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## *The History of a Cambridgeshire Manor*

IT is not often that one has the good fortune of being able to study a series of medieval documents at one's own time and in one's own house; but this was given to me by the late Mr. O. C. Pell, lord of the manor of Wilburton, in the county of Cambridge. He committed to my care a splendid line of court and account rolls which, though there were some gaps in it, stretched from Edward I to Henry VII, and now, the consent of his successor, Mr. Albert Pell, having been very kindly given, I am able to lay before the readers of this Review a fairly continuous history of a particular English manor during the later middle ages; and to me it seems that at the present time we have some need for histories of particular manors, for I am convinced that the time has not yet come when generalities about *the* English manor and its fortunes will be safe or sound.

The manor of Wilburton, on the edge of the fen, formed part of the ancient estates of the church of Ely. It is fully described in two 'extents,' the one made in 1221, the other in 1277.<sup>1</sup> Of these its late lord, who was deeply interested in its history, gave an account in the Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society.<sup>2</sup> I shall here speak of them very briefly, for they are but the prelude to those documents which are the theme of this essay.

The two extents begin by describing the demesne land—that is, the land which is in the lord's own hand. In the extent of 1277 he has 216 acres ('by the lesser hundred and the perch of 16½ feet') of arable land, and besides this he has meadow land and a wide expanse of fen. In the next place an account is given of the

<sup>1</sup> MS. Cott. Tib. B. 2; Claud. C. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Report and Communications*, 1887, p. 162.

holdings of the 'freeholders' and 'hundredors' (*de hundredariis et libere tenentibus*). Of these there are nine, one with 16 acres *de wara*, four with 12 acres *de wara* apiece, two with 6 acres apiece, two with  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres apiece. This arrangement remained constant during the half-century which elapsed between the two surveys. These 'freeholders and hundredors' pay small money rents—the holder of 12 acres pays 2*d.* a year—they owe two days' ploughing in Lent and two in winter, for which they receive 1*d.* a day; they have to attend the great boon day in autumn. They owe suit to the court of Wilburton and must attend the hundred court, which is in the bishop's hand; hence their designation as *hundredarii*. In the later extent it is expressly stated that they owe a heriot (best beast, or 82*d.*), a fine for marrying their daughters (82*d.*), leyrwite and tallage; the *gersuma*, or fine for marrying a daughter, is mentioned in the earlier extent.

In the court rolls the existence of freeholders can from time to time be detected. They owe suit of court; they are often amerced for not doing it or compound for it with a small sum of money. There are entries also which show that they still owe ploughing service and that some of them are very lax in performing it. Again, descents and alienations are sometimes presented and the heriot is still due. But on the whole these freeholders seem to have played only a small part in the manor; the names which occur on the court rolls are chiefly those of customary tenants.

In the extents the description of the freehold tenements is followed by the heading 'De Operariis et Plenis Terris.' The full land (*plena terra*) consists of 12 acres *de wara*. Of this thorny phrase *de wara* I will here say nothing—its interest lies in a remote past—save this, that as a matter of fact the full land at Wilburton really consisted of 24 acres. Of these full lands there are fifteen and a half. The holder of such a tenement pays 19*d.* a year—12*d.* as wite penny, 6*d.* as sedge silver, 1*d.* as ward penny. From Michaelmas to Hokeday he does two works a week according to the earlier survey, three according to the later; from Hokeday to Lammas three works a week, from Lammas to Michaelmas five works a week; and besides all this there is a good deal to be done which is not computed as part of the regular week work. On the whole the services, which are more elaborately described in the later than in the earlier of the two surveys, and which perhaps have become heavier during the interval, are of the familiar type.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> As it seemed that in 1277 the bishop was exacting from the Wilburton tenants a greater amount of 'week work' than he exacted in 1221, I looked through some of the extents of other manors given in the two Cottonian manuscripts, and I found the same phenomenon at Lyndon, Stretham, and Thriplow. Apparently in all these cases the bishop had put on an extra work-day in every week between Michaelmas and Hokeday—and this in the thirteenth century. These Ely extents ought to be printed as soon as possible.

Then there were  $10\frac{1}{2}$  cottage tenements, which even in Henry VII's day still preserved a relic of the Domesday terminology in the name 'cossetles.' The holder of each such tenement paid 7*d.* a year—4*d.* for wite pound, 2*d.* for sedge silver, 1*d.* for ward penny—and did two works in every week. The holders of the full lands and the cottiers owe suit to the lord's mill, a fine for marrying their daughters, leyrwite and tallage; they cannot sell colt or ox without the lord's leave.

We already see that a basis has been fixed for the commutation of labour into money. Every 'work' in autumn is, we are told, worth one penny, and out of autumn every work is worth a half-penny; we also see that one half-cotaria is held by a tenant who 'at the will of the lord' pays 2*s.* a year in lieu of his labours; but the profit of the manor is reckoned mainly in 'works.' In the way of money rents the lord draws but 31*s.* a year from the manor, besides some small dues; on the other hand  $3,773\frac{1}{2}$  'works' are owed to him, by a 'work' being meant the work of one man for one day.

From 1221 down to the very end of the middle ages the manor seems to have kept with wonderful conservatism what we may call its external shape—that is to say, at the end of this period the distribution of the customary tenements into 'full lands' and 'cossetles,' or cottier tenements, was still preserved, though the 'full land' was often broken into two 'half-lands.'

At the beginning of the fourteenth century we see that some of the 'works' were done in kind, while others were 'sold to the homage.' Thus there is an account for seventeen weeks in the winter of 1303-4 during which the temporalities of the see of Ely were in the king's hand; in this the bailiff and reeve, after charging themselves with the rents of assize (i.e. the fixed money rents), proceed to account for 10*s.* 10*d.* for 260 'winter works sold to the homage at the rate of a halfpenny per work.' In a later part of the account we see how this number of 'works' is arrived at:—the officers account for 1,985 works arising from  $15\frac{1}{2}$  'full lands' and 10 cottier tenements; they then set against this number the 260 works sold to the homage, 355 works sold to the executors of the late bishop, 57 works excused to the reeve and reaper, 38 works excused to the smith, 19 works due from a half-cotaria which has been let at a fixed rent,  $14\frac{1}{2}$  works excused on account of the Christmas holiday,  $363\frac{1}{2}$  works the amount of ploughing done, 258 works the amount of harrowing done, 20 works in repairing the ditch round the park at Downham, thus getting out the total of 1,985 works.

A little later comes a series of accounts for some consecutive years in Edward II's reign. The basis of these accounts, so far as works come in question, is that 2,943 winter and summer works, valued at a halfpenny apiece, are due, and 845 autumn works

valued at a penny. These numbers seem subject to some slight fluctuations, due to the occurrence of leap years and other causes. Then the accountants have to show how in one way or another these works have been discharged, and in the first place they must account for 'works sold.' In the year ending at Michaelmas 1322 the accountants charge themselves with the value of 1,213 winter and summer works and  $60\frac{1}{2}$  autumn works which have been 'sold,' in the next year with the value of 1,297 $\frac{1}{2}$  winter and summer works and 170 $\frac{1}{2}$  autumn works; in the next year with the value of 1,496 winter and summer works and 149 autumn works; in the next year with the value of 1,225 $\frac{1}{2}$  winter and summer works and 218 $\frac{1}{2}$  autumn works; in the next year with the value of 1,023 winter and summer works and 247 $\frac{1}{2}$  autumn works; in the next year with the value of 1,381 winter and summer works and 68 $\frac{1}{2}$  autumn works. In these and in the later accounts it is not usual to state to whom or in what manner these 'works' were 'sold;' but there can be little doubt that they were sold to those who were bound to do them—that is to say, when the lord did not want the full number of works he took money instead at the rate of a halfpenny for a winter or summer work and of a penny for an autumn work. The phrase 'works sold to the homage,' which occurs in the accounts of Edward I's time, may perhaps suggest that the whole body of tenants were jointly liable for the money which thus became due in lieu of works.

It will be seen that the number of 'works sold' does not amount to half the number of works due. How were the rest discharged? In the first place some were released; thus the reeve, the reaper, and the smith stood excused; and then again holidays were allowed on festivals; thus the occurrence of the feasts of St. Lawrence and St. Bartholomew serves to discharge a certain number of the autumn works. But very many of the works were actually done; thus in one year 203 'diets' of ploughing between Michaelmas and Hokeday discharge 406 works; in the previous year 377 works had been discharged in similar fashion, in the year before that 406, in the year before that 420 $\frac{1}{2}$ . Ploughing, mowing, harrowing, and the like are always wanted; other works are accounted for now in one fashion, now in another. In one year 26 works were spent on the vineyard at Ely, in another 8 works were spent in catching rabbits; but on the whole the *opera* are laid out in much the same manner in each successive year.

I have examined the accounts for the last six years of Edward II's reign; their scheme is as follows: The accountant is the reeve; his year runs from Michaelmas to Michaelmas. He begins by debiting himself with the arrears of previous years. The next item consists of 'Rents of Assize.' These are the old money dues payable by freeholders and customary tenants; they amount to no great

sum—about 2*l.*—but show a slight tendency to increase, owing to the ‘arrentation’ of some of the minor services; for instance, 19*d.* is accounted for in respect of a release of the duty of collecting sticks in the park at Somersham. Next comes ‘Farm of Land,’ a single item of 82*s.* in respect of 24 acres of demesne land which have been let at a rent. By far the most important item is ‘Sale of Crops,’ a very variable item, fluctuating between 8*l.* and 54*l.* Then follows ‘Sale of Stock.’ Then comes ‘Issues of the Manor’ (‘Exitus Manerii’). Under this head the reeve accounts for the number of ‘works’ that have been ‘sold,’ also on occasion for the price of fowls and turf. The ‘Perquisites of the Court’ comprise not only the amercements, but also the fines payable on alienation of the customary tenements and the like. The last item consists of ‘Sales accounted for on the back of the Roll;’ these seem to consist chiefly of sales of malt. The total income varies between very wide limits, rising to 66*l.*, falling to less than 20*l.*

On the credit side the first heading is ‘Allowances’ or ‘Acquitances.’ A sum of 3*d.* has to be allowed because the reeve is excused that sum from his rent. Under ‘Custus Carucarum’ stand the cost of making and repairing ploughs, shoeing horses, and so forth. About 5*s.* per annum is spent in paying 2*d.* per plough per day for every one of the sixteen ploughs of the tenants engaged in the ‘boon ploughing’ for winter seed and for spring seed. The ‘Cost of Carts’ is sometimes separately accounted for; the cost of ‘Repairs of Buildings’ is by no means heavy. Under ‘Minute Necessaries’ fall the price of various articles purchased, also the wages of the only money-wage-receiving labourers who are employed on the manor—namely, a swineherd at 4*s.* 4*d.* per annum and an occasionally employed shepherd at 5*s.* a year. ‘Threshing and Winnowing’ are paid for as piece work. ‘Purchase of Corn’ and ‘Purchase of Stock’ are headings that need no comment. Under ‘Mowing and Harvesting’ (‘Falcatio et Autumpnus’) we find no heavy charge; all that has to be paid for is the tenant’s harvest dinner, and the wages during harvest of the reeve and the ‘reperve.’ Sometimes under the head of ‘Forinsec’ (or Foreign) ‘Expenses’ occur a few small sums not expended directly on the manor.

The reeve then accounts for the money that he has paid into the exchequer at Ely, and then the account is balanced and generally leaves him in debt. Apparently the annual profit of the manor varied between very wide limits. The reason of this fluctuation is to be found chiefly in the sales of corn. The highest prices of the wheat sold in these six years are as follows:—

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
1821-2 . .	12	0	per quarter.	1824-5 . .	7 0
1822-3 . .	11	0	„	1825-6 . .	5 0
1823-4 . .	7	2	„	1826-7 . .	3 4

Such figures as these, though they may be familiar enough to economists, are worth notice, for they show us that however stable an institution the manor may have been from century to century, agriculture involved a very high degree of risk.

On the back of the account roll the reeve proceeds to account for the produce of the manor and the 'works' of the tenants. First comes 'Compotus Grangie' ('Barn Account'). The reeve has received so many quarters of wheat from the barn; so many have gone in seed, so many in provender for the manorial servants, so many remain in the barn. Rye, barley, pease, oats, and malt have to be similarly accounted for; the account is checked by tallies between the reeve, the reaper, and the barn-keeper. There are four ploughmen and one shepherd who are *famuli manerii* and in receipt of corn, each of them getting one quarter per week during some twelve weeks of the year. Next comes 'Compotus Stauri' ('Account of Live Stock'), under which heading the horses, oxen, and pigs are enumerated. Then under 'Compotus Operum' ('Account of Works') the reeve has to show, as explained above, how some 3,700 works have been discharged, the autumn works, worth a penny apiece, being distinguished from the winter and summer works, worth a halfpenny. Thus in one of these years he has to account for 814 autumn works; he does so thus:—

Excused to reeve, reaper, smith . . . . .	58 works
Excused in respect of a cottary let at a rent . . . . .	7½ „
Excused on account of festivals . . . . .	58 „
Sold . . . . .	246½ „
Reaping, binding, and stacking 128 acres at 2 works per acre . . . . .	256 „
Carrying . . . . .	96 „
Garnering <sup>4</sup> . . . . .	22 „
Stacking pease . . . . .	10 „
Carrying dung . . . . .	58 „
	<hr/> 812 <hr/>

Thus out of this batch of works more than half have actually been done.

Now, glancing at the manor as a whole, we see that to a very large extent it is still dependent on the labours of its villains. The whole amount received by way of rent is but 2*l.* 10*s.*, or thereabouts, while the price of works sold brings in some 3*l.* or 4*l.* Almost all the regular agricultural work, with the exception of threshing and winnowing, is done for the lord by his tenants. He is as yet no great 'employer of labour' in the modern sense; wages are a comparatively trifling item in his accounts. He generally employs a hired swineherd and a hired shepherd, and during some part of the

<sup>4</sup> *In bladis mayand' in grangia.* The word *mayare* is new to me.

year he has ploughmen, who are paid in grain. But the main part of his ploughing, reaping, mowing, harrowing is done by those who are bound to do it by status or tenure.

From the reign of Edward III there are no accounts; but turning to those of Richard II's time we find that the theory of the account, so far as 'works' are concerned, is still the same. It is now reckoned that there are 2,970 winter and summer works, worth a halfpenny apiece, and 813 autumn works, worth a penny apiece, to be accounted for. Some of these works are 'sold,' some not sold; thus in the year ending Michaelmas 1393 we find 183 works of the one class and 93 of the other class accounted for as sold. The number of works sold varies much from year to year. Many hundred works are still done in kind; but the number so done has been diminished, because no less than four full lands and nine cottier tenements 'are in the lord's hand' and have been let out at money rents. This has introduced into the account a new element—namely, 'Rent of Bond Land' ('Firma Terre Native' or 'Firma Terre Nativorum'), which brings in about 9*l.* a year. A large number of *opera* has, therefore, to be subtracted on this score, *e.g.* 528 winter and summer works in respect of the said 4 full lands and 836 similar works in respect of the said 9 cottier tenancies. Exactly when or how the change occurred the extant accounts do not show. Already in the first year of Richard II there were 3 full lands and 8½ cottier tenements let at a rent for short terms of years and doing no work. But by connecting the accounts with the court rolls we are enabled to infer that these lands were vacated by villains who fled late in the reign of Edward III; thus the first full land on the list is that of John Thorold, who fled in 1376 or thereabouts, and of whose flight the court rolls continue to talk for the next forty years.

Turning, therefore, to the court rolls, we find many entries which seem to show that during the last half of the fourteenth century and the first quarter of the fifteenth the lord had great difficulty in keeping and finding customary tenants on the old terms. Some examples shall be given.

(1364) J. W., who held a full land, has eloiigned himself outside the dominion of the lord, and altogether relinquished the said land, which has, therefore, remained in the lord's hand for default of a tenant; N. R. now comes and takes the land. (1365) N. R., mentioned in the last entry, has now relinquished (*omnino reliquit*) the land; his goods are seized into the lord's hand; they include beasts, swine, household utensils, &c., valued at 89*s.* 10*d.*, exclusive of the corn. (1366) H. G., who held a half-land and cottage, has eloiigned himself outside the lord's demesne; his goods and crops are seized into the lord's hand. (1366) R. O., who held a full land, has eloiigned himself and abandoned



his land, taking with him a plough and a pair of quern stones, against the custom of the manor; let him be attached. (1870) J. C. held

a cottage, but has relinquished it because of his poverty (*propter impotenciam*); so it has been seized into the lord's hand and is now let to J. G. for twelve years at a money rent. The tenement abandoned by R. O. is let in the same way. (1870) J. W. takes for twenty years a full

land which is in the lord's hand for default of a tenant. In similar circumstances A. L. takes a half-land for twelve years. Several similar entries follow. (1871) S. T. takes for his life a half-land which is

in the lord's hand for default of a tenant; he pays no fine, for he takes it unwillingly (*quia invito capit*). Other lands which are in the lord's hands are granted out provisionally until permanent tenants can be found. (1872) One full land, three half-lands, three cottages, and

six half-cottages are in the lord's hand for default of tenants, but some of them have been temporarily let; tenants ought to be found for them, and let proclamation be made that any heir or other person who has any right in them do come and claim them. Proclamations to this effect are made at several successive courts. (1880) W. W., who held

a messuage and a full virgate of customary land, has left the manor, waived his land, and carried off his chattels to Chesterton [which is ancient demesne]. J. M. removed the chattels for him, knowing him to be the lord's tenant. Let J. M. be distrained to answer for these chattels, and let a writ be sued out against W. W. [for being on the ancient demesne there can be no talk of seizing him]. (1884) W. S.

surrenders a cottage and two acres of 'native land,' which he held for 5s. a year, for that this was too dear (*eo quod nimis cara*), as the whole homage testifies; it is granted to J. P. and his wife and their sequel at 8s. a year. A case of surrender follows, in which the new tenant is to pay 8s., instead of 5s., paid by his predecessor, the whole homage again testifying that the rent had been too high. (1887) It is ordered in

many successive courts that a tenant be found for the lands lately held by J. A., which he has abandoned (*reliquit fugitive*). (1892) It

is presented by the reeve that S. T., who holds a messuage and half a 'cossetle,' is unable to maintain the said tenement and do the services (*impotens est predictam terram et tenementum manutencere et defendere versus dominum*); therefore the lord's officers must find a new tenant, and in the meantime answer for the issues.

Throughout the court rolls of Henry IV's reign cases continue to occur in which lands have been abandoned or 'waived,' and other cases in which rents are reduced. Thus (1401) it is presented that Agnes D., who holds a half-land, is unable to maintain it and do the services due to the lord, and that the jurors have provided R. N. to take the land; he is to pay 12s. rent instead of doing the services which Agnes did, and only pays 2s. by way of fine for admittance, because he is an unwilling tenant. The house is ruinous; the land is out of cultivation; one of his neighbours provides him with the requisite seed. (1409) Mariota, widow of J. N., who held a full virgate for life, has left the lord's domain,



gone to Haddenham, taken a husband, and 'waived' the land, so that it has come to the lord's hand. (1410) A cottier tenement formerly held at a rent of 4s. is granted out at a rent of 2s.

It is not necessary, perhaps not justifiable, to infer from this evidence that the customary tenants of Wilburton were in any absolute sense badly off, that they could not live and thrive upon their tenements. The true explanation may be, not that they were in distress, but that they saw a more attractive prospect elsewhere. An increased demand for hired labour and a consequent rise of wages may have been the forces which drove the peasantry to desert their holdings. Unfortunately there are neither accounts nor court rolls which testify to the immediate effects of the Black Death; but, so far as I can see, the bishop's difficulty in finding tenants, who will take the full lands on the old terms, begins at a somewhat later time and thenceforth increases.

Nor need we suppose that none of the tenants were contented with their lot. During the same period we find cases in which an heir or surrenderee is willing to promise the old services and to pay a fine on admission. To give a fair idea of the situation I will make notes of the various entries which relate to changes among the tenants of the 15½ full lands between 1364, when the court rolls begin, and the accession of Henry of Lancaster.

(1364) William Starling surrenders half a full land to the use of John Osbern. John Walter, who held a full land, late that of Andrew Cateson, has eloiigned himself and relinquished his land; Nicholas of Boydon takes it, to hold at the accustomed services. (1366) Nicholas of Boydon

has relinquished a full land; it is seized into the lord's hand. Aubin Willay has eloiigned himself and relinquished one half-land; Henry Greneleaf has relinquished another. (1367) Richard Leycester

takes the half-land formerly Aubin Willay's, to hold at a rent of 18s. until a permanent tenant can be found. (1367) Robert Osbern,

who held a half-land, has deserted it. (1368) There are now in the

lord's hand for default of tenants a full land late of Nicholas of Boydon, a full land late of John Thorold, a full land late of Robert Osbern, a half-land late of Aubin Willay, a half-land late of Henry Greneleaf, and two cottage tenements. (1369) Robert Tates takes the full land of

Nicholas of Boydon for a term of seven years; he is to pay 5s. rent and to spend 2s. a year on improvements; he pays a fine of 8d. (1370)

John Frost takes the half-land late of Robert Osbern for a term of twelve years at a rent of 18s. 4d.; he pays a fine of 6d. Aubin Willay takes as tenant for life a half-land, seemingly that which he relinquished in 1366. For half of it he is to pay a rent of 6s.; for the other he is to do the accustomed services. He pays a fine of 6s. John Atwell takes the full land late of John Thorold for twenty years at a rent of 26s. 8d.; fine, 12d. Andrew Lessi takes the half-land late that of Edmund Prat, now in the lord's hand for default of a tenant, to hold for twelve years at a rent of 14s.; fine, 12d. Richard Cokayne takes the half-

land late of Henry Greneleaf for twelve years at a rent of 15s.; fine, 12*d.* John Downham takes a half-land late that of Nicholas of Roydon for twelve years, rendering in the first year 4s. for half of it and the accustomed services for the other half, and afterwards the accustomed services for the whole; fine, 12*d.* (1871) Simon Teye takes a half-land, late that of Nicholas of Roydon, for his life at the accustomed services; no fine, for he is unwilling. John Downham, junior, takes a half-land, late that of Nicholas of Roydon, until a tenant shall be found who will do the accustomed services, to hold at a rent of 15s.; fine, 6*d.* There are now in the lord's hand a full land late of John Thorold, a full land late of Robert Osbern, a half-land late of Richard in the Lane, a half-land late of Henry Greneleaf, a half-land late of Nicholas of Roydon, besides seven of the cottage tenements.

[*Hiatus in the rolls.*]

(1879) Walter Wiseman marries Alice, widow of Richard Sewyne, tenant of a full land, and is admitted for his wife's life; fine, 2s. (1881) Walter Wiseman has fled with his chattels to Chesterton; let a writ be sued out against him. The full land known as Thorold's is divided into four portions; one is granted to Richard Tates, another to Nicholas Dony, another to Richard Walter and John Scot, another to John Downham, senior, and John Parsce; in each case the tenure is for ten years at a rent of 6s. 8*d.*; fine, 6*d.* John Atwell has been holding the lands, but he could not do the services. (1882) Alice Cokayne surrenders a half-land, late that of Henry Greneleaf; it is granted to Aubin Willay and John Scot, at a rent of 14s., to hold for their lives or until a tenant be found who will do the ancient services. (1882) Richard Downham marries Ellen, widow of John Newman, tenant of a full land; he is admitted; fine, 13s. 4*d.* The full land 'waived' by Walter Wiseman is granted to John Arnold and Margaret, his daughter, for their lives, and the life of the survivor, at a rent of 26s. 8*d.* and suit of court in lieu of all service. (1882) John Atwell surrenders a full land to the use of John Warwick, who takes it from the lord for a term of twelve years at the accustomed services; fine, 18*d.* (1884) The tenement relinquished by John Arnold is in the lord's hand; the manorial officers answer for the issues. (1885) Anna Foldyng surrenders a messuage and a full land, for which she has been paying a rent of 29s. 4*d.*, to the use of John Pontefysche, who is admitted to hold at the same rent; fine, 8s.; John is to erect a chamber which Anna is to hold for her life, and is to demise to her an acre of the said land for life. (1886) Alice Cokayne, who held a full land for life as widow of Richard Cokayne, is dead; her son Andrew is admitted; fine, 6s. 8*d.* The tenement relinquished by John Arnold is still vacant. Nicholas Dony surrenders a parcel of a full land held by him at a rent of 6s. 8*d.* to the use of Richard Downham, who is admitted to hold to him and his at the said rent; fine, 12*d.* Simon Teye, who holds a half-land at the ancient services, is too feeble to do them; John Crombred takes the tenement to hold to him and his at the ancient services; fine, 6s. 8*d.* (1887) John Arnold's tenement is still vacant. (1889) John Down-

ham, senior, tenant of a full land, is dead; his widow, Anna, is to hold for her life. Richard Downham and Ellen his wife, who in Ellen's right hold a full land, are too feeble to maintain the said land, and they surrender it, Ellen being separately examined; the lord grants it to Jacob Frost, to hold to him and his sequela at the accustomed services; fine, 8s. 4d., and no more, for he is an unwilling tenant; and since Richard and Ellen have let the tenement go out of repair and cultivation, Jacob is to have from them two mares (*iumenta*), price 15s., and four quarters of drage, price 8s., and they are to hear no more about the waste of which they have been guilty. Aubin Willay, who holds a half-land jointly with John Scot, surrenders his moiety to the use of John Downham, junior, who is admitted to hold at a rent of 7s. until a tenant be found who will do the ancient services; fine, 8d. Richard Downham surrenders his share of Thorold's tenement to the use of William Breche and Catherine his wife, who are admitted to hold to them and their sequela, at the rent of 6s. 8d., at which Richard held; fine, 8d. (1889) John Arnold's tenement is still vacant. (1890) John Atwell surrenders a full land, since he is too feeble to maintain it, to the use of John Warwick, who is admitted to hold to him and his sequela at the accustomed services; fine, 6s. 8d. John Arnold's tenement is still vacant. (1892) John Arnold's tenement is still vacant. (1893) Anna, widow of John Downham, senior, who held a full land for her life, is dead; her son, John Downham, junior, is admitted to hold to him and his sequela at the accustomed services; fine, 6s. 8d. John Arnold's tenement is still vacant. (1896) At the last court it was presented that Aubin Willay, who held a half-land, had gone away and waived it. He is now present, and on being examined states that he refuses and relinquishes the land, and he surrenders it to the use of Richard Scot, to whom it is granted at a rent of 12s., to hold to him and his sequela until some one shall come to take it at the accustomed services; and in case such a one appears, Richard is to have an option of continuing to hold at the said services, and should he reject this option is to receive from the incoming tenant the costs that he has laid out on the tenement; fine, 12d., and no more, because he is to build. John Arnold's tenement is still vacant. (1898) John Crombred, who held a full land, is dead; his widow, Ellen, is admitted to hold for her life; no fine. Richard Dony and Ellen, his wife, late widow of John Crombred, who hold a full land for the life of the said Ellen, surrender their estate, and the lord grants the said land to them and their heirs at the accustomed services; fine 2s. Nicholas Dony, holder of a half-land, is dead; his widow, Agnes, is admitted to hold for her life at the accustomed services; no fine. (1899) John Starling, holder of a full land, is too feeble to maintain the land, and surrenders it; the lord grants it to John Newman, to hold to him and his sequela at the accustomed services; fine, 6s. 8d. The outgoing tenant 'demises' to the incoming tenant farming utensils and tillages, and pays 60s. to the incoming tenant in respect of waste, which money the incoming tenant is to spend in repairs. John Arnold's tenement is still vacant.

On the whole, after reading these entries our conclusion will probably be that, in the then state of the markets for land, labour,

and food, the value of a full land copyhold of the manor of Wilburton, to be held by the ancient services, was extremely small, and was often accounted a negative quantity by the tenant—that is to say, he would rather not have the land than have it. Happy in their posterity were those who endured and got their services commuted into rents.

We may now compare the accounts of Richard II's reign with those of Edward II's. The scheme remains the same, but some new headings have made their appearance. The 'Rents of Assize' now bring in 2*l.* 3*s.* 0½*d.*; there is here a trifling increase. The old 'Farm of Land,' which brought in 1*l.* 12*s.*, is replaced by two headings—'Farm of Demesne Land' and 'Farm of the Natives' Land.' Under the former there is an increase during Richard's reign from 6*s.* 9*d.* to 1*l.* 1*s.* 11½*d.* A good many small pieces, two or three acres apiece, of the old demesne have been granted out by entries on the court roll at money rents of about 1*s.* per acre. Under the 'Farm of the Natives' Land' fall the rents paid for those relinquished full lands, half-lands, and cottages which have fallen into the lord's hand and been granted out at money rents; the amount of these rents rises during the reign from 7*l.* 10*s.* to near 10*l.* 'Sale of Corn' brings in some 20*l.* and 'Sale of Stock' a very variable amount. The 'Issues of the Manor' bring in some 2*l.* and the 'Sale of Wool' some 8*l.* The 'Sale of Works' is separately accounted for, and at the beginning of the reign still brings in 8*l.* or 4*l.* The 'Perquisites of the Court' have fallen rather than risen, and cannot be relied on for more than 2*l.* There are now some sundry receipts which may raise the total by 1*l.* or 2*l.*

The credit side of the account presents some new phenomena. Under 'Acquittances and Decay of Rent' we find that the rents with which the reeve now debits himself are by no means pure gain. As tenements fall into the lord's hand and are let out at new rents—rack rents—the old dues have to be forborne; they are not at once struck out of the account, but appear on both sides: it is conceived that the old rents have 'decayed.' Under this heading also various allowances to the tenants are comprised, and a sum is thus shown which rises from 9*s.* to 15*s.* Other headings of discharge are 'Purchase of Corn and Stock' (very variable), 'Cost of Ploughs' (1*l.* to 2*l.*), 'Cost of Carts,' 'Repair of Buildings and Gates' (usually less than 10*s.*, but rising to 5*l.* when a new pigeon-house is built), 'Cost of Sheep and Fold' (less than 1*l.*), 'Necessaries,' 'Threshing,' 'Servants' Wages' (there is a shepherd, sometimes a boy to help him; the whole of this item is 10*s.* to 15*s.*), and besides this there is the cost of the 'Boon Ploughing' and of the 'Harvesting' (the tenants' dinner).

An attempt has been made to bring out the net result of these

accounts in a tabular form, in which are stated (1) the total of the items of charge, less arrears, (2) the total of the items of discharge, less money paid to the lord's use. During the fifteen years of Richard's reign for which accounts exist the excess of income over outgo varies between 28*l.* and 50*l.*; its average is about 37*l.*

			Year ending Michaelmas		
			1878	1879	1881
Income	.	.	47 1 10	45 18 2½	57 12 0½
Outgo	.	.	7 9 1½	8 18 11½	16 18 7
Balance	.	.	39 12 8½	36 19 8	40 18 5½
			1882	1884	1885
Income	.	.	49 19 10½	48 2 0½	58 6 11
Outgo	.	.	12 17 1½	12 8 7	10 10 2½
Balance	.	.	37 2 8½	35 18 5½	42 16 8½
			1886	1887	1892
Income	.	.	36 19 8½	46 0 4½	60 17 9½
Outgo	.	.	18 12 6½	15 17 5½	11 17 0
Balance	.	.	28 6 9½	30 2 11	49 0 9½
			1894	1895	1896
Income	.	.	40 18 11½	57 18 6	45 7 4½
Outgo	.	.	7 9 10½	25 6 11½	14 9 9½
Balance	.	.	33 4 1	32 11 6½	30 17 6½
			1897	1898	1899
Income	.	.	48 16 0½	47 4 6½	61 8 1½
Outgo	.	.	7 7 9	9 15 11	10 10 2½
Balance	.	.	41 8 8½	37 9 7½	50 17 10½

On the back of the roll, as of old, appear the 'Barn Account,' 'Stock Account,' and 'Account of Works.' The 'Account of Works' for the year ending Michaelmas 1881, the year which saw the peasants' rebellion, is as follows:—

Ploughings:—[He accounts for] 232½ diets of ploughing, proceeding from 15½ full lands for 30 weeks and two days between Michaelmas and Hokeday, falling this year on the last day of April, from each full land every other week one diet of ploughing reckoned as two works.

Total, 232½ diets.

Of which in acquittance of the reeve and reaper, each of whom holds a half-land in respect of his office, 15 diets; and in default of 4 full lands in the lord's hand and at farm, 60 diets; and in acquittance of 10½ full lands which are in work, in respect of the fortnight at Christmas, 10½ diets; and in ploughing the demesne land for wheat seed, 12 diets; and for spring sowing, 17 diets; and for diets sold, 118 diets.

Balanced.

Somererthe:—15½ diets of ploughing, called Somererthe, proceeding

from the said  $15\frac{1}{2}$  full lands; to wit, for each full land, 1 acre ploughed and reckoned as 1 work as per the terrier.

Total,  $15\frac{1}{2}$  diets.

Of which in acquittance of the reeve and reaper, each of whom holds a half-land in respect of his office, and of the 4 full lands in the lord's hand and at farm, 5 diets of ploughing; and in ploughing the demesne land  $10\frac{1}{2}$  diets.

Balanced.

Benerthe:—56 diets of ploughing proceeding from the *customarii*, as well free as native, according to the teams that they yoke; in the year from each *customarius* with all the beasts that he yokes, 4 diets, at 1*d.* per diet, as per the terrier.

Total, 56 diets, accounted for by ploughing of the demesne land.

Nederthe:— $15\frac{1}{2}$  acres of ploughing and harrowing proceeding from  $15\frac{1}{2}$  full lands at two seasons called Nederthe, from each full land at each season  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre ploughed and harrowed without food and without being reckoned as a work.

Total,  $15\frac{1}{2}$  acres.

Of which in acquittance of the reeve and reaper, each of whom holds a half-land in respect of his office, and of the 4 full lands in the lord's hand and at farm, 5 acres ploughed and harrowed; and in ploughing of the demesne land  $10\frac{1}{2}$  acres.

Balanced.

Winter and summer works:—[He accounts] for 2,936 $\frac{1}{2}$  works proceeding from  $15\frac{1}{2}$  full lands and  $10\frac{1}{2}$  cottaries, from Michaelmas to Lammas (1 Aug.); from each full land 3 works per week and from each cottary 2 works per week; price of each work, a halfpenny.

Total, 2,936 $\frac{1}{2}$  works; price of a work, one halfpenny.

Whereof in acquittance of the reeve and reaper, each of whom holds a half-land in respect of his office, 130 $\frac{1}{2}$  works; and in default of the 4 full lands in the lord's hand and at farm, together with the full land of Walter Wiseman, which fell this year into the lord's hand at the end of November, 498 $\frac{1}{2}$  works; and in default of the 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  cottaries in the lord's hand and at farm 639 $\frac{1}{2}$  works, and in acquittance of  $10\frac{1}{2}$  full lands which are *in opere* for 147 diets of ploughing, arising from the same as mentioned above, at 2 works per diet, 294 works; and in acquittance of the said  $10\frac{1}{2}$  full lands which are *in opere* for 'somererthe' as per the terrier, 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  works; and in cutting 760 bundles of thatch, called lawthatch, among the full lands that are *in opere*—to wit, each 100 bundles reckoned as 1 work—9 works; in cleansing wheat and rye for seed, 12 works; in harrowing the demesne land for sowing wheat and rye, 46 works; in making a new *murs*<sup>5</sup> for enlarging the lord's sheepfold, 37 works; in covering the same sheepfold, 33 works; in cutting the brushwood in the grove at Hadenham for inclosing the gardens, rabbit warren, 'et le ponyerd,' 86 (?) works; in aiding the carrying of the said brushwood to the carts which had been brought there,

<sup>5</sup> I can only read the word thus.



6 works ; in aid in 'shredding' (*shridando*) of the said brushwood at the rabbit warren at Wilburton and drawing it inside, 12 works ; in securing the ditch round the said warren, 8 works ; in carrying dung outside the manor to the fields within the Christmas fortnight, 40 works ; in repairing the wall round the manor, which had fallen down, 61 works ; in scouring the ditch round the ponyard, 13 works ; in digging the lord's vineyard at Ely, 18 works ; in harrowing the lord's land for spring sowing, 102 works ; in breaking the ground for the same sowing, 22 works ; in carrying pease from the rick in the manor to the barn for threshing, 6 works ; in weeding the lord's corn, 60 works ; in shearing 178 sheep of the lord, 82 works ; in scouring the ditch round the park at Downham, 15 works ; in mowing 7a. 8r. of meadow in Emedwe, 20 works ; in cutting, binding, and shocking the forage there, 20 works ; in mowing 24½ acres in Landmedwe, 88 works ; in making the hay there, in addition to the help given by the servants, 88 works ; in carriage of the said forage and hay with two carts for two days, 20 works ; in stacking the forage and hay in the manor, 8 works ; in collecting dung in the manor in July, 6 works ; in winnowing 161 qrs. 2 bus. of divers grain of the issue of the barn, as above, besides the 80 qrs. of barley for malting, 62 works ; and in works sold, 484½ works ; and in 23½ works upon the account.

Balanced.

Autumn works:—[He accounts] for 814 works proceeding from the said 15½ full lands and 10½ cottages from Lammas to Michaelmas, during 8 weeks and 8 days, during which each full land works 5 days per week—to wit, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday—and each cottaria works two days per week on days chosen by the bailiff.

Total, 814 works ; price of each work, one penny.

Of which in acquittance of the reeve and reaper, each of whom holds a half-land in respect of his office, 41 works ; and in default of 4 full lands in the hands of the lord, and at farm, 164 works ; and in default of 8½ cottaries in the hands of the lord and at farm, 144½ works ; and in acquittance of the 10½ full lands which are *in opere* for two festivals falling on their work days within the said time—to wit, the Assumption of St. Mary, on a Thursday, and the Decollation of St. John, on a Thursday [21 works] ; and in reaping, binding, and shocking 96½ acres of divers grain at two works per acre, 193 works ; and in carrying the lord's corn, 28 works, besides the help of the manor carts ; and in stacking the lord's corn, as well in the barn as outside, 12 works ; and in driving the lord's plough while the servant (*famulus*) of the manor was thatching a rick of pease, 8 works ; and in carrying dung out of the manor, 88 works ; and in works sold, 169½ works.

Balanced.

We see, then, that at the very end of the fourteenth century many of the old 'works' were exacted. In some years more were 'sold,' in some less. In the year ending Michaelmas 1397 only 8 out of 2,970 winter and summer works were sold : some 800 were actually done ; many of the others were discharged by the fact that four of the



full lands and no less than ten of the cottage tenements had fallen into the lord's hand and had been let by him either permanently or temporarily at money rents. And on the whole the economy of the manor is far from being an economy of cash payments. The lord is no great payer of wages. For the regular field work he has no need of hired labourers; his only permanent wage-receiving hind is a shepherd, but there are ploughmen who receive allowances of grain.

Passing on now to Henry IV's reign, we find that the old mode of reckoning is still preserved. There are still 2,970 winter and summer works due, but 5 full lands and 10 cottier tenements have fallen into the lord's hand and bring in nothing but money; more than 10*l.* has now to be accounted for as 'Rent of Bond Lands,' and a proportionate number of works has to be subtracted. Of the other works some are sold; in one year 204 of the winter and summer works are sold, while 114 have been discharged by harrowing. In 1407, however, the basis of the account was changed; it became a recognised fact that 6 full lands were no longer *in opere*, and the total number of winter and summer works to be accounted for was reduced to 1,188, and that of autumn works to 378.

A great change seems to have taken place soon after this, during a period for which we have no accounts. In the first year of Henry VI (1423) the 'Rent of Bond Lands' has risen to 22*l.* All the 'works' seem now to be released (*relaxantur customariis domini*) except the boon ploughing:—76 'diets' of ploughing due from the customers, whether free or bond. Very shortly after this, in or about 1426, another great change was made. The demesne of the manor, containing 246 acres of arable land and 42 acres of meadow, was let to farm at a rent of 8*l.*, and the demise of the land which had been actually in the lord's hand seems to have carried with it the right to the ploughing service; that service, therefore, no longer concerns the bishop while the lease lasts (*nichil hic quia conceditur firmario terre dominice cum firma sua*). The demesne land is let *cum operibus et consuetudinibus omnium customariorum operabilium*. This soon leads to a great simplification and abbreviation of the accounts, an abbreviation to be measured in feet. The receipts are now the old assize rents, the rent of the demesne, the rents of the bond lands, the perquisites of the court; the *opera* are no longer brought into the account, and the purchases and sales of stock and crops disappear, for these of course concern the *firmarius*, not the lord. The *firmarius*, it may be noted, is just one of the men of the vill, one of the copyholders, as we now may call them; in the first instance he is the same man who is acting as reeve.

Thenceforward the bishop seems to have been able to keep the demesne land in lease, now one and now another of the copyholders taking it for a term of years: thus under Edward IV it was let for

16 years at a rent of 7*l.* It is always recognised that the subject of this demise comprises 'the customs and works of the customary tenants of the lord.' Meanwhile the 'Rent of Bond' or 'Natives' Land,' which has declined from 22*l.* to about 17*l.*, remains constant.

Under Henry VII the situation is but little altered; the bond land brings in its 17*l.*, the demesne land 8*l.*, the demises of the latter are still described as including 'all the works and customs of the customary tenants of the lord.'

This evidence, therefore, seems to point to a great change under Henry V (1413–22). In the last year of Henry IV the rent of bond lands is entered at 11*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.*; it is still reckoned that 1,056 halfpenny works and 336 penny works are due; many of these are actually done in kind, though some are 'sold.' When the accounts begin again under Henry VI the rent of bond lands is 22*l.* 2*s.* 10*d.*, almost exactly double the old amount, and all the works that are accounted for are 76 diets of ploughing. This change was immediately followed by another—namely, the letting of the demesne—the *scitus manerii*, as it is sometimes called—together with the benefit of whatever *opera* remained uncommuted. Whether the commutation under Henry V was originally regarded as more than a temporary or revocable measure does not appear; practically it seems to have been a final step.

Two cases of commutation which occurred in the reign of Henry IV are noticed on the court rolls. J. N., who holds a full land by services and customs, has requested the lord that he may have his land at farm and not for customs and services, and the lord, seeing his weakness and poverty (*inopiam et debilitatem*), of his special grace has granted that he may hold his land at farm; and upon this comes J. N. and takes the land to hold to him and his by the rod at the will of the lord, according to the custom of the manor, rendering yearly to the lord 20*s.* rent for all labour services to the said lord belonging, and he gives the lord 2*s.* The other case is of a similar character: the lord of his special grace grants to J. D. a half-land, to hold to him and his *sequela* at a rent of 12*s.* for all services and customs, which land the said J. D. hitherto held by services and customs. It is specially noticed in this case that no fine (*gersuma*) is taken for this new grant.

Then, as already said, we find that in the first year of Henry VI (1422–3) all the customary tenements are paying money rents. It may be interesting to note the fate of the full lands.

The reeve accounts for 26*s.* 8*d.* from John Downham and his fellows for the full land late of John Thorold.

For 18*s.* 4*d.* from Andrew Somerset for a half-land.

For 18*s.* 0*d.* from Thomas Stoney for a half-land, formerly Pratt's.

For 12*s.* 0*d.* from Simon Dauntre and William Philip for a half-land, formerly of Henry in the Lane, demised to them for life.

- For 18s. 0d. from John Downham, senior, for a half-land, formerly of Henry Greneleaf.
- For 26s. 0d. from the full land called Sewyne's, demised to various tenants.
- For 12s. 0d. from Robert Scot for a half-land.
- For 12s. 0d. from Robert Newman for a half-land demised to him and his.
- For 12s. 0d. from Thomas Downham for a half-land demised to him and his sequela.
- For 24s. 0d. from John Newnan for a full land.
- For 24s. 0d. from John Downham, senior, for the works of a full land recently released to him.
- For 24s. 0d. from Andrew Cokayne for the works of a full land recently released to him.
- For 24s. 0d. from John Frost for the works of a full land recently released to him.
- For 24s. 0d. from John Downham for the works of a full land recently released to him.
- For 24s. 0d. from Richard Dony for the works of a full land recently released to him.
- For 24s. 0d. from Andrew Frost for the works of a full land recently released to him.
- For 24s. 0d. from Andrew Lessy for the works of a full land recently released to him.
- For 24s. 0d. from Jacob Frost for the works of a full land recently released to him.
- For 24s. 0d. from John Warwick for the works of a full land recently released to him.

Thus the basis of the commutation effected under Henry IV and Henry V seems to have been 24s. for the full land—that is to say, a shilling per acre with the messuage thrown in. During the fourteenth century the lord seems to have been able to obtain a higher rent—namely, 26s. 8d.—for the full land, and 13s. 4d. for the half-land. But even 24s. was too high a rent to be permanently maintained; before the end of Henry VI's reign it had been very generally reduced to 20s., and the total 'Rent of Natives' Land' had fallen from 22*l.* to 17*l.* It might be an anachronism to say that these copyholders of the fifteenth century were paying 'rack rents,' but they were paying 'the best rents that could reasonably be gotten.'

When once the commutation has been effected and the demesne demised to a farmer, the manorial accounts cease to have any great legal interest. The lord of the manor has, in effect, become a landlord of the modern type. It can be no part of my undertaking to trace the ups and downs of his income; many of its items were now irrevocably fixed, while the rent that could be obtained for the demesne varied from time to time and lease to lease. On the whole his income seems to have fallen. About the years 1428 to 1492

the excess of income over outgo generally amounts to 30*l.* or little less; thirty years later it has fallen to some 25*l.*, and it seems never to recover from this fall. An abstract of the account for the year ending Michaelmas 1507 will show how the matter stood at the beginning of another century.

<i>Debit.</i>				<i>Credit.</i>			
	<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>		<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Rents of assize . . . . .	2	3	2½	Allowance and decay of rent . . . . .	14	0	
Rents of 'Natives' Land' . . . . .	17	16	1	Repairs of barns . . . . .	1	0	0
Rents of pieces of demesne land . . . . .	1	6	10	Paid to the lord's use . . . . .	28	8	6½
New rent for small parcels of demesne . . . . .		1	8		80	2	6½
Farm of the manor . . . . .	8	0	0	Balance due . . . . .		1	11
Issues of the manor (only one item, for liberty of fold demised) . . . . .			1 0				
Perquisites of court . . . . .		15	8				
Total . . . . .	30	4	5½	Total . . . . .	30	4	5½

The manor was granted by Bishop Martin Heton to Queen Elizabeth in the forty-second year of her reign (1599–1600). This appears from a survey of 8 Aug. 1609, when the manor was in the hand of King James. Its revenue was then estimated as follows:—

	<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Rents of assize . . . . .	2	3	2½
Rents of assize of 'native tenants' . . . . .	17	16	1
Farms of demesne lands in the occupation of tenants . . . . .	1	16	10
New rent . . . . .		1	8
Issues of the manor . . . . .		1	0
Farm of the 'scite of the manor' let for a term of years by indenture . . . . .	8	0	0
Perquisites of the court upon an average . . . . .	8	9	11½
Total . . . . .	33	8	9

But the surveyor adds, 'Ther is yearly allowed and deducted out of the value aforsayde for a decay of rente within the sayde mannor the some of xvij.<sup>s</sup> 9<sup>d</sup> ob. but whether it may be repayred or not I have noe knowledge.'

A good many of the ancient tenements have still to all appearance kept their shape; they are still held as integral wholes, though several are sometimes in the hand of one man. The full tenement, or 'virgate,' still pays in general a rent of 20*s.*; it consists of a house and curtilage, of twenty-four acres of arable scattered about

in the common fields, of a few acres of meadow, and of rights of common of pasture. What is more, it still owes some labour service, the remains, so it would seem, of the old 'boon works.' Against the names of several of the tenants, in addition to the amounts of their rents, is set '*j. opera seminand' tritici et al' pro seminand' ordeï*,' '*j. opera tritici al' ordeï ut supra*,' '*iiij. opera ut supra*,' '4 daye workes cum carucca firmarii,' '*iiij. opera cum caruca*.' The benefit of these is enjoyed by the farmer (*firmarius*) of the demesne, of the *scitus manerii*. But while rents have remained fixed, the annual values of the copyholds, reckoned in money, have in all probability increased enormously. Against each tenement is set not only its rent but what seems to be an estimate of the amount beyond its rent that it might be expected to bring in if let at a rack rent. Thus of one small tenement the rent is 12*d.*, while after this stands *ann' val' dimittend' 9s. ultra r*—that is, the annual value of it if demised at a full rent is 9*s.* beyond the rent actually paid; in other words, the actual rent is but a tenth of the possible rack rent. In some cases the virgate which brings in 1*l.* per annum is reckoned as worth 6*l.* or 7*l.* more. Even the demesne seems to be held by the termor on very beneficial terms (probably he has paid a substantial fine); as of old he pays but 8*l.*, while the annual value of his tenement seems to be estimated at 66*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* From a copy of the deed whereby King James sold the manor it would seem that he got 1,261*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.* for it, an absurdly large price if the purchaser was going to get but 88*l.* a year. But whatever the purchaser could get by reletting the demesne or cultivating it himself, the time was past when he could hope to increase his receipts from the 'natives' lands,' and the evidence goes to show that the economic catastrophe of the sixteenth century, the influx of the precious metals, not to mention the debasement of the coinage, had greatly benefited the representatives of the 'natives' at the cost of their lord.

At the risk of making this paper intolerably long I must add a few words about the legal status of the villains of Wilburton. There can be no doubt that in the thirteenth century the customary tenants, the holders of the full lands, half-lands, and other tenements, were serfs, *nativi*. This theory was kept up during the whole of the next century, and was brought home to them in practice. Thus in or about the fiftieth year of Edward III. a number of *nativi* relinquished their lands and fled; for many years afterwards orders were given at every successive court for their recapture.

(1369) Andrew Thorold, a *nativus* of the lord, dwells at Lindon, Andrew in the Lane at Hidingham, Nicholas Bande at Hempstead, William Coppe at Cottenham; let them be seized and brought to the next court. (1372) Andrew in the Lane, Nicholas Bande, John Thorold and Robert his brother, Andrew Thorold, John and

Nicholas, sons of Andrew Frost, *nativi domini*, are missing and ought to be seized. Such entries as these are found on the rolls of the fifteenth century also. (1467) Several *nativi domini* dwell at Crowland, Iselham, and elsewhere, and pay no chevage (head money); let them be attached. (1480) A similar entry. In Henry VII's day care is taken to record the fact that certain persons are serfs, and to state the whereabouts of their progeny. (1491) A. C., a native by blood of the lord, dwells on the lord's demesne, and has three sons and one daughter, whose names and ages are stated; J. B., another native, has two sons and one daughter; R. F., another native, has one daughter; another R. F. has a daughter; Agnes D., a niece, dwells with W. B.; Joan D., a niece, dwells at Chatteris; Ellen D., a niece, dwells at Wilburton; let them be attached by their bodies to do fealty to the lord. Such an entry as this suggests that by this time it has become necessary to enumerate the 'natives'; it is no longer to be assumed that all holders of customary lands are serfs; the difficulty that there had been of finding tenants had probably brought into the manor a number of outsiders who were not the bishop's born bondmen.

The practical incidents of servility are enforced during the fourteenth century. True that when a serf has once run away he is not recaptured; but there is a good deal of talk about recapturing him, though nothing seems to come of it. The 'natives,' however, who remain behind cannot marry their daughters, educate their sons, or sell their beasts without the lord's leave.

(1364) It is presented that H. N. sold a foal of his own increase (*de proprio incremento*) without the lord's licence; therefore he is amerced. (1367-9) Several similar entries. So in 1384 an amercement for selling foals to strangers without leave of the lord or supervision of the bailiff. (1372) Presentment that Richard Cokaygne has put his son John, aged eight years, to school without the lord's leave; he is amerced in 40*d.* At a later court Richard is licensed to send his son to school on condition that he does not take any holy orders without the lord's leave, the condition being enforced by a penalty of 100*s.* (1380) A. L., a *nativus* of the lord, at the time when he was reeve acquired, without leave of the lord, a messuage and some freehold land from W. S.; he now makes fine to the lord with 20*s.*, that he may hear no more about this matter (*ne occasionetur*). (1384) A *nativus* pays 13*s.* 4*d.* for leave to marry a *nativa*, a widow who holds a full land, and for leave to hold that land jointly with his wife. (1385) Presentment that A. L. married his daughter to R. H., a *nativus* of the lord; A. L. pays 3*s.* 4*d.* that he may hear no more of this (*ne occasionetur de maritacione predicta*). (1394) J. F., a *nativus domini de corpore*, pays 18*d.* for leave to marry his daughter, *nativam domini*, to J. C., *nativo domini*; he pays no more because his daughter has been guilty

of fornication—*comisit leyrwyght*—by reason whereof the lord had 5s. These marks of servility seem to disappear in the fifteenth century.

The terminology employed in the earliest surrenders and admittances is not stereotyped. The land is sometimes *terra nativa*, sometimes *terra custumaria*, sometimes simply a 'full land' or 'half-land,' as the case may be. The *tenendum* is sometimes *sibi et suis*, sometimes *sibi et sequele sue*; '*secundum consuetudinem manerii*' appears at times, and occasionally '*ad voluntatem domini*.' In Richard II's day, in the case of a grant to a man and his wife, we already find the full form, *tenendum J. et M. et heredibus et assignatis eorundem per virgam et ad voluntatem domini secundum consuetudinem manerii faciendo servicia antiqua pro predicto integro cotagio*. Thenceforward it is common to mention the rod, the will of the lord, and the custom of the manor; but the phrases '*sibi et sequele sue*,' '*sibi et suis*' do not at once give way before '*sibi et heredibus suis*.' In the middle of the fifteenth century it became common to describe the tenant as holding *per copiam*.

The conclusions to which these rolls would lead us may now be stated in a summary fashion.

*Before 1350 or thereabouts.* The lord gets very little by way of money rent. His demesne is cultivated for him by the 'works' of his customary tenants. More works are due than are wanted, and each year he 'sells' a certain number of works at a customary rate—that is to say, he takes from the person liable to work a penny or, as the case may be, a halfpenny in respect of each work that he does not want. The customary tenants are for the more part, if not altogether, unfree men, and are treated as such.

*From 1350 to 1410 or thereabouts.* There is as yet no permanent commutation of work for rent. The lord, however, finds the greatest difficulty in keeping old and obtaining new tenants; his tenants, more especially the cottagers, run away and relinquish their tenements. The lord still hopes to obtain tenants on the old terms, but in the meanwhile has to make temporary grants or leases at money rents, and from time to time to reduce those rents. From the tenants who still hold on the old terms he still exacts a considerable number of works, while other works he 'sells' to them year by year. Many of the tenants are still unfree, and are treated as such.

*After 1410 or thereabouts.* It having at last been recognised that many of the tenements are no longer *in opere*, and that there is no prospect of a return to the old state of things, a general commutation of all works (except some ploughing) takes place. Perhaps this is not at once conceived as a final change, but practically it is irrevocable. The rents are the best rents that the lord



can get, and in course of time it is necessary to reduce them. The demesne land, together with the benefit of such works as are uncommuted, is now let, for short terms of years, to a farmer. The lord of the manor becomes, in effect, little more than a receiver of rent. Very few practical traces of personal servitude remain, but we read of no formal emancipation of the bondmen, and the lord is careful to preserve a record of their bondage.

*In the sixteenth century.* Owing to the fall in the value of money, the copyholder gradually acquires a valuable right in his holding. His rent—less than a shilling an acre—becomes light. I will not generalise, but to me it seems that in this instance the copyholder's vendible interest is almost entirely an unearned increment, the product of American mines.

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