

CHARTER OF KING HENRY I.

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**H**ENRY by the grace of God king of England, to Hugh de Boclande justiciary of England, and all his faithful subjects, as well French as English, in Hertfordshire, greeting:

Know that I, by the Lord's mercy, have been crowned king by common consent of the barons of the kingdom of England; and because the kingdom has been oppressed by unjust exactions, I, out of respect to God and the love which I feel toward you, in the first place, constitute the holy Church of God a free Church, so that I will not sell it, nor farm it out, nor will I, on the death of any archbishop, bishop or abbot, take anything from the domain of the church or its people, until his successor takes his place. And I from this time do away with all the evil practices by which the kingdom of England is now unjustly oppressed, and these evil practices I here in part mention. If any baron, earl, or other subject of mine, who holds possession from me, shall die, his heir shall not redeem his land,

as was the custom in my father's time, but shall pay a just and lawful relief for the same; and in like manner, too, the dependants of my barons shall pay a like relief for their land to their lords. And if any baron or other subject of mine shall wish to give his daughter, his sister, his niece, or other female relative, in marriage, let him ask my permission on the matter; but I will not take any of his property for granting my permission, nor will I forbid his giving her in marriage except he wishes to give her to an enemy of mine; and if on the death of a baron, or other subject of mine, the daughter is left heiress, I, by the advice of my barons, will give her in marriage together with her land; and if on the death of a husband the wife is surviving and is childless, she shall have her dowry for a marriage portion, and I will not give her away to another husband unless with her consent; but if a wife survives, having children, she shall have her dowry as a marriage portion, as long as she shall keep herself according to law, and I will not give her to a husband unless with her consent; and the guardian of the children's land shall be either the wife or some other nearer relation who ought more rightly to be so; and I enjoin on my barons to act in the same way to-

wards the sons and daughters and wives of their dependants. Moreover the common monetage, as taken throughout the cities and counties, such as was not in use in King Edward's time, is hereby forbidden; and if any one, whether a coiner or any other person, be taken with false money, let strict justice be done to him for it. All pleas and all debts which were due to the king my brother, I forgive, except my farms, and those debts which were contracted for the inheritances of others, or for those things which more justly belong to others. And if any one shall have covenanted anything for his inheritance, I forgive it, and all reliefs which were contracted for just inheritances. And if any baron or subject of mine shall be ill, I hereby ratify all such disposition as he shall have made of his money; but if through service in war, or sickness, he shall have made no disposition of his money, his wife, or children, or parents, and legitimate dependants, shall distribute it for the good of his soul, as shall seem best to them. If any baron or other subject of mine shall have made forfeiture he shall not give bail to save his money, as was done in the time of my father and brother, but according to the degree of the forfeiture; nor shall he make amends for his fault as he did in the time of my

father or of my other ancestors; and if any one shall be convicted of treason or other crime, his punishment shall be according to his fault. I forgive all murders committed previous to the day on which I was crowned king; but those which have been since committed shall be justly punished according to the law of King Edward. By the common advice of my barons I have retained the forests in my possession as my father held them. All knights, moreover, who hold their lands by service are hereby allowed to have their domains free from all amercements and from all peculiar service, that as they are thus relieved from a great burden, they may provide themselves properly with horses and arms, so that they may be fit and ready for my service and for the defence of my kingdom. I bestow confirmed peace in all my kingdom, and I order it to be preserved from henceforth. I restore to you the law of King Edward, with the amendments which my father, by the advice of his barons, made in it. If any one has taken any thing of mine, or of any one else's property, since the death of my brother king William, let it all be soon restored without alteration; and if any one shall retain anything of it he shall, on being discovered, atone to me for it heavily. Witness

Maurice bishop of London, William elect of Winchester, Gerard of Hereford, earl Henry, earl Simon, earl Walter Gifford, Robert de Montfort, Roger Bigod and many others.