

CHAPTER II HOW THEY HOLD OUR LAND

William the Conqueror gave the manor of Great Wimondley, Herts., to Fitz-task, a Norman noble, to hold by the service of Grand Sergeantry. Ellen, daughter and heiress. of Guy Fitz-lecon, married John de Argenton, whose family held this manor during several generations, by the service of offering to the King the first cup of drink which he tasted at his dinner on the day of his Coronation, the cup becoming the property of the Lord of Wimondley by the said service.

Ralph de Fletcher held lands in Lincolnshire from the King on payment of ~0 fletched arrows. The Manor of Theobalds, Herts., which reverted to the Crown, was granted to John Carpenter, Master of St. Anthony's Hospital, London, by tenure of 1 bow and 1 barbed arrow. William de Greseley held the Manor of Drakelow, Derbyshire, on payment of 1 bow, a quiver, and 12 fletched arrows and 1 unfletched. De Dagge— worth paid Edward 111 3 fletched arrows for his lands at Da gworth, Suffolk, and Reginald de Colewick paid the same king 12 fletched arrows whenever he came to Nottingham Castle, for lands which he held near by. John Bandet had to pay 100 barbed arrows to the Crown for land at Southampton.

Cecilia Muchgrave held under Edward I the Manor of Bricknor,

Gloucestershire, for keeping a certain wood in the Forest of Dean by means of one man armed with bow and arrows. David de Sciredum held land in Devon on payment of 2 arrows when the King hunted on Dartmoor, while Walter Aungevin held land also in Devon by paying 2 barbed arrows when the King hunted on Exmoor. For lands at Barr, in the same county, Marinus de Ia Barr gave the King a salmon and 2 barbed arrows.

The liberty of the Savoy was granted by Henry III to. Peter of Savoy, uncle of Queen Elinor, “ to him and his heirs,” for a yearly payment at the Exchequer of 3 barbed arrows. Nicolas Foljambe held lands in Derbyshire for keeping the forest of the High Peak with bow and arrow. Richard de Vernon held Merphall and other lands by sergeantry of keeping the bailiwick of the forest of Macclesfield; he had to attend the King in war-time, armed with the same weapons

with which he kept his bailiwick—that is, with bow and arrows. William Randolph held lands in Wiltshire on payment to the King's keeper of the forest of Charidon of 6 barbed arrows on the nativity of St. John.

A not uncommon service for several manors in different parts of the kingdom was that of taking care of the King's mistresses; at Bockhampton, in Berkshire, half a yard of land (about 15 acres) was held by the tenure of keeping six damsels at the King's charge. In the same place two hides of land (240 acres) were held by the service of keeping a kennel of the King's harriers.

King John gave lands at Kepperton and Atterton, in Kent, to Solomon Attefeld, to be held by this singular service

“That as often as the King should be pleased to cross the Sea, the said Solomon or his heirs, should be obliged to go with him, to hold his Majesty's head, if there should be occasion for it,” that is, if he should be sea-sick; and it appears from the Record in the Tower that this same Office of Head-holding was actually performed in the reign of Edward I.

The lands at Broughton, near Brigg, in Lincolnshire, were held by the following tenure :—“Every year on Palm Sunday, a person from Broughton comes into the Church Porch at Caistor, having a green silk purse containing two shillings, and a silver lash tied at the end of a cart whip, which he cracks three times in the porch and continues there till the Second Lesson begins, when he goes into the Church and cracks it three times over the Clergyman's head, and kneeling before him, during the reading of the Lesson, he presents the Minister with the purse, and then goes into the Choir, and continues there during the rest of the Service.”

Church over, the whip was delivered to the occupier of Hudon Farm, near Caistor, and the lands at Broughton were safe for another year. There was an unsuccessful Petition to the House of Lords for the abolition of the Custom from the Lord of the Manor of Hudon, but it was not abolished until the sale of the Manor in 1846.

Wilmington Manor, in Kent, was granted to a family of that name in return for finding for the King one Pothook for his meat, whenever he should come within the Manor of Boighton Aluph. A lesser Manor in the same parish was held for providing one man called a Vautrer (hunter of wild boars) to lead three greyhounds when the King should go into Gascoigne and till he had worn out a pair of shoes at the price of fourpence, bought at the King's cost.

The Hundreds of Ongar and Harlow, Essex, were held by tenure of the Ward-staff. Upon the Sunday preceding Hock-Monday, that is, a fortnight before Easter, the Bailiff of the Hundred gathered a willow bough in Abasse Rothing Wood and made a staff therefrom three-quarters of a yard long and nine inches round. This he carried to the Manor Place of Ruckwood Hall, where it was reverently received by the Lord of the Manor, who wrapped it in a fair linen cloth and laid it upon a cushion on a table in the hail, “there to remain till the said Bailiff shall have relieved and refreshed himself,” who then took up the staff “by sun shining into Wardhat’ch Lane besides Long Barnes,” where the Lord of Ruckwood and all other tenants concerned in the service assembled to their full number of able men, harnessed with sufficient weapons. The Lord closed the lane by drawing a rope, called a barr, across the entrance; at the end hung a bell, and near the bell the Ward-staff was laid down, while the Bailiff called over the names of the tenants who, as they were named, presented their men.

Then the Bailiff charged them in the King’s name “to watch and keep Ward in due silence, so that the King be harmless and the county scapeless until the sun’s rising.” At sunrise the Lord of Ruckwood came, and taking up the Staff, notched it with his knife as a token “that the legal service was done for that year.” “Then the people went to their pleasure. The Staff was then carried to the Lord of the Manor of Fifield, when a similar ceremony was performed, and so the Staff was carried through the Hundred till it reached Attewood, when it was thrown into the sea. This Staff was supposed to represent the person of the King, and lands were held by the service of keeping the Ward-staff, paying Ward silver, bearing the Staff, and finding men to watch with it through the night.

The Customary duty or service rendered to the Crown by the City of Norwich on account of fee farm consisted in the yearly delivery at Court of twenty-four herring pies. In Blomefield’s “History of Norwich,” we find this legal document

“This Indenture made at Norwich, at the Guildhall there, the 27th day of September at ten of ye Clock in ye forenoon of ye same day in ye twenty five yeare of ye Reign of Our Lord Charles the Second by ye Grace of God of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, King, Defender of ye Faith, &c., and in ye yeare of Our Lord 1673.

Between John Leverington and Robert Freeman, Sheriffs of ye City of Norwich on one part and Edward Eden, Gentleman, tenant of Thomas Lord Richardson, Baron of Cramond, &c., of ye other part.

Witnesseth that ye aforesaid Sheriffs, on ye day, yeare, hour, and place aforesaid, delivered to the said Edward Eden one hundred herrings (viz., of ye large hundred) of ye first new herrings that came to the said City in twenty-four pyes,. well seasoned with ye following spices, viz.: halfe a pound of ginger, halfe a pound of pepper, a quarter of cinnamon, one ounce of spice of cloves, one ounce of long pepper, half an ounce of grains of paradise, and half an ounce of galgangals to be brought to ye King's Palace, whenever he is in England, and there to be delivered.

And be it known that the saicl Edward Eden or his Attorney, carrying all ye said pyes shall receive at ye King's House, six loaves, six dishes out of ye Kitchen; one Flagon of Wine; one Flagon of Beer; one truss of hay; one bushel of Oats; one prickett of wax; six candles of tallow: In Testimony of which ye parties aforesaid have alternately set their seals to this Indenture, ye day, houre and place and year aforesaide.”

Blomefield gives at length a curious letter dated” Hampton Court iiij October, 1629,” from the Household Officers of the King to the Mayor and Sheriffs of Norwich on the subject of these pies, that” they were not well baked in good and strong pastye, as they ought to have been,” Divers of them, also, were found to contain no more than “ fower herrings, whereas the tenure required five to be put into every pye at the least,” neither were they made of the “ first new herrings which reached the City,” and a particular answer for his Majesty's better satisfaction was demanded.

The cost to the Sheriffs of these pies in 1754 was Two pounds, independent of carriage.

Sir Philip de Somerville held four manors from the Earls of Lancaster, and lived to perform these very peculiar services regularly for 48 years. Every year from St. Peter's Day to Holy Rood Day, did Sir Philip hunt wild swine in the forests of Needwood and Duffield, dine with the Earl's steward, and kiss his porter upon his departure. For the Manor of Wicheflour, Sir Philip was required to keep a fitch of bacon hanging in his hall at all times, Lent only excepted, “ ready for delivery to every man or woman married after a year and a day of the marriage be passed; and to be given to every man of religion

—Archbishop, Prior, or other religious, and to every priest, after the year and a day of their probation finished or of their dignity received. And he that demanded the bacon shall kneele upon his knee, his right hand upon a booke, and say:

I wedded my wife and had her in my keeping by a yeare and a daye after our marriage, and if she were sole and I sole, I wolde take her to be my very wife, before all the women in the worlde.’ And his neighbours shall make oath, that they trust verily he has said truly, and if it be found by his neighbours that he be a freeman, there shall be delivered to him half a quarter of wheate, and a cheese, and if he be a villeyne, he shall have a Quarter of Rye without cheese. And then shall the lord of Rudlowe be called for to carry all these thynges; and the corn shall he laid upon horse and the bacon above it and so shall they depart the Manor of Wichnoore.”

This grant was given upon these conditions by John of ‘Gaunt to the then Sir Philip de Somerville.

The manor of Catteshall (Godalming) was held directly of the king until the time of Richard III, in consideration ~of the services of the Lord of the Manor who was in charge .of the strumpets attached to the royal household.

Peper Harrow, now the home of the Earl of Middleton, was held by Sir XValter Calvert, who, in 1625, was constrained to “ lend “ King Charles I £20, at the time when that monarch was in financial straits owing to the fact that Parliament refused to vote taxes, as it imagined itself to have been insulted by the King.

The Manor of Witham., in Essex, was anciently possessed by Earl Harold and later by Eustace, Earl of Boulogne, who married Goda, sister to Edward the Confessor; Geoffrey de Lyston held land in Witham by service of carrying flour to make wafers whenever the King was in the kingdom.

Bilsington Manor, Kent, was held by the Earls of Arundel and Sussex, by service of performing the office of chief butler to the King on the day of his Coronation. Their descendant, the Duke of Norfolk, holds that Manor and office to-day.

John, a tenant of the Manor of Banham, in Norfolk, held twenty-five acres of the Lord, for this he paid nine pence a year in money rent, but this was the least of his burdens. He paid to do two days’ work at haymaking time, and half a day’s work at carrying the Lord’s hay. He had to do four days’ carting, and nine days of job work in the lord’s demesne, whenever it suited the lord to set him. on, and he had every year to bring to the Lord’s house two hens at Christmas, twenty eggs -at Easter, and four Quarters of Oats on Saint Andrew’s day— November 30th.

Henry de Aveyning held the Manor of Morton, in Essex, by

service of one man, with a horse of the price of 10s., and 4 horseshoes, 1 leather sack, and 1 iron crock, as often as it should happen for the King to go into Wales with his army, at his own charges, for 40 days.

Roger Carbet held the Manor of Chettingham, in Shropshire, on the condition of finding one foot-soldier, or man-at-arms, who was to carry with him one bacon or salted hog, on which he was to dine daily, and to serve so long as the bacon remained unconsumed. He was not allowed, however, to have the salted pig in his own possession, it being expressly stipulated that the Marshal should have the custody of the bacon, and cut off his rations, so that, if long service was required, it could be enforced by cutting him off less bacon daily.

Peter Spillman held lands at Brockenhurst, in the New Forest, for the service of finding an esquire to serve the King for 40 days, and for providing straw and litter for the King's bed.

Hamon de Massey, and Robert, son of Waltesh, made a curious bargain between themselves; the latter receiving the Manor of Brommington from the former on condition that he served him in his chambers, and carried his clothes and arms when he followed the Earl of Chester into Wales. Hamon found Robert "a sumpture, a man, and a sack," whilst they went campaigning; and Robert swore to set Hamon free if he were taken prisoner, and to help to make his son a knight, and to find a husband for his daughter, and gave him a gold ring in token thereof.

When John, Earl of Warren and Surrey, appeared before the Commissioners of Edward I., to show by what title he held his lands, he flashed an old sword before the astonished eyes of the King's Justices, saying: "Behold, my Lords, here is my warrant. My ancestors coming into this land with William the Bastard, did obtain their lands by this sword; and I am resolved by the sword to defend them against whomsoever shall endeavour to dispossess me; for William did not himself conquer and subdue the land, but our forefathers were sharers therein 1"

Aylesbury, in Buckinghamshire, was a Manor Royal belonging to William the Conqueror, who invested his favourites with some of the lands on condition that they should provide straw for his bed and chamber, and three eels for his use in winter, and in summer straw, rushes, and two green geese, thrice every year, if he should visit Aylesbury so often.

Putteridge Manor, Herts., granted by William I to William, Earl of

Ewe, whose posterity held it till the reign of Henry III, when it was forfeited to the Crown, passed to the Darrels in the time of Henry VI, and was held by them for the yearly rent of a pound of pepper and a pound of cummin.

Ralph de Waymer held the Fish Pond at Stafford on condition that he permitted the King to keep all the pike and bream he could catch when it pleased him to fish there; while he contented himself by taking as his share “ all the other fishes, with the eels, coming to the hooks.”

The Manor of West or Little Peckham, Kent, was held in the time of King John by service of carrying one of the King’s goshawks beyond sea when demanded, from the Feast of St. Michael to that of the Purification.

Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire, was held on condition of fitting the right hand of the King with a glove on the day of his Coronation, and supporting his arm while he held the sceptre. The ancestors of the present Earl of Shrewsbury exchanged Farnham with Henry VIII, but reserved this privilege to themselves and their posterity.

The Duke of Marlborough holds Blenheim by presentation of a small flag to the King annually. For Strathfieldsaye, the Duke of Wellington renders similar service; the flags are hung in Windsor Castle.

For Brook House Farm, Penistone, Yorkshire, the tenant had to pay in lieu of rent, a snowball at midsummer and a red rose at Christmas.

Oxenheath, Kent, was formerly held by the Colepepers from the Manor of Hoo, near Rochester, “ by the yearly payment of a pair of gilt spurs.”

Henry IV vested the Lordship of the Isle of Man in the Earl of Northumberland, conditionally that at the Coronation he bore that naked sword with which he was girded when he arrived at the Port of Holderness, called “ Lancaster’s Sword.”

Upon Northumberland’s attainder after the battle of Shrewsbury the island was transferred for ever to Sir John Stanley and heirs, upon the easy terms of the preservation of a pair of falcons upon similar occasions.

The manor of Edgware was granted by Ella, Countess of Salisbury, to Nicholas (her son) and his spouse by render of one sparrow-hawk. Of the same manor 100 acres were held by yearly

render of a pair of gilt spurs, while for another 50 acres the annual rental was fixed at “ a pound of cummin.”

For a small piece of land somewhere within the parish of St. Clement Danes, London, the City Solicitor, acting for the Corporation, attends at the Law Courts at the beginning of each October to render to the King’s Remembrancer a quit-rent of six horseshoes and sixty-one nails. He also performs similar service for land in Shropshire.

The first service of this payment arose in the reign of Henry the Third. The old tilting-ground of the Knights Templar had belonged to the Crown. It was situated partly in the Inner Temple and partly in St. Clement Danes Parish. By tradition, an itinerant farrier established himself in a little shed close by, so that he might be at hand to re-shoe the horses whose shoes had become dislodged in the tilts, and to repair the battered armour of the combatant knights. The king, greatly interested in the farrier’s dexterity, gave him, for the purpose of his craft, a picce of land upon rendering the annual quit-rent above described. The exact site of this holding has long been lost. No one knows who owns it or what occupies the site, and it does not appear that the Corporation of the City of London knows why it should render those horseshoes and nails, but the strict legal rights of the Crown are, all the same, preserved.

The ceremony formerly took place before the Barons in the old Court of Exchequer, in the presence of the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs. Since 1845, however, the present course has been followed. Prior to that date the King’s Remembrancer was present, *and* sat with the Barons; as representing the King, he enjoyed the right of wearing his hat in Court, which quaint privilege is kept alive to this day by wearing his little hat on top of his wig, on Lord Mayor’s Day.

The horseshoes annually produced are always the same, and all for the fore-feet. They are kept in the Remembrancer’s office in the Law Courts.

William de Albemarle holds the Manor of Leaston “by the service of finding for our Lord the King two arrows and one loaf of Oat bread when the Sovereign should hunt in the Forest of Eastmoor.”

The Forest is no longer a hunting ground, and arrows have long since given place to rifles and shot guns, still the heirs of Albemarle keep the arrows and the oat bread ready for any stray king that may happen that way, thus holding good title “ to their estates.

Seckham, Durham, worth £564 a year, was held by presentation of

a falchion to every bishop on his first entrance into the diocese. Tradition hath it that Sir John Conyers slew with his falchion a dragon or flying serpent, who devoured women and children, and that he had acquired the Manor by that deed of valour.

The Earls of Abergavenny held the Manor and advowson of Inkborough, Worcestershire by grant from Philip and Mary, on condition that it should revert to the Crown in the event of failure of male issue. They hold it to-day.

The Manor of Hope Norton, in Oxfordshire, was held by the Countess of Warwick so long as she carved for the King on Christmas Day.

Bondly, in Lincolnshire, was held by bearing a white wand before the King on Christmas Day.

Horton, in Cumberland, was held by the service of holding the King's stirrup when he mounted his horse at Carlisle Castle.

Penkelly Manor, Cornwall, held on condition of delivering a grey riding hood at Paulton Bridge whenever the King enters Cornwall.

Ovenhills Manor, Kent, held for "forty days' service in the King's Army when he went forth into Wales for battle with the rebels there," the holder being further bound to provide himself with a horse worth 5s. and a sack worth 6d., and a needle or skeweringpin to fasten the sack with.

StUrmynster..Marshal Dorset, was held in return for handing the King "a pair of spurious sixpences " when he hunted in Furbrook Forest.

Blechisdon Manor was held for a " shield of brawn of the value of two pence," tendered to the King when hunting in Cornbury Park.

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For the Hundred of Lambourn, Essex, the holder had to carry the King's horn while hunting in the Hundred.

For his Manor in Dorsetshire, Sir William Russel is bound to put away pieces after the king has honoured him by trying his skill as a Chess player.

Shirefield Manor, Hants., was held by the Lord who "had to measure the measures of the Royal household, keen the King's female domestics in order, and to dismember malefactors."

The inhabitants of Chichester held a number of tenements in the suburbs on condition of paying to the King whenever he should pass through Goddestrete a spindleful of raw thread to make a false string

for his crossbow.

Copyholders of Godalming Manor had to convey civil prisoners to the gaol at Guildford Castle, and execute any sentenced Godalming men within the bounds of the Manor. Some little time before 1318, when copyholders were delivering some thieves into Guildford Castle, Sir Andrew of Calais, the French Constable of the Castle, seized one of the copy-holders and did not liberate him until he had extorted a large ransom some months later. An early instance of kidnapping.

Westbrook manor (Surrey) was held of the Manor of Godalming for an annual quit-rent of ten shillings and six-pence, equal to £6 6s. in present money. It is doubtful if this rent would secure the site of a modest dwelling in the Manor to-day.

Theophilus Oglethorpe, head of an old Yorkshire family whose fortunes had been impaired by too zealous royalist sympathies during the Civil War, as a consequence of which, as one historian records, "Theophilus had to earn his daily bread," entered the Life Guards in 1652 as a "private gentleman," rose to the rank of general and, by 1688, had *earned* sufficient to enable him to purchase the Manor of Westbrook. He retired from the Army with a knighthood, was elected Tory M.P. for Harlemere, and died at Westbrook in 1702.

Another example of a money-rent is furnished by the Manor of Godmanchester, in Huntingdonshire, granted in fee-farm to the "Men of Gumcester" by King John, for £12 a year, and, the grant being in perpetuity, the Manor is still held by the tenure and rent.

Scrivelsby Manor was granted to the Marmions of Tam-worth, hereditary Champion of England, on condition of the bolder "riding completely armed, upon a barbed steed, into Westminster Hall, and there challenging the combat with whomsoever dared to dispute the King's title to the Crown."~

Manor and office passed upon the extinction of the male line of Marmion into the family of Dymoke, some member of which has duly executed his office from the time of Richard II

The Picots held the Manor of I-Tevdene by holding a basin for the King's ablutions, and by holding the towels wherewith he dried himself.

For the Manor of Finchingfield the holder has to turn the spit for the Coronation Dinner.

Pay it with flowers was the rule in the Manors of Crendon in Buckinghamshire, Mickleham in Surrey, and the Manors of Hene and Hinton in Northamptonshire. Lands at Haines in Surrey were held by

payment of “ three clove gillie-flowers at the King’s coronation.”

The house of Isaac the Jew, in the parish of St. Margaret’s, Westminster, was handed over to the Earl of Derby on condition that he and his heirs should serve the King and his heirs at dinner, on all annual feasts, with his head uncovered, save by a garland of the breadth of the little finger of himself or his heirs.”

The Greens of Green Norton held their manor by lifting up the right hand towards the King upon Christmas Day.

Three pairs of gloves, a pound of cummin seed and a steel needle was the yearly rent paid for the Manor of Elston, in Nottinghamshire. One silver needle yearly was required of the holder of lands in Hallingbury, Essex. For the Manors of Cottingham, in Nottinghamshire, Eldresfield, in Worcester-shire, and Henley, in Warwickshire, the annual payment, in each instance, was a pair of scarlet hose.

The Manor of Grenock, in Sussex, was held by payment of an oar for the King’s galley when he wished to cross to France from Hastings. Ashwell, Essex, was held for the service of finding a *broche*, or spit of maple, on which to roast the King’s meat on his coronation day. For the Manors of Echemendon in Shropshire, Enesley in Nottinghamshire, Esperett in Somerset, and Huntlesham in Suffolk, the holder in each case paid yearly rent of “one mewed sparrow-hawk.”

For certain lands, the City of Norwich had to furnish each year a bear and six dogs,” for bear-baiting. For Carlcoats in Yorkshire, a” right hand glove and a left hand glove yearly was demanded. Elmsdale, Vorks, was held by gift of a pair of gloves, furred with fox-skin.”

Bermeton in Durham, Finchley in Middlesex, and High-gate in Denbigh were held by payment of” a peppercorn.” In the case of Potherley in Durham, the peppercorn had to be paid on St. Cuthbert’s day.

For Symondsbourne a falcon, and a nightcap, value one halfpenny, had to be rendered.

Lincoln Cathedral had to supply the King with a rich cloak, furred with sable, until one bishop redeemed the annual payment by paying down one thousand marks of silver.

There is in Devon a house on lease for 2,000 years from the death of Queen Elizabeth (1603).

On the corner stone of a house in North Street, LostWithiel,

Cornwall, it is stated that “Walter Kendal, of Lostwithiel, founder of this house, ‘Hath a lease for three thousand yeares, which had beginning the 29th of September, Anno 1652 ‘.”

The estate of Kingsfold, near Billingshurst, Sussex, comprising 166 acres with a house, was let for 10,000 years in the second year of James I on a yearly rental of one red rose.

“The messuage of Stayneth Coote, in Kylesney, in Craven York,” in the 19th year of Queen Elizabeth, was let for 3,000 years at the modest rental of 2s. 1~d., “towards the Queen’s yearly tenth,” and a ld. to the landlord and his heirs.

A Lord Lavat granted a lease of some Aberdeenshire acres for 1,140 years. As expressed in the deed, the lease is for three times twenty times nineteen years,” and the rental fifty-six boils farm bear, four boils horse corn, two custom cows, four wedders, four lambs~ four dozen poultry, and fifteen merks of tithe.”

Upon the attainder of the 12th Lord Lovat in 1747, the property passed to the Crown.

The Blaghill estate in Cumberland is held of a lease of 1,000 years from 1611 at a rental of 10s. 10jd. The Ayle estate, in Northumberland, is let for 999 years at us. 4d. a year, with an additional 14s. for “boon days.”

The Blair Atholl estate of 201,640 acres in Perthshire, is held by the Duke of Atholl by payment of one white rose when the sovereign visits it.

The inconvenient and troublesome nature of many of the ancient tenures led to their being commuted for money payments whenever the superior lord was inclined to waive his rights.

Although these tenures of land by service are of great antiquity, still the practice is retained in many instances up to the present day. James I made an enquiry as to these services, and in 1761 George III issued a Proclamation, and some of the claims being allowed and some disallowed; of those allowed, many were performed at the Coronation of George V.