with William de Briouse who was one of William's closest friends.

Early in November, Meiler arrived and was well received by the king. When the justiciar presented his complaints against William, John lent a willing ear and soon joined with him to plan the earl's destruction—or at least the seizure of his lands in Ireland. Meiler suggested that John keep William in England and summon to him John d'Erley, Jordan de Sackville, and Stephen d'Evreux. In their absence he felt confident that he could easily overrun Leinster. Several barons of Leinster had accompanied Meiler to England, and they were given lands to bind them to the cause of the king and justiciar against their rightful lord. John Marshal accepted from John the office of marshal of Ireland and a fief. David de la Roche and Philip de Prendergast, both vassals of William, received considerable grants from the king. Thus John won to him such of William's men as could be bribed, while he summoned to England those who were loyal. By that means Meiler could be given a free hand to do what he pleased in Leinster.

28 Hist., 13464-13550.
29 Ibid., 13552-13584.
30 Ibid., 13585-13588. On William de Briouse's quarrel with John see Nor- gate, John Lackland, pp. 146-7, 149-151. See also Powicke, The Loss of Nor- mandy, pp. 468-9 and Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland (ed. H. G. Sweetman, Rolls Series), no. 408.
81 Hist., 13616-13652.
83 Ibid., pp. 172b, 171b.
Despite the fact that it was the stormy season, Meiler managed to cross to Ireland in company with the messenger who bore the king's letters summoning John d'Erley and Jordan de Sackville to England. Before he left Ireland, he had instructed his men to attack Leinster as soon as William started for England. This they had done early in October and had killed twenty of the earl's men, but greatly to Meiler's chagrin, the custodians of Leinster had later captured the raiders and cast them into prison. The justiciar at once summoned all William's vassals and gave them the king's letters calling their leaders to England. After a brief consultation they decided to ignore the royal mandate and to prepare to defend their lord's lands as best they could. While John d'Erley mobilized the men of Leinster, Jordan sought the aid of the lord from whom he held his lands in Ireland, Hugh de Lacy, earl of Ulster, who promptly came to their assistance at the head of sixty-five knights, two hundred mounted serjeants, and a thousand infantry. Meiler could not withstand the combined forces of Ulster and Leinster. His lands were devastated while he himself was captured and was forced to purchase his freedom by giving up his son as a hostage. Philip de Prendergast and the other disloyal barons of Leinster were likewise obliged to give hostages for their good behavior.

Meanwhile, William had followed the court about England. Considering the danger to his wife and lands in Ireland and the ungracious attitude of the king toward him, he was far from happy. One day, toward the end of January, as they rode out of Guildford, the king called William to him and asked if he had had news from Ireland. As William had not, the king went on to give him a purely imaginary account of the war between Meiler and the men of Leinster. According to the story, John d'Erley had made a sorty from Kilkenny castle with all the garrison, leaving but two serjeants to hold the fortress. While he was gone, Meiler laid siege to the castle, but the countess...
managed to notify John and a sanguinary combat ensued. The justiciar and many of his knights were captured, but John d’Erley was mortally wounded while Stephen d’Evreux and Ralph fitz Pagan were killed. William replied, "Certainly, Fair Sire, it is a great pity about the knights. They were your men which makes the affair still more regrettable." 97 He was not, however, particularly troubled as he did not believe that the king had had any word from Ireland. At that season the passage of the Irish Sea was almost impossible, and besides, he felt that he would have received the news as soon as the king. 38

Up and down England they rode together, William and the king, each anxiously awaiting word from Ireland. John solaced himself by seizing the lands of John d’Erley and Jordan de Sackville for their disobedience of his summons, though it is rather hard to see how they could have come to England before the sea became passable. 89 Finally, late in February, messengers arrived bearing to the king and to William the news of the justiciar’s discomfiture. When John summoned him and asked if he had heard from Ireland, William pretended to know nothing and gave the king the somewhat doubtful pleasure of replacing his imaginary account with the true one. 40

The miscarriage of his plans against Leinster forced John to moderate his hostility toward his vassal. On March 7th the king despatched letters to Meiler to inform him that two days before William had come to him at Bristol of his own volition and had shown himself submissive to the royal will. There was to be a council at Winchester on the Wednesday before Lent where the affairs of Ireland would be thoroughly discussed. Meanwhile, the justiciar was to keep the peace and make what amends he could for any raids his men might have made into Leinster. William had promised to send similar directions to his vassals. 41 In short, John provided for a truce until the ques-

97 John and Stephen were English tenants-in-chief and hence were primarily the king’s men.
88 Ibid., 13787-13866.
90 Rot. Claus., I, 103, 106b.
40 Hist., 13904-13930.
41 Rot. Claus., I, 105.
tions at issue could be settled. The terms of the compromise between William and his master were formulated by March 20th. The earl agreed to accept a new charter for Leinster and promised the king a fine of three hundred marks for the return of Offaly with its castles. John sent Philip of Worcester, Master Robert of Cirencester, Roland Bloet, and William Petit to inform Meiler of this agreement and to see that it was put into effect. The king also turned over to William the custody of the lands of John d’Erley and Jordan de Sackville which had been seized when they failed to obey the royal summons.

The real basis of the agreement between William and his king was embodied in the new charter for Leinster which was issued on March 28. The earl and his heirs were to hold the fief for the service of one hundred knights. But while Henry II had given Earl Richard “all the liberties which I have or can give,” John imposed important restrictions on the powers of the lords of Leinster. The pleas of the crown—treasure-trove, rape, ambush and arson—as well as all appeals for felonious breach of the peace were reserved for the king’s court. In case of default of justice in the lord’s court or in case of complaints against the lord himself, the question could be carried on appeal to the royal court. The regalian rights over the episcopal sees of Leinster were also reserved to the king. If any tenant-in-chief of the king who held lands in Leinster should die leaving a minor heir, the lord would have the custody of the fees held of him, but the king could arrange the marriage of the heir or heiress. While this charter decidedly restricted the privileges of the lord of Leinster, it did not reduce him to the status of an ordinary English tenant-in-chief. All rights not specifically reserved to the crown were left to the lord. He still had control of the entire administration of the region—the

46 crocis et dignitatis ab ea pertinentibus Orpen interprets this expression more broadly, Ireland under the Normans, II, 233-4.
sheriffs were his officials. His courts had full jurisdiction in most cases. The custody of the fees held of him by tenants-in-chief of the crown was a right denied English barons. 47 Leinster was still a liberty, though a somewhat limited one. A month later Walter de Lacy accepted a similar charter from John. 48 Whether the king’s support of his justiciar’s aggressive policy was due solely to a desire to injure William or to a definite plan to reduce the power of the Irish palatine lords, he had achieved the latter result. No longer were the lords of Leinster and Meath so completely independent of the lord of Ireland.

When in April William sought leave to return to Ireland, John granted it freely. 49 He set out at once and landed at Glasscarrick near Wexford where he was met by Jordan de Sackville and John d’Erley, the latter clothed in a hauberk. William glanced at this warlike array and remarked that he thought peace had been proclaimed, but John assured him that there were some who did not observe it. As they rode inland, the two faithful knights explained to their lord the state of his land of Leinster which had been entrusted to them and told him which of his vassals had shown themselves loyal. The news of the earl’s arrival spread rapidly, and the barons of Leinster hastened to greet him. Among the first to arrive were the two most prominent of those who had shown themselves disloyal to their lord and had accepted lands from John, Philip de Prendergast and David de la Roche. William saluted them with the rather dubious greeting, “God save you, if it is right that he should.” When they protested that they were two of his most loyal vassals, he replied that all men both in town and countryside knew them for traitors. As Jordan and John heartily concurred in this statement, the two disloyal barons broke down and begged their lord’s pardon which he granted them. The next day the Countess Isabel arrived to welcome her husband, and they returned to Kilkenny together. The countess had passed several anxious months as the result of the strife stirred up by Meiler, and she

was in favor of taking summary vengeance on her enemies, but William fully realized that his rebellious vassals had really acted in accord with the king's will and in support of his justiciar. Meiler alone of the lords of Leinster could be held to account. All the other unfaithful vassals were forgiven and their hostages returned—much to the disgust of the countess. Meiler himself was soon brought to his knees by the loss of his position as justiciar which placed him practically at William's mercy as the lord from whom he held his lands. To gain the earl's forgiveness he was forced to surrender his castle of Dunamase at once and promise his lord the succession to all his lands when he died.\textsuperscript{50} This seemed to remove the last obstacle to peace in Leinster, and William could turn his attention to the development of his lands. Probably at this time he rewarded John d'Erley and Mallard, his standard bearer, with generous fiefs.

Unfortunately, this unusual peace was not to bless Ireland for very long. William de Briouse, who had returned to his lands in Wales after his estrangement from John in the autumn of 1207, decided in the winter of 1208-9 to flee to Ireland from the king's displeasure.\textsuperscript{51} The reasons for John's bitter quarrel with his old friend and vassal are somewhat obscure. William certainly owed vast sums of money to the exchequer, and his wife had refused to give up his son as a hostage to John.\textsuperscript{52} Besides this, it is probable that William de Briouse knew far more about the fate of Arthur of Brittany than John cared to have published to the world. Mr. Powicke has suggested that it was he who furnished the chronicler of Margan Abbey with its peculiarly detailed information on the young prince's death.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 13941-14136.

\textsuperscript{51} William de Briouse's flight to Ireland is placed in 1208 by Roger of Wendover (II, 48-9) and by the Annals in \textit{Chartularies of St. Mary's, Dublin} (II, 310), and is listed with other events of 1208 under 1207 in \textit{ Brut y Tywysogion}. It took place in the winter (Hist., 14167-8). See Orpen, \textit{Ireland under the Normans}, II, 239, note 1.

and later told the same story to William le Breton, the chronicler of the French court. The author of the History asserts that he does not know the cause of the quarrel, and if he did, it would not be his business to tell it. This seems to support the theory that there was far more to the matter than a few thousand marks owed to the exchequer or a refusal to deliver a son as hostage. At any rate, William de Briouse fled from Wales with his wife and children, and after a stormy crossing, landed at Wicklow in Ireland where, according to the History, William Marshal was staying at the time. As Wicklow was not part of Leinster, it seems more likely that William simply went there to meet his old friend when he heard of his arrival and then escorted him into his own lands. There he sheltered the fugitives for twenty days.

When John de Gray, bishop of Norwich, who had succeeded Meiler fitz Henry as justiciar, learned that the lord of Leinster was harboring William de Briouse and his family, he immediately ordered him to deliver the fugitives to him. William Marshal replied that he was harboring his lord, William de Briouse, as it was his duty to do. He knew nothing of any quarrel between his guest and the king, and it would be treason to turn him over to the justiciar. Instead he would conduct him safely to the frontier of Leinster. In short William de Briouse was his lord and his guest, and he would protect him while he was in his lands. This reply of William's to the justiciar's demand is rather puzzling. One has some difficulty in figuring out how William de Briouse was William Marshal's lord. It also seems most improbable that William did not know of his guest's quarrel with the king as it had started when he was in England in the autumn of 1207. Apparently the real reasons

---

54 Hist., 14154-14156.
55 Ibid., 14193-14198.
56 Ibid., 14186-7.
57 Ibid., 14199-14232.
58 Orpen, Ireland under the Normans, II, 239, note 2. See also Norgate, John Lackland, p. 151, note 1. William de Briouse may have been overlord of the manor of Speen in Berkshire. Book of Fees, pp. 749, 846, 859.
59 Hist., 13585-13588.
which urged William to receive his old friend do not appear. This becomes more evident in the conversation that ensued in 1210 when John accused the lord of Leinster of harboring a traitor. Whatever his motives may have been, William escorted his guest safely to the borders of Meath where he was received by his son-in-law, Walter de Lacy.

William de Briouse spent the year 1209 in Ireland under the protection of the two de Lacys, and in the spring of 1210 obtained permission from the justiciar to go to Wales with the understanding that he would seek out the king and make his peace with him. Meanwhile, John had decided to make an expedition to Ireland to settle the de Briouse affair once and for all and to punish the barons who had given the family shelter. While he was mustering his army, he summoned William Marshal to join him. On May 31st, the king arrived at Haverford in William's county of Pembroke, and by June 3rd he was at Cross-on-the-Sea, near Pembroke, where he remained until after the 16th. There William de Briouse came to him and attempted to settle their quarrel by a fine of forty thousand marks. As he had been unable to pay his regular debts to the exchequer, this offer can not have been taken very seriously by the king. Furthermore, John was convinced that William's wife, Matilda, was the ruling member of the family and his promises were of little value without her concurrence. As she was still in Ireland with the equally obstinate de Lacys, John continued his preparations to go after her. In the meantime, he gave William leave to go before him to win his wife's assent to the proposed settlement, but he preferred to stay in Wales. Sometime after June 16th John set sail for Ireland to capture Matilda de Briouse and punish the barons of Ireland who had abetted her family in their contumacy. This seems a rather slight motive for so costly an expedition, but it is the only one

---

60 Norgate, John Lackland, p. 151.  
61 Hist., 14240-14246.  
62 Rotuli de Liberate ac de Misis et Praestitis, pp. 172-178.  
63 Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland, no. 408. Orpen, Ireland under the Normans, II, 241.
that John avowed. One is forced to conclude that there was some far more potent reason for John's hatred of the house of Briouse than a mere matter of debts. The forty thousand marks fine was a prohibitive sum at best. Apparently John's purpose was the destruction of the family of Briouse.

One June 20, 1210, John landed at Crook near Waterford where he was joined by his justiciar, John de Gray.\textsuperscript{64} The next day he entered Leinster by the port of New Ross and from there proceeded to Kilkenny by way of Thomastown.\textsuperscript{65} Accompanied as he was by William Marshal, his progress through Leinster was a peaceful one. At Kilkenny he was well received, and his whole army was entertained there two days at William's expense.\textsuperscript{66} One wonders if this were part of John's revenge on the lord of Leinster and his barons for their contumacy in the affair of William de Briouse and their foiling of his plans in 1208. The long stay of the king in Pembroke, his advance through Leinster, and his entertainment at Kilkenny, which was William's chief seat in Ireland, must have been a great burden to the latter and his vassals. From Kilkenny John proceeded to Naas, whose lord, William fitz William, was one of William Marshal's most powerful barons.\textsuperscript{67} Finally, on June 28th he quitted the lordship of Leinster and entered his own city of Dublin.\textsuperscript{68} There he was met by a number of the barons of Meath who made submission to him in the name of their lord, Walter de Lacy. John refused to be mollified and moved through Meath taking possession of all Walter's castles and depriving him of his lordship. Hugh de Lacy, earl of Ulster, instead of following the pacific example of his brother, decided to defend his territories. Finding it impossible to resist the royal army, he retired to his castle of Carrickfergus, and finally, when he learned that the king was advancing against this stronghold, he fled to Scotland with Matilda de Briouse and her sons William and Reginald. Deprived of their leader and at-

\textsuperscript{64} Rotuli de Liberata ac de Missis et Praestitis, p. 178.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., p. 179.
\textsuperscript{66} Rotuli de Liberata ac de Missis et Praestitis, p. 181.
\textsuperscript{67} Hist., 14258-14266.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
tacked by all the forces John could muster, the garrison of the castle soon surrendered. By August 18th, the king was back in Dublin.

After he had thoroughly punished the two de Lacys, John felt that it was time to turn to William Marshal. There in Dublin, in the presence of all the barons of the army, he charged him with sheltering William de Briouse. The earl replied to the king much as he had to the justiciar a year and a half before. He had harbored his lord who had arrived at his castle in a very miserable condition. It had never occurred to him that there was any harm in this act of mercy, for William de Briouse was his lord and his old friend, and he did not know that the king had anything against him. When the earl left England, John and William were together. If anyone except the king cared to charge him with harboring a traitor, he was willing to defend himself in any way the court saw fit. As usual, none of the barons showed any enthusiasm for taking up the quarrel, and John was forced to drop the matter. In general, William's statement of the case was probably true. William de Briouse, his lord and old friend, had arrived on the coast of Ireland after a stormy voyage, and he had given him shelter. It is, however, impossible to believe that William Marshal was unaware of William de Briouse's quarrel with the king, especially as the History assures us that it affected his own position at court in 1208. On the other hand, it was perfectly true that William de Briouse was at court when William departed for Ireland in the spring of 1208. The earl's position was technically correct, but there could have been little doubt in John's mind that in reality William had cheerfully harbored a man whom he knew to be the king's enemy. As in the case

69 Orpen, Ireland under the Normans, II, 246-260.
70 Rotuli de Liberata ac de Misis et Praestitis, p. 213.
71 Hist., 14283-14314.
72 Ibid., 14314-14318.
73 Ibid., 13585-13607.
74 He was in at least some favor with John as late as May 6th, 1208. (Rot. Claus., I, 114). His complete disgrace came that summer. See Norgate, John Lackland, p. 150. Rot. Pat., p. 86b.
of his refusal to follow him to Poitou, John could not take any action against his great vassal because his barons refused to support him. Whatever they may have felt about the rights of the question, none of them had the slightest desire to risk having to fight so doughty a warrior as William. The old knight, he was then sixty-six, found that his offer to put the question to the proof of combat still served, as it had in the past, to dampen the enthusiasm of any baron who might care to accuse him of any fault toward his king.

Despite the fact that he had been forced to drop his main charge against William, John insisted that he be given the castle of Dunamase, which the latter had received from Meiler, as a pledge for his future good behavior, and Geoffrey fitz Robert, Jordan de Sackville, Thomas de Sanford, John d'Erley, and Walter Porcel as hostages. The earl replied that the king already held all his castles in England as well as his two sons, but he was willing to give him all his Irish castles and the sons of his vassals if he wanted them. He had no evil intentions toward the king and would give him whatever pledges he desired. The king answered that he only wanted the castle and hostages whom he had mentioned, and with their consent William turned over to him the only two who were present, John d'Erley and Walter Porcel. The others were apparently summoned and given to the king later. John, however, was not satisfied and demanded still more hostages from the baronage of Leinster. One of these lords, David de la Roche, refused to go on the ground that William had wronged him and he was not obliged to be a pledge for his conduct. At William's insistence, the king asked the barons if this charge were true, and all agreed that it was not. Sometime later, Peter fitz Herbert, a

75 I cannot understand the inclusion of Thomas de Sanford in this list. There is no other evidence that he was a vassal of William, and he was extremely prominent in the king's service before and after this time. It seems likely that it is an error for Hugh de Sanford who was William's man.
76 Hist., 14319-14372.
77 Probably only until the rest of those listed above could come. See ibid., 14453-14465.
baron of Gloucestershire who had succeeded William as sheriff
of that county in 1194, when looking for a seat, found that the
only one vacant was next to David de la Roche. Peter refused
to sit next to a man who had failed his lord. 78 William's hos-
tages were sent to England and distributed among a number of
royal castles—Jordan at Gloucester, Thomas at Winchester,
John at Nottingham, and Geoffrey at Hereford, while Walter
Porcel was entrusted to Peter fitz Herbert who entertained him
royally while he was in his custody. 79

Although William Marshal spent most of the next two years,
1211 and 1212, in Ireland, what little is known of his activities
during that period belongs to the discussion of his part in the
troubles of King John with the church and his barons which
will occupy the next chapter. But before passing on it is neces-
sary to form some estimate of William's work as lord of Leins-
ter. The energy which he displayed in establishing boroughs
was undoubtedly his principal contribution to the economic de-
development of the region. He seems to have had an abiding
interest in the advance of trade and commerce. When he was
once more in the king's favor, he obtained free passage past
Waterford for ships bound for New Ross, and later as regent
of England he continued to grant favors to the merchants of
Leinster. 80 Of course every increase in the volume of trade
within his lands added to the revenues which he drew from
them. When William's lands were divided after the death of
his last son, Leinster produced the very considerable revenue
of something over seventeen hundred pounds a year. 81 The earl
also continued the settlement or rather the sub-infeudation of
Leinster. Geoffrey fitz Robert, John d'Erley, Mallard the stand-
ard bearer, Thomas fitz Anthony, and William de St. Leger
all received fiefs in the previously undeveloped county of Kil-
kenny. 82 Finally William showed a laudable enthusiasm for

78 Ibid., 14402-14446. 79 Ibid., 14447-14468.
80 Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland, no. 648, 725, 862.
81 Chartularies of St. Mary's, Dublin, II, 401-406.
82 Orpen, Ireland under the Normans, II, 225-6.
establishing religious foundations. Besides the monastery of St. Mary de Voto, or Tintern Minor, he founded the abbey of St. Salvator, or Duiske, and confirmed grants made by his predecessors and vassals. At the close of the year 1210 William was under the cloud of royal displeasure more deeply than ever. His two sons, all his castles in England and Wales, the castle of Dunamase, and the homage and service of Meiler fitz Henry were in the king’s hands as pledges for his good behavior. Five of his most important vassals were held as hostages in royal castles. Still he had escaped the fate of the de Briouses and the de Lacy’s, and none of his lands had actually been confiscated. He had opposed John’s plans in Ireland to the extent of waging war on his justiciar and had sheltered a man whom the king considered a traitor, yet officially he was in full standing as a baron of England. A sense of unreality permeates the whole course of this quarrel between William and the king—it was almost a game. John wished to reduce his vassal’s overweening power while the latter resisted as best he could, but both observed scrupulously the forms if not always the spirit of feudal law. In 1207 the earl had obeyed the king’s summons to England and had remained at court while Meiler returned to Ireland. He could not be held personally responsible for John d’Erley and Jordan de Sackville’s defiance of the royal mandate any more than John could be for Meiler’s attacks on Leinster. There could be no more intriguing picture than that of John and William travelling about England together in the spring of 1208 while their representatives, with their complete if unofficial approval, waged war on each other in Ireland. Then the two principals solemnly made peace and ordered their deputies to cease fighting. William’s case was a trifle weaker in the affair of William de Briouse, yet he could and did argue that he had merely ful-

---

88 Facsimiles of National Manuscripts of Ireland (ed. J. T. Gilbert), I, no. lxix; Chartularies of St. Mary’s, Dublin, II, 158-9; Register of St. Thomas, Dublin, pp. 137, 356.
filled his obligations to one of his lords in perfect innocence of the fact that this lord was in enmity with John, the lord paramount. When the king summoned him to meet him in Wales in 1210, the earl obeyed promptly. Whenever the king had demanded hostages in the shape of sons, vassals, or castles, William had complied. He had never actually defied his king and suzerain. On his side John had acted throughout with rare restraint. Cheerfully disavowing the acts of Meiler, he had compromised on the question of William's palatine privileges in Leinster. In 1210 instead of punishing William with the de Lacys, he had given him the opportunity to demonstrate his loyalty by meeting him at Pembroke and accompanying the royal army to Ireland. Of course this may have been simply caution on John's part, for the combined forces of Leinster, Meath, and Ulster might well have defied him successfully. Once the de Lacys were crushed, the king did try to convict William of harboring a traitor. But John must have known from experience the futility of attempting to persuade his barons to render judgement against the earl. One is inclined to believe that the king simply used this accusation as a convenient excuse for demanding hostages. While John mistrusted William and desired to reduce his power and to insure his loyalty, he had no intention of driving him to open rebellion. The earl's wealth, his influence with the baronage, and his personal ability would make him an exceedingly dangerous enemy. He had often proved himself an invaluable servant. In such circumstances no monarch in his senses would risk his permanent disaffection. For his part William was enjoying the perquisites of his vast estates and was far too wise to give the king a valid pretext for their confiscation. Self-interest if nothing else prevented these two men from carrying their quarrel to extremes.