

The Archbishops of Canterbury as Lay Lords.

BY THE LATE W. HENEAGE LEGGE, Esq.

THE Primates of all England, during the Middle Ages, being temporal as well as spiritual peers, had possessions, powers, and privileges as secular and earthy as those of any earl or baron of the realm, knight of the shire, or lord of rural manor. They were, indeed, overlords of many a baron, knight, or squire who held lands under them; they were lords of the bodies as well as shepherds of the souls of many men and families of men dwelling on their demesnes. All these—their temporalities—were held with the same material object and managed by the same kind of officials, their deputies and servants—"ministers" as they were called—as were the lands of any lay lords.

Their chamberlains or stewards held their manor courts, their reeves managed their farms, and their collectors drew in the fiscal net, whose fine meshes allowed little to escape, while their bailiffs executed distrains and their parkers protected their parks.

The transactions of all these officials are to be found, to a large extent, extant to-day, enrolled on miles of narrow parchments, or, later, on reams upon reams of paper, and even the archiepiscopal registers contain a large amount of merely mundane matters. All these embrace an immense amount of detail, some curious and interesting, much trivial, their £ s. d. of their accounts extending from thousands of pounds to the sixteenth part of a farthing, all presenting the varied aspects of the archiepiscopal temporalities.

The first appearance of an Archbishop as a temporal peer was one—perhaps not unfittingly for the good of his soul—in which he had to play a secondary part—namely, his render of homage and oath of fidelity to his Sovereign as his overlord, precedent to his entering on the temporalities of his See. Since in the vacancy of an Archbishopric its lands and revenues were

“seized into the King’s hands,” the confirmation and investiture of a Primate was sometimes deliberately delayed by a needy or greedy monarch. Thus William Rufus, on the death of Lanfranc, seized the temporalities of Canterbury, and retained its rich revenues for four years. Even on their restoration, some tempting morsel of a manor might be retained, until the Papal power had to be invoked. Some Archbishop might be fortunate enough to obtain retrospective restoration, as when, in 1276, Edward I. ordered to be restored to John Peckham all the corn that had been cut and carried in the great manor of South Malling during the four years past.

A curious custom once existed in connection with the accession of a new Primate—the gift, namely, to the King of a palfrey fully caparisoned, a render which in time became commuted into a money payment, called “Palfrey-Silver.” It would appear that this render was, as a matter of fact, a payment less from the Archbishop than his “servile” tenants, for an Originalia Roll of 1350 records that “the King, on the supplication of the Venerable Father Simon, Archbishop of Canterbury, excused his villeins from a certain payment of a sum of money called Palfrey-Silver, due on every vacancy of the Archbishopric.” Such feudal customs on these and similar occasions were often productive of disputes derogatory to the dignity of the ceremony.

Thus, in the year 1294, there is a record of the King’s endeavour to compose “the dissention concerning feudatory rights, on the day of the Archbishop’s enthronement, between him and the Earl of Gloucester.” Among other feudal renders associated with the accession of an Archbishop was a payment of ten pounds made to him by the tenants of some of his manors due on his first visit thereto. Though I have not met with a record of this custom earlier than Henry VI.’s reign, it was apparently an ancient render, since the entries of its receipt are usually accompanied by the words “*ex antiquo consuetudine.*” For their temporal possessions and positions of honour and profit as lay lords the Archbishops were indebted to individuals

of the laity and to the State through the King, since the monarch was the fountain-head of honours and privileges. From him they obtained grants of manorial fairs and markets, hunting rights, and licences to impark or enclose lands, and to fortify their manor-houses. That they were liberally endowed with such earthly possessions and privileges even at an early date is shown by ancient charters of the See still extant; from those enumerating such small donations as (in 824) "a little farm of one plough[land]" to the comprehensive confirmation by Ethelred of—"All the donations of lands which have been given to the See of Canterbury, with all the rights of hunting, hawking, fishing, and all other liberties."

Succeeding Kings made many and various grants to their Archbishops. Thus John gave licence for a fair and a market at Lambeth, whose fishery had been granted to the See nearly five hundred years before; and a few years later he made a like concession to the Archbishop for his Sussex manor of Pagham. This domain was formerly a possession of Wilfrid, Archbishop of York (*ex dono Cædwalla*), who signalized his becoming lord of the manor by the worthy act of liberating all the serfs on the demesne. Although he had been long at variance with his brother primate Theodore, Wilfrid, on his death-bed, "remembering the benefits he had received from the Church of Canterbury," conferred upon the Southern See this large Sussex manor, one of the most fertile domains in the country.

Apparently, his liberation of the serfs had not extended freedom to their "sequelæ," or progeny, since Domesday enumerates seventy-four villeins as existing on the demesne at the time of its survey. From John, also, the Archbishop obtained a grant of the very worldly privilege of having a mint and money exchange at Canterbury, as well as the more pertinent power of imprisoning criminous clergy; doubtless a very valuable concession for which to be able to show an actual charter; since so much contended for by the ecclesiastical power in its long contest with the secular was more the offspring of fancy than fact.

But John was not always so complaisant to the clergy, and a few years later, having placated the Pope by an acknowledgment of suzerainty, he procured from the Holy Father a Bull, addressed to the Archbishop, concerning the dissensions between the King and the Barons, in which the Primate was "severely accused of taking part in the said discords"; while the King, on his part, demanded the surrender of Rochester Castle, at that time in the hands of the Archbishop.

For Hubert Walter, as well as other Primates, like Becket before him, and many after, had held several high and potent secular offices, as Lord Chancellor, Lord Chief Justice; and as Governor of the whole realm while King Richard was warring abroad he had doubtless incurred, as a lord temporal, the displeasure of the unfraternal John in his designs upon the Crown. To Henry III., also, the occupant of the chair of St. Augustine was not always *persona grata*, and in 1261 a representative was sent to the Roman Court to complain of "the grievous things done to the King and Kingdom" by Boniface, Archbishop of Canterbury; while a prohibition was addressed to the Primate himself against "attempting anything against the Crown." Two years later the temporalities of the See were seized, and committed to various favourites of the King; for it was not only in vacancies of the See that these or similar seizures were made. In 1275 Edward ordered the sheriff to proceed in person to the archiepiscopal manor of West Tarring—a "peculiar" of the See where Becket is said to have introduced fig-trees for the first time into this country—and to seize it and all the goods and chattels therein until the settlement of the long dispute which had existed between Sir Richard de Waleys and the Archbishop.

Per contra, the Primates received upon occasion the entirely secular but profitable "custody" of the lands of various lay lords, as when to Archbishop Reynolds' the rich manor of Petworth with its many submanors was committed at the moderate render of 200 marks. As head of the Anglican Church, Reynolds presided, in conjunction with his suffragans

and the Papal Inquisitors, at the trial of the Templars, and as such published the Bull dissolving the Order; but he does not appear to have taken a prominent part in these iniquitous proceedings, nominally religious, but actually secular and worldly, inspired by the greed of Pontiff and Princes who had cast covetous eyes upon the great wealth of the religious knights.

So much, indeed, and so often in the long history of the Metropolitan See were the Archbishops concerned in purely secular affairs, either by reason of the greatness of their state, their abilities, or the favour of Princes, that perforce they became involved in the dangers and chances of this temporal life, in which they risked not only power, wealth, and the royal favour, but life itself. Archbishop Elphege, who in 1011 was slain in the sack of Canterbury, was by no means the only Primate to meet with a violent death; for Becket, in 1170, and Sudbury, in 1381, also lost their lives by the rage of Prince or populace. Robert Winchelsey, Archbishop in Edward I.'s reign, being accused of treasonable practices and his temporalities seized, withdrew abroad, where he fell into such poverty that he was saved from starvation only by the assistance rendered by his monks of Canterbury. On the accession of Edward II. he was, however, recalled, and his temporalities restored; the King, doubtless, being mindful of the Primate's friendly actions in such purely secular matters as assisting the Prince (when in exile in Sussex) to purchase the hunting-stud of Earl Warren, Lord of Lewes, and in lending him stallions for the improvement of his stable. Archbishop Arundel also suffered the pains and penalties of banishment. These do not appear, however, to have weighed very grievously upon him, since he found refuge in sunny Italy, and while in exile superscribed a letter to his monks of Canterbury — "From my terrestrial paradise near Florence."

On the other hand, the Archbishops were by no means usually deficient in loyalty or patriotism. Thus, we find Robert Winchelsey sending a letter to all suffragans, ordering them to hold services of praise for Edward's victories over the Scotch.

Walter Reynolds, Archbishop and Chancellor, provided for the purposes of Edward III.'s expedition to Scotland 150 quarters of wheat, 300 quarters of flour, 15 quarters of beans, and 5 quarters of peas, and 200 great oaks from his Sussex manors, and sent them from Shoreham to Newcastle by the ship *La Sainte Marie*.

Archbishop Bradwardine accompanied the same King in his French wars; and before the great naval victory of *Les Espagnols sur Mer* offered prayers for his country's success.

The Primate, being lords temporal as well as spiritual, found themselves bound by the feudal tenures of their temporalities, and thus could be called upon by the medieval monarchs, whose favourite sport was war, to furnish their due quota of knights and men-at-arms to follow their Sovereign in the field. In their turn they demanded kindred contribution from barons, knights, and squires who held lands and manors under them; and this, not only from their lay tenants, but also from the clergy themselves, in some cases *in propriis personis*. Thus, in Richard II.'s reign, when the French were making preparations for an invasion of England, Archbishop Courtney, son of the Earl of Devonshire, sent letters to his Commissary of Canterbury to arm the clergy of the city and diocese in their due rates and proportions. These were such that a benefice exceeding sixty-five pounds a year had to provide a man-at-arms and two archers; a parson "passing rich on forty pounds a year" had to furnish two archers; while an incumbent of a living worth twenty pounds supplied one archer; the poorer clergy providing only coats of mail and arms. Similar commands to arm and array the clergy in person were issued by Archbishop Chicheley in view of a supposed invasion of the French in Henry IV.'s reign.¹

In humbler and more local matters the connection of the Archbishops with secular affairs is abundantly manifested in

¹ Grose, commenting upon these orders, says: "Notwithstanding these writs were at least three or four times issued, history does not inform us that these reverend battalions were ever actually called forth under arms."

the view which is afforded by the Court Rolls of their numerous manors. Concerning such aspects, an immense number of documents exist, both at Canterbury and Lambeth; and this in spite of the great loss of such material which was caused by a fire at the end of the fourteenth century, if we may judge by the Royal Writ issued in 1399: "To make inquiry concerning all the records of the Archbishopric of Canterbury destroyed by fire." A large number of the manor-rolls related to such places as Otford, Croydon, Mayfield, and Slindon, where the Primates possessed palaces, or South Malling, where they frequently visited. On these manors a large number of officials were maintained, each having to account for some secular aspect of the lord of the manor's interest.

In the Sussex Archiepiscopal Manor-Rolls I have found more than twenty-five officials named (after endeavouring to eliminate "duplicates," and not mentioning such as hayward, fisherman, etc., of the manor), viz.:

Auditor.	Keeper ("custos") of the Fishery.
Bailiff.	" " " Park.
Chamberlain.	" " " Quarry.
Cofferer.	" " " Manor.
Collector.	" " " Herd of
Clerk of the Court.	Goats.
" " Kitchen.	Master of the Servants.
Cadaverator.	Seneschal of Lands.
Drossman.	" the Household.
Forester.	Sergeant.
Ranger.	Treasurer.
Reeve.	Supervisor.
Receiver.	Woodward.
Keeper ("custos") of the Woods.	Woodseller.

Two of these call for some notice—viz., "Cadaverator," a manorial officer one might designate "Coroner of Cattle," since his duty was to report on the deaths of cattle, particularly as regards "Murrein," the endemic cattle disease of the Middle Ages; and the "Drossman," who was the keeper of the cattle pasturing in the woods of the manor. All these must have involved the Primates in great expenses, for though their salaries or wages—varying from a penny to sixpence a day—

appear to us small, their "liveries" raised the value of their offices considerably. The word "livery," as used in the Middle Ages, had by no means the restricted meaning it has to-day, and though in the case of these officials it sometimes included a robe, it usually had a wider scope. Thus, what was "delivered" to them as part payment for their work, comprised in one case a certain quantity of wheat or flour; in another, one or two pigs, or sheep, or a bullock; while some had pasture for a cow or two; another a horse to ride, and an allowance of oats or hay for its keep.

In addition to the Archbishops' expenses that came upon them daily as lay lords, there were the costs of maintenance and the continual repairs of houses, granges, fences *et hoc genus omne*, throughout their various demesnes.

Archbishop Peckham is said to have spent 3,000 marks on the necessary repairs in his manors.

The Primates, as lords of manors, were also constantly concerned in the temporal affairs of their tenants, particularly those who were "unfree"; their villeins, serfs, or "nativi."

We have already referred to St. Wilfrid's "manumission," or setting free all the serfs on his large demesne of Pagham, and to the fact that his action does not appear to have affected any but those actually in a state of servitude at the time. How the perpetuation of a community of villeins could come about in such a case appears from a manumission which Archbishop Islip (in 1361) granted to a certain serf, on his Manor of Mayfield, named Nicholas, whom he "freed from the bond of servitude," together with all his "sequelæ," or family, with the exception of Walter, the youngest. This unfortunate was doomed with all his descendants to remain serfs on the demesne for ever. Among the servile customs prevailing on certain of the archiepiscopal manors was that called "chivage"—the payment made by the villein to his lord for permission to go beyond the bounds of the estate for a stated period. Thus we find mention of frequent renders of "six capons for permission from the lord to remain out of the manor at Christmas."

In a variety of other ways the Archbishops, as lay lords, were involved in purely secular matters, as in protecting their own material rights and privileges, as well as those of their tenants. At Pagham, the tenants of the Primate, Richard Wethershed, and those of the Bishop of Chichester were at variance on the matter of rights of pasture, concerning which the Archbishop wrote to the latter complaining that he had been led to think it "some small matter comprised under the name of boundary, as a ditch or such-like . . . but we have since learned from our bailiffs for certain that the matter is not small, but rather great, concerning things in peaceful possession of which the Church of Canterbury has stood for a hundred years and more," finally requesting further conference about the affair. Nor did the Archbishops neglect their dependents in distress, and so we find Peckham, in 1234, while residing at South Malling, ordering his officials to provide for the poor who were afflicted by a famine, while in another case he wrote to Earl Warenne, asking him to attend to the complaints of his tenants whose crops were damaged by the excessive amount of game that swarmed in the woods, warrens, and chases of the Lord of Lewes.

Again, he interfered on behalf of the Rector of Pagham, writing to the Dean and Chapter of Chichester to warn the Bishop of the Diocese to restore a cart and horse which his bailiffs had taken from the parson ; while at the other end of the county he ordered the Barons and Bailiffs of Rye to remove their distraint on the tenants of Richard de Waleys.

Some of the most interesting documents exhibiting the concern of the Archbishops with worldly matters are the Rolls of their Foresters and Parkers. Parks and chases were among the earliest possessions of the See, from the days of Egbert, who conferred upon it the great manor of South Malling, with its large and numerous woodlands, to the donation of the Wood of Blean, by Richard I. onwards.

The economic aspect of the parks of the Middle Ages was particularly to the fore when they were the possessions of

ecclesiastical persons or corporations. Not that the clergy forbore all hunting—albeit forbidden by the Canon Law—and the reiterated command of an Archbishop that “The servants of God should not keep hawks or hounds,” for a later modification allowed them to hunt, not for pleasure, but the benefit of their health. Before the introduction of turnips, mangolds, and similar crops made possible the winter keep of cattle, large numbers of swine and bullocks, as well as deer, were killed and salted down in autumn to supplement the food-supply during the cold season; while the lakes, ponds, and fisheries which the parks and chases included, afforded the large amount of fish required for the numerous fasts and lengthy Lents of the pre-Reformation period. The large number of swine pastured and “pannaged” in the woodlands of the kingdom may be gleaned from the statistics of Domesday. Thus, in the aforementioned manor of South Malling, we learn the lord received 300 hogs from those “pannaged”—*i.e.*, feeding on the acorns and beechnuts in its woodlands; a figure which indicates the large total of swine so maintained as at least 3,000, if a tithe was the proportion due to the lord; or 3,600 if one in twelve, as some figures given seem to indicate, was the ratio. In the same manor the Archbishop received 355 hogs from those pasturing on the herbage therein, which gives the large total of 2,485, since a marginal entry in Domesday states that throughout all Sussex the render for herbage was “one hog from every villein who had seven.” The privilege, therefore, of turning out swine to pannage and herbage was a substantial benefit conferred by territorial lords on the houses of religion of their foundation or patronage.

In an undated charter, Archbishop Theobald granted the Dean and Canons of South Malling the privilege of “pannage for 24 swine in his park commonly called the Broyle.” As for the deer in the various parks of the See, the Archbishops, if they had not the pleasure of hunting them, had the venison always at their command, for their own use, that of their numerous retainers and dependents, or their friends. Many

“warrants” are extant commanding the parkers to deliver deer to favoured persons, usually in terms similar to the example here adduced :

“Right welbeloved we greet you well we wyll and charge you that ye kill and deliver w^out any disturbanc^e of our game w^o reasonable expedition oon seasonable deare of grece in oure parke of Broyle to the berer here of to the use of our welbeloved John Wornet and this oure warant shall be yor sufficient discharge Wryten at oure man^o of Lambhithe the xix day of July the xxi yere of Kyng Henry the VII” Willm^o Cantuar’.”

Needless to say, the Archbishops, in common with other lay lords, suffered much from the depredations of poachers in their parks and chases. Thus, in 1324, Archbishop Winchelsey obtained a Commission of Oyer and Terminer, on his complaint that Robert de Morley and Thomas de Hevre had broken into his park of Slindon, and hunted and carried off his deer. In his mid-Sussex manors, a succeeding Primate obtained a similar Commission to try “certain malefactors and peace-breakers who, arrayed in manner of war, had broken into his parks of Frankham, Mayfield, Broyle, Ringmer, Plasshet, More, and Glynde, had hunted therein, carried away his deer, beaten and assaulted his servants.” More than one, even of this small number out of all the parks of the See, had small lakes, stew-ponds or fisheries within their bounds; the first-named, Frankham, to wit, having a lake of the area of nine acres. During the time when Archbishop Arundel was in exile and his temporalities in the King’s hands, Richard II. sold all the fish in the South Malling ponds, or *vivaria*, to Sir Edward Dalyngridge for £5.

In an archiepiscopal “Receivers’ Roll” for 1481, there is account of no less a sum than £46 6s. 8d., paid for “salt fish of various kinds bought for the use of the lord’s household this year.” A similar roll, of a date twenty years earlier, mentions the various kinds of fresh fish—*pisces recentes*—bought for the Archbishop’s household when he was at South Malling, £2 5s. 8d. having been paid “in Lent and the Rogation days after,” for thirty-seven “bremys,” six “tenchys,” and four “perchys”; while other Rolls, still extant, record further payments for *pisces aquæ dulcis*.

The Archbishops had yet another source of profit in one at least of their parks—namely, from Ringmer, where there existed a heronry from a very early date. The parkers' rolls contain numerous records of the sale of herons from Ringmer Park, of sending them to London "for the use of the lord," etc., but no record of hawking them. A payment entered on one roll (of Henry VI.'s reign) of "eighteenpence paid for the labour of one man climbing the trees and taking the said herons," suggesting that this was the prosaic method of capture adopted, instead of the picturesque pageant of hawk and horse.

Most profitable of all the products of the parks of the Primates was the timber growing therein, especially in days when all ships were built of it, and most houses and bridges, and when but little "sea-coal" was used for fuel. The same Dean and Canons who had Theobald's grant of pannage for their swine had also the right to take four oaks yearly from the same park—"namely, each of them one oak, large and fit for fuel." From Broyle Park, also, Edward I. had taken, during a vacancy of the See, eighteen cartloads of timber for making a drawbridge at Pevensey Castle.

We have already noticed Archbishop Reynold's free gift of 200 great oaks to Edward III. for national purposes. During the Middle Ages roofs of houses, barns, and the spires of churches were usually covered with "shingles"—as, indeed, are the latter even to-day in wooded districts. These are, as it were, small tiles of split oak, and immense quantities of them were used, their making and fixing by men called "shinglers" being often mentioned in the archiepiscopal Court Rolls, usually those of the parkers. In a Roll of 1458 it is recorded that 15,000 shingles were cut, made, and sent to London "to cover the roof of the Lord's house at Lambeth," an equal number being used for the rectory at Mayfield, and 11,000 for that of Wadhurst, all of which appear to have been made in the contiguous parks of Mayfield and Frankham.

The position of the Primates as lay lords is nowhere more evident than in the aspect presented of them as lords of manors

in the multitudinous rolls of their Courts-Baron, Courts-Leet (or View-of-Frank-Pledge), and Hundred-Courts, though I have not been able to find any record of an Archbishop presiding in person at one of these secular courts. Apparently the chief court of all these was that held, not at Lambeth, but at Canterbury, for some of the lands and tenements held under the See were subject to "suit of court at the great court of Canterbury," doubtless held in the hall of the Archbishop's palace.

Very different was the locale of one of their Sussex courts, for there is still extant the record (in Latin) of a "Court held xx^o day of September in the 6th year of the reign of King Edward IV. in the cemetery of St. John, under the Castle" [of Lewes]. St. John the Baptist's Church is of great antiquity, and has built into its north-east wall a Saxon doorway, the oldest ecclesiastical relic in Lewes; but it is not a "peculiar" of the See of Canterbury, and it is not evident why an Archiepiscopal Court should have been held there. At all these courts purely mundane matters came under review, such as reports of ditches choked up, cottages wanting repair; of "heriots" and "reliefs" due on the death of tenants and the incoming of their heirs; of fines levied for non-appearance at court, for assaults or for trespass, for overcharging the common with cattle, etc. Usually, the receipts were trifling in amount, seldom more than a pound or two; commonly a few shillings, or even pence. The total received at the court held in St. John's Cemetery was only twopence; at another twopence halfpenny.

At some courts "Inquisitions" were made by the "homagers" into manorial customs; as that held in Henry VII.'s reign at Tarring, which reported that "The lord should receive his heriot before the rector receives his mortuary" on the death of a tenant in that manor.

Much interesting matter is contained in all these various documents which might be drawn upon indefinitely; but enough has been already adduced to set forth the position of the Primates of all England as lay lords.