

# “NONARUM INQUISITIONES” FOR SUFFOLK.

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Many people are more or less acquainted with the *Taxatio*, or Valuation of Churches, of 1292 (20 Ed. I.), commonly called the “Taxatio of Pope Nicholas IV.,” and also with the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535. But few, comparatively speaking, have even heard of the *Nonarum Inquisitiones* taken in 1341 (14 Ed. III.), about fifty years after the *Taxatio*, about two hundred years before the *Valor*, and only seven years before the awful Black Death of 1349, which so greatly affected Norfolk and Suffolk.

The Nonæ Rolls were printed by the Records Commission in 1807. The book is a folio of 485 pp., and it contains the report of the Inquisitions for 27 counties, of which Suffolk is one. The print and the paper are both poor. It is written in Mediæval Latin, and is full of contractions. There are said to be many misprints.

At the beginning is a preface, in which the Commissioners explain that Parliament granted to King Edward III. in his 14th year (1341) a subsidy of the Ninth of the Corn, Wool and Lambs in every Parish for two years, “in consideration of the great Travailes that he had made and sustained in his wars.” Cities and Boroughs were to pay “the very Ninth of all their goods and chattels.” “Merchants Foreign which dwell not in the Cities or Boroughs, and also other People that dwell in Forests and Wastes, and all others that live not of their Gain or Store” were to pay the Fifteenth, and the “poor boraile (i.e. poraile) People,” and “others that live of their bodily Travaile” were to be excused altogether. A succeeding statute

allowed that "the aforesaid Grant should not another Time be had in Example," i.e., should not be a precedent. I asked the Record Office if that promise had been kept, and they could only tell me that "no similar series of returns of them (Inquisitions) exist here for any other period."

Another statute in 1342 appointed Assessors and Venditors for every County to assess and sell the Ninth or Fifteenth, and three Commissions were issued to Commissioners. "By the 2nd of these the Ninth of the articles to be assessed and sold (corn, wool, and lambs) was to be levied according to the Tax or Valuation of Churches completed in 1292," i.e., the *Taxatio*, but this was modified by a third Commission issued on 26 Jan., 1342, which ordered the *Taxatio* to be used as a general guide, but that it should be disregarded if it were either less or more than the real Ninth, and in order to gain correct information as to the existing facts, the Commissioners were directed to take Inquisitions upon the oath of the Parishioners in every Parish.\* The volume printed by the Records

\* The parochial jurators were generally from two to four in number. It is curious that these men, who appeared before the Commissioners to give sworn evidence as to the income of the benefices, should not, apparently, have included the one man who could give the facts from personal knowledge, viz., the Parson. Occasionally, but rarely, you meet with such names as William or John le Clerk. But *Clericus* described a good many men who were not Parsons. To the Parson the jurators would have to go for their information, unless the Rectorial income was administered by a Parochial Council! They are described simply as "parochiani." Generally they have a Christian and a Surname as at Ampton, John Skott, John Screttus and Adam Skot. But sometimes you find William, son of Hugh, Peter, son of Richard West. Or again, William atte Church, Alan atte Hethe, Stephen atte Mere, William atte Watir, or atte Grene, atte Wode, atte Merch, etc.; or again, Thomas le Reve, John le Pipere, Arnald le Fullere (though I have not noticed any mention in Suffolk, as elsewhere, of fulling mills), John le Taillour, Radmund le Smyth, Galfridus le Chapman, Alan le Wrughte, etc. They did not, apparently, belong in any number to the gentry class. It is true that in English history Edward Longshanks was a King, but in Parochial History John Schortneck of Brockeleye is scarcely likely to have been the Squire. On one occasion, at any rate, the jurators are described as "probi et legales homines parochiæ." This is a regular phrase for men qualified to serve on a jury, or in any other public capacity (as distinct from criminals, serfs, etc.)

Commission in 1807 contains the report of these Inquisitions. “In these Records it appears that the Parishioners of every Parish found upon their Oath the true Value (sometimes separately) of the Ninth of Corn, Wool and Lambs, then the amount of the antient Tax of the Church was stated, and afterwards the Causes of the Ninth not amounting to the Tax or Value of the Church were assigned, and when the Ninth did not exceed the Tax, it was assigned for Cause thereof, that within the Valuation or Tax of the Church there were other Articles included besides Corn, Wool and Lambs, such as the Dos or Glebe of the Church, Tythe of Hay, and other Tythes. And if any Abbey, Priory, or other Religious Corporation had Property within any Parish, the Ninth arising from such Property was found and returned.”

In form the Inquisitions differ somewhat in each County, and also in length. The returns from the County of Sussex are the longest, and cover 53 pp., and this is accounted for by the late Mr. W. R. Stephens (*Hist. of the Dio. of Chichester*, S.P.C.K., p. 130) by the fact that the subsidy of the Ninth is said to have been suggested by Robert Stratford, Lord Chancellor, and Bishop of Chichester (1337-1362), brother of John Stratford, Archbishop of Canterbury. Some of the county returns are very short, those from Staffordshire going into 3 pp., Middlesex 5 pp., Worcestershire  $7\frac{1}{2}$  pp., and York 28 pp. The returns from Suffolk cover 42 pp.

They are a good second in length, and scarcely second in the amount of interesting information which they contain. In the County of Suffolk the records differ, both in form and substance, in different Hundreds. In some they are very meagre, and tell nothing which could be left untold, as, e.g., in the Hundred of Samford. In Thingoe Hundred they are not much

more interesting, though they cover a larger space. Whereas in other Hundreds, as e.g., Risbridge, they go very much into particulars, and that is where the great interest comes in. At the head of each report, under the name of the parish, occur the words "Ext' ix Mr'", or other sum, which gives the amount at which the Benefice was assessed in the *Taxatio* ("Rectoria extenditur (or taxatur) ad ix marcas") Then follows generally the amount of the Ninth of Corn, Wool, and Lambs, which is also, apparently, the amount of the Great Tithes of the Parish, and then comes the statement, going more or less into detail, of the remaining income of the Parson or Vicar in that year. So that we have here a more or less detailed statement of the incomes of all the beneficed Clergy of the County in the year 1341. The returns for the *Valor* were more detailed than those for the *Taxatio*. But those for the *Nonæ* were still more detailed, and therefore more interesting.\*

The Clergy had rather a bad grievance in connection with these "Nonæ." The oppressions of some of our modern "Assessment Committees" were anticipated in 1341. The clergy had just granted to the King a Tenth of their incomes for 2 years. They were therefore clearly entitled to be free from any further levy. But at first they were assessed and taxed to the Ninth also, and both their Tenth and their share of the Parish Ninth was collected from them, but Archbishop Stratford intervined in their behalf, and redress was given. The Ninth was paid only by the laity. Archbishop Stratford had supported the grant (which, as we have seen, may have

\* In the *Taxatio* the printed Suffolk returns fill 18 folio pp., divided equally between temporalia and spiritualia; in the *Nonarum Inquisitiones* they fill 42 pp., all devoted to the parochial benefices; and in the *Valor* 85 pp. But in the latter the printing is much more "displayed," a great deal of the space is occupied by the account of the income of the Religious Houses, and there are but few details about the Parochial benefices.

been suggested by his brother), as for instance in a letter written to Bishop Grandison, of Exeter, dated 29 Jan., 1340/1, in which he speaks of the Grant to the King, and says that "eidem liberaliter duximus concedendum."

Now let us go a little into details. The main object of the returns was, as we have seen, to give the amount of the Ninth of Corn, Wool, and Lambs which a Parish ought to pay, but they tell us much besides. They tell us of the way in which the Clergy were paid, and the amount of their incomes. They tell us a little about the houses in which they lived. We get glimpses of the feudal system existing, and of the clerical manors. We pick up interesting information as to the amount allowed to the Vicar of an impropriated living; the amount of land of various sorts in the hands of the Clergy, and the annual value of it; the decay or want of prosperity in various parts of the county. We learn something of where the Windmills were in 1341, and the Watermills, and fish-garths or fish weirs, the Woods, the peat beds, and rabbit warrens. We can form shrewd guesses as to the income of the millers. We learn a little about prices, and about the animals which were kept in the villages, and of what was grown in the fields, and other things which need not now be particularised.

I. *What do the Inquisitions tell us as to disaster or lessening of value in any part of the County in 1341?*

There is nothing like what we read about in some other counties, as, e.g., in Lancashire, where in parish after parish from Preston northward we get such an entry as this, at Kirkham: "Dicunt etiam quod propter destructionem & guerram scottorum dicta ecclesia deterioratur & diminuitur valor ejus in

detrementum dictæ taxæ annuatim per cxx. marcas"; or again, going from the North with the Scottish enemy to the South with the French enemy, at Portland, in Dorset, "Item piscaria valet x<sup>li</sup> (*i.e.* £10) in qua proficuum dictæ ecclesiæ maxime consistit ac etiam dicta parochia per inimicos Anglorum combusta & destructa fuit, bidentes cum aliis catallis abductæ." Neither do we read of anything like this at poor little Tyngree (Tingrith) in Bedfordshire: "Item dicunt quod propter distemperantiam hiemalem oves & agni eorum moriebantur fere omnes & pauçæ quæ remanserunt parve valebant in venditione."\*

But we do read of considerable damage on the sea-coast. At Bawdsey, Hollesley, Ramsholt, Boyton, and elsewhere we read of so many acres submerged by the tide of the sea. But, since in all these cases the value of the submerged land is reckoned in the total value, it is possible that the submerging did not greatly injure the land. When, however, we read of a certain marsh at Burgh St. Andrew, which used to produce 26/8 for the altar, being almost entirely destroyed by the sea, we feel sure that we are dealing with destructive erosion. We find this at Kessingland (200 acres), Leiston, Gorleston (400 acres), Corton (10 acres), and elsewhere, and the damage was sometimes serious, and, consequently, the loss of income to the Church, as, e.g., 10/- per ann. at Gorleston, and 40/- at Corton.

The destruction at Dunwich requires a somewhat fuller notice. In the early part of the 13th Century

\* The year 1341-2 seems to have been a trying time in rural England. In Suffolk we do not find many complaints, but the Cambridgeshire returns are full of them, and so are those from Buckinghamshire and elsewhere. The winter seems to have been unusually severe. Sheep and lambs perished, and various crops entirely failed. Some of the tenants were so poor that they lacked both animals for ploughing and seed corn for sowing their land, and there are complaints also of the severity of the taxes. It is curious to read of St. Margaret's, Westminster, that that "parish was almost destroyed by prostratione domorum."

Dunwich was a flourishing port. In the latter half of the Century its decay had set in. In 1341 six parish churches were standing, St. Nicholas, St. Leonard, St. Martin, St. Peter, All Saints, and St. John's, besides the Chapel of St. Mary. Nearly all of this has now vanished. In 1341 all were standing. But in 1328, thirteen years before our Inquisitions were taken, the harbour was totally destroyed, and about 400 houses were destroyed about the same time. Consequently, though it was not until six years later than this that it lost its Mayor, the place was in a most depressed condition in 1341. The income of the Churches had greatly lessened. In the case of all the parishes “Manual tithes” are mentioned. This is the only place in which I find mention of these, and the mention is of peculiar interest. I take it that these “manual” tithes were “personal,” as contrasted with “praedial” tithes, and that they were paid by the tradesmen and workmen of Dunwich. The annual value of St. Nicholas' had fallen from  $6\frac{1}{2}$  marks to barely 50/-; of St. Leonard's from 8 marks to 6; of St. Martin's from  $6\frac{1}{2}$  marks to 1; of St. Peter's from 6 marks to 30/-; of All Saints from 16 marks to 8; of St. John's from  $6\frac{1}{2}$  marks to 60/-. The Parishes of St. Nicholas ( $\frac{13}{4}$ ), St. Martin (30/-), St. Peter ( $\frac{26}{8}$ ), and St. John ( $\frac{133}{4}$ ), apparently used to pay an annual tribute to the Prior of Eye, but in each case this had come to an end “propter debilitatem ecclesiae.” In the parish of St. Martin, when the *Taxatio* was made some fifty years before, there were 100 houses of parishioners from which the rector received oblations and manual tithes, but owing to the ravages of the sea only 7 of these houses were left, and no Chaplain would serve the Church for all the profits which belonged to it. The case was apparently the same at St. Peter's. At St. Nicholas' things were worse. In 1292 the parish contained 300 houses, but in 1341 only 18 *parishioners* remained. The jurators valued the goods and wares

of divers merchants in the town, who did not live by the land or by animals, at £44. All these details given by responsible persons living in Dunwich at the time, and speaking upon their oath, bring home to us with quite a new force the great depression of the place in those days, when it had only just begun to "go down the cliff." So much for Dunwich.

The Hundred of Risbridge seems to have been (in parts) in rather a bad way in 1341. In eight out of its thirty parishes complaints are made, viz., Gayslee, Chetburgh, Wickhambrook, Multon, Ousden, Depden, Hawkedon, and Lidgate. In most of these parishes land, once cultivated, was lying idle ("frisce"). At Gaysley 400 acres were idle owing to the poverty of the tenants, and the destruction wrought by the rabbits of the Lord of the Manor, the Earl of Gloucester. The value of the benefice was thus reduced by 54/4 p.a. I met with similar instances in Sussex, at Ovyngeden, where the Lord of the Manor was the Earl Warenne, and at Sidlesham, where the rabbits belonged to the Bishop of Chichester. At Lidgate things were even worse; 700 acres were idle. They belonged to the Manor of Laurence de Hastings, Earl of Pembroke. These had long lain uncultivated. The Manor was in the hands of the Lord King during the minority of the said Lord Laurence and so £6 p.a. was lost to the Church, and to the State. Apparently there were only about 200 acres besides in the parish in cultivation. So, though the benefice was assessed in the *Taxatio* at 23 marks, the sum of the Nonæ was only 70/-. At Wickhambrook the case was similar. Laurence, Earl of Pembroke, was Lord of that Manor also, and during his minority the Lord King had possession of his land, 240 acres of which was lying "frisce." Had it been sown there would have been 60s. more for the Nonæ, and, presumably, as much more for the Rector also.



At Multon the poverty of the tenants is blamed for the waste condition of 240 acres, and this may have been the root of the trouble in other parishes. At Wyston 120 acres were lying “*frisce*,” apparently because the land itself was so poor. But in each parish there was a loss, more or less serious, to the Parson, and to the State.

At Bury St. Edmunds they seem to have been in rather a poor way in 1341, for they complain that things were not what they were at the time of the *Taxatio*, “on account of the impoverishment of the said town.”

At Cockfield, which the *Taxatio* assessed at 50 marks, i.e., £33 6s. 8d., they complain that they were over-assessed, and in proof of this they swear that John of Melton, who then was and for 40 years past had been Rector of Cockfield, had put it to farm to Richard of Stoke, Rector of Lavenham, who was then the *firminus* (i.e., farmer) at a rent of £30, so, clearly, they were over-assessed. This Cockfield statement is of interest for more reasons than one.

II. *What do the Inquisitions tell us about the incomes of the Clergy in 1341?*

#### MANORIAL INCOME.

They were for the most part derived from 3 sources with which we are still more or less familiar, viz., Glebe, Tithes, and Fees or Offerings. But there was in some parishes a source of income, of which we now, I suppose, know nothing. The most striking instance is at Hoxne, where there were both a Rector and a Vicar. As a rule in such a case the statement sets out their incomes separately. At Hoxne this is not done. The Benefice is said to be worth 70 marks, and the

Vicarage 10 marks. But when it comes to details the *Vicar* is said to have them all, and there is no reference to the Rector's share. So, possibly, the word "Vicar" may be a misprint for "Rector," and it may be that the Vicar really took a fixed pension of 10 marks and the Rector the rest. The *Nonæ* are given as worth 40 marks, and the other details of income add to a little over £17, which gives an income of nearly £44 out of the £46 13s. 4d. of the *Taxatio*. But the point to which I specially direct your attention is this. After the more usual items come these:— "xxvj. aruræ (plough-works), 4/4; It. xxj. averagia (service with horse and carriage). It. xxiiij-xx (480) opera hiemalia (winter works), 10/-. It. xxvj. acr. Daywynes (a day's winnings or pay at mowing), 3/-. It. xxiiij. opera in auctumno (autumn works), 1/-. It. de Maltselvir (Maltsilver, or tax for making malt), 1/6. Item perquisita curiæ (perquisites of the Court, i.e., fees, fines, etc.), 40/-". We see at once that the Rector must have been the Lord of the Manor, for this is Manorial income, and so in this case he certainly was, for he was the intrepid Bishop Bateman, of Norwich, who, when the awful Black Death in 1349 made it impossible for him to continue longer in the Cathedral City, administered the Diocese for some 3 months from his Manor of Hoxne, of which place he was also the Rector (Jessopp, *Coming of the Friars*, p. 215). Hence all this clerical Manorial income at Hoxne. But we find more or less of it at Melford,\* Gaysley, Stowe, Cockfield, Bur' Ste. Marie, Debenham, Rickingale, Redgrave, Jakele, Backton, Laxfield, Ixning, Polsted, and Acton. At these two last places

\* Dr. Copinger (*Manors of Suffolk*, Vol. i., p. 156) gives an account of the Melford Rectory Manor, which dates from the 11th Century, when it had 261 acres. About the end of the 12th Century it had 174 acres. In 1287 it had about 144 acres; in 1341 137 acres; in 1684 131 acres; and in 1836 about 129 acres. In 1287 the Rector had a certain number of villeins and 7 cottars, who would pay the "redditus assise" mentioned in 1341, and render the "customary works," etc. The earlier court rolls from 1412 onward are lost now, the earliest existing being from 1630 to 1641.

the Parson has an income from “Heriot.” At Melford “fines and ameracements” are mentioned, as also at Burgh’ Ste. Marie, where “lete” is added, the whole coming to 26/8 p.a. At Ixning we read of income from rent and services, “tam liberorum quam villenorum cum leta & perquisitis curiæ,” the whole reaching £5 p.a. In nine parishes “customary” works or services are mentioned. We may possibly conclude that in all these parishes the Rector was also Lord of a Manor. I say of a Manor, for an expert friend tells me that in many parishes there was more than one manor, “each ancient freehold estate was a ‘manor,’ even if it owed some subjection to a superior lordship. Hence a rector, like any other lord, would have his ‘Court,’ with its ‘perquisites,’ dues of various kinds, his glebe ‘held in demesne,’ his ‘free-tenants’ paying ‘rents of assize,’ and his ‘tenants at will’ and ‘bondmen’ rendering ‘customs’ and ‘works.’” This fact must be borne in mind when we consider the relation between the parish priests and their people in such parishes at that time. Only a few years ago, comparatively speaking, the Rector of Wigan, in Lancashire, sold his manorial rights to the Corporation, and so for ever put a stop to the friction which had lasted for centuries.

In the case of at least 216 of the Suffolk benefices in 1341 we read of income from “redditus assise,” rents of assize, i.e., “fixed rents of free tenants,” probably fixed “when the tenement was first created, at some ‘assize’ or sitting of the Manor Court.” They were as low as 6d. p.a. at Gedding, Bedefeld, and Lelleseye, etc., and as high as 53/4 at Debenham, Framlingham, Washbrook, and Bur’ St. Mary, and 77/- at Gaysley. At Bernyngham they came to 3/6½—note the ½d! At Stowmarket the Rector had £6 p.a. from “rents of assize,” and 17/6 from “customary services.” At Cockfield the Rector had 14/- from

rents of assize with customs, and at Rougham 30/- p.a. from rents of assize with "lokes", of which more hereafter.

#### GLEBE.

The clergy were considerable landowners, and in a great many of our Suffolk returns their Glebe is mentioned in detail, and its value per acre. The land is divided into arable, meadow, pasture, and wood, and the annual value of each per acre is given. The size of the estate differed considerably in different parishes, Pakenham, e.g., had 212 acres of arable, 6 acres of meadow, and 4 acres of pasture. Gaysley had 80 acres of arable with pasturage for sheep on the common together with liberty of faldage. Lidgate had 80 acres of arable,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres of meadow, 1 acre of pasture, and also pasturage over the rabbit warren. Culford had 30 acres of arable. Ixning had 180 acres of arable. Lavenham had 120 acres of arable and 16 acres of wood. Timworth, Thurston, Welnetham Par., Woolpit, Rougham had each 40 acres of arable. Norton had only 20 acres of arable and 2 acres of meadow. Some parishes had less than this. These are only specimens picked at random. As the size of the estate varied so did the quality of the land, if we judge from the annual value. A very common value for arable land was 4d. per acre. The Elveden and Weststowe arable was worth only 1d., and the Brandon 2d. At Ampton and Culford it was worth 3d., and at Stowmarket and Rougham 6d., at Hoxne 8d., and at Ixning 14d. Pasture land was worth more than arable, and reached 1/- at Lidgate, Tuddenham, Herringswell, and Mildenhall, and  $\frac{1}{6}$  at Stowmarket. Meadowland was worth more still, and reached 2/- at Brandon,  $\frac{2}{8}$  at Lidgate, 3/- at Pakenham and Stowmarket, and 4/- at Norton. The Norton meadowland must have been particularly

good, for the Hay tithes brought in £5 (quite exceptional), which is only 8d. short of the tithes of corn, wool, and lambs there. We read of meadow land at Cavenham “in uno claustro” (worth 11/-) [cf. Dynenton “in claustro rectoris x ac., 10/- ”], and at Elveden and elsewhere of land “quædam separalis pastura” (worth 26/8) [cf. Dunham and Bradlegh], i.e., held “in severalty”—apart from the common pasture.\*

But probably the Glebe, or at any rate the arable part of it, was divided up into strips, and mixed up with other lands. When the Ampton Glebe (which in Domesday stood at 8 acres) was exchanged in 1859 it consisted of 16 pieces mixed up with the estate land in an extraordinary way. There was then only a little over 11 acres of it instead of the 27 acres with which it was credited in 1341. It was no uncommon thing for dishonest neighbours to filch land. There are abundant instances of this in Manor Rolls. But the loss of 16 acres is considerable. On the other hand at Freckenham (which had 20 acres in Domesday survey) in 1341 there were 65 acres of arable at 1/- and 2 acres of meadow at 5/- per acre, i.e., 67 acres in all, all of it evidently unusually good land. In the *Valor* of 1525 the Vicar is credited with, say, 128 acres, and the Rector with 35 acres, at 1/- an acre, 1½ ac. at 4/- per acre, and 4½ acres at 2/- per acre p.a. A short time ago the Rector told me he had between 500 and 600 acres of glebe, some of it good, and much of it poor. The old good land remained, and a quan-

\* The “pasture” would sometimes be upon the common fields. In the Hampshire returns I find the following close together: “Hentone, 3 virgates and 10 acres of land and pasture for one cow and a calf.” “Ichenstoke, pasture for 12 bullocks and 100 sheep.” “Swareweton, pasture for 3 horses doing farm-work, 3 cows, and 12 pigs.” So frequently elsewhere. There are instances of this in the Suffolk Returns as e.g. at Livermere Par, “pasture for 105 sheep”; Ixning, “pasturage in heath, marsh and field for all his beasts.” But that arrangement was apparently rare in Suffolk, where the Rectors generally had so many acres of pasture worth so much an acre per annum. In the *Valor* of 1525 is the following (Vol. iii., p. 476) under the Rectory of Freckenham, “35 acres of glebe land at 1/- per acre per annum. 1½ acres of meadow lying in the Common Field at 4/- per acre, 4½ acres of titheable meadow at 2/- per acre.”

tity of poor land was bought and added to it at the time of the Enclosing. It would be interesting to compare generally the glebeland of 1341 with that of 1535 and 1920.\*

Before leaving this subject of the land I must speak of Lakenheath. There the Rector had 80 acres of arable at 3d. per acre. But the Prior of Ely was lord of the manor, and he was a very famous man, or afterwards became so. The jurators swore that he had some 27 ac. with barley, 200 ac. with white wheat, 57 ac. with oats, 3 ac. with peas, and that in the hamlet of Underley he had sown 50 ac. with wheat and barley, and had 1,000 sheep and 20 lambs, the nonæ on which would amount to £6, and we can imagine the pleasure of the jurators when they added the words "unde nihil solvit, nec solvere vult," "He pays nothing, and *wont* pay." The Lakenheath Inquisition was taken at Henhowe, Northgate Road, Bury (where the Shire Hall stood prior to 1571), on Thursday next before 12th March, 1342. Hence this Prior of Ely, who neither had paid nor would pay, could be none other than the "flos operatorum," the great architect to whom we owe the Ely Lady Chapel, Octagon, and Crawden Chapel, Alan de Walsingham, elected Prior on the death of Prior Crawden, 25 Sept., 1341. He was a long-headed man of business, too, and quite within his right in refusing to pay, for the Nonæ were to be paid by the laity only.

\* In one solitary instance (Somerton) we find reckoned amongst the Rector's income "the herbage in the Churchyard" (cimiterio). This at first sight looks rather like sharp practice. But probably in this case the rector was in the habit of making money out of his Churchyard by selling the hay or grass, or by feeding animals in it. The Canons of Edgar (A.D. 959-975) allowed swine to be kept in the Churchyard (though upon sufferance), but "not more swine than a man is able to manage." (Cutts, *Parish Priests*, p. 69).

PARSONAGE HOUSES.

In many returns the House is not mentioned at all, but it would not be safe to conclude that there was none, for sometimes it is not mentioned in a whole Hundred. In the Hundred of Lothing "unum mesuagium" is mentioned at Oldton, Blundiston, Gunton, Corton, Somerleyton, Askeby, Burgh, Hopton, Bradwell, Fritton, and Lound. This is not mentioned at Lowestoft, Flixton, Belton, Jerningham, Heringfleet, or Godiston in the same Hundred. Hence, apparently, it was sometimes included in the valuation, and sometimes not. The Parsonage seems generally to have been a messuage with garden, curtilage or court, and one or more pigeon or dove cotes, some or all of these, and they varied in value. At Edwardston they were worth 10/- p.a., but at Burgh St. Mary only 6/8. At Cavendish the messuage with dovecote was worth 12/-, and at Waldyingfeld, the messuage, garden and dovecote was worth 20/-. At Acton the messuage alone was worth 4/-, which was the value of the dovecote alone at Preston. The Bradley garden was worth only 9d. p.a., but the dovecote 6/8, so the Rector was probably a better birdman than gardener, unless the pigeons ravaged the garden. At Whatfield there was (apparently) an unusually large garden with 2 acres of pasture "in eodem giardino." At Melford things seem to have been at a low ebb, for there the messuage with dovecote was worth nothing "ultra reprisas," i.e., "worth nothing beyond the payments to be made from it," it cost as much as it was worth, which is, I fear, true of many a Suffolk Parsonage to-day.\*

\* In 1613 the Rectory Manor House at Melford was thus described in a terrier: "The site of the Rectory containeth an acre whereon are built one manour house containing 12 several rooms smal and great with an out-house and the office of the Dairy with 5 rooms, built on the side of the yarde: one garden containeing one rood; one orchard planted containeing one rood; al which are inclosed with a moate; one close or ponde yarde, with a sluice, and a swann's tofte, and 2 fish ponds, and one smal crofte containeing half an acre; one Dovecoate with a smal flighte of Doves, and one Pound belonging to the manour" (qu. Copinger, *Manors of Suffolk*, Vol. i., p. 156-7).

A curtilage was a Court, but it might contain a "little pond," like that at Icklingham Manor, in 1342. In that particular curtilage flax was grown (the seed cost 2½d. for a gallon), and pot herbs, which cost 3d., were bought to be planted in it, and the profits of the flax in that year come to 12d.\* Moreover, tithes were received from curtilages; at Clare they amounted to as much as 40/- p.a.

With regard to the size of the Parsonages, the Inquisitions tell us nothing except what may be inferred, perhaps, from the annual value, but they were probably small as a general rule. The Parson was a single man. The great houses with which so many of the Suffolk Benefices are now burdened are of quite recent date. Going back only so far as 1674 we find from the hearth tax returns, published by Mr. Sydenham Hervey in one of his green books, how much smaller the generality of the houses were then than they are now, from 3 to 5 hearths being a very common number. At Carlton Colville, Bungay, and Shipmeadow there were only 2. At that time the livings of Ampton and Livermere were held in plurality by Henry Priest, who lived at Livermere in a house with 4 hearths. His present day successor at Livermere has 14, and I have 11. In 1674 the largest Parsonage in the county (Hadleigh) had only 10 hearths. In the middle of the 14th Century the Parsonage, (generally speaking) would probably consist of a hall, a parlour, a kitchen, and 2 or perhaps 3 bedrooms. Richard Purdy, Rector of Icklingham, St. James, died in 1498, about 150 years after our Inquisitions. His will is the nearest to our date which I can find at the moment. His gross income, was probably about £11 p.a., and he may have had private means. He farmed his own glebe, and left various bequests. But

\* At Boxgrave, Sussex, the rector "had a curtilage in the same mansion for flax, hemp, and vegetables" (worth 20/- p.a.).



what concerns us now is what he left in the way of household plenishing. He left a variety of pots and pans, and a maser of silver-gilt, 7 plates, 13 dishes, and 8 saucers, all of pewter. There is no mention of a bedstead, but he left 3 coverlets, 3 pairs of sheets, 3 blankets, and 1 best mattress with a bolster. From the mention of the *best* mattress we may probably conclude that there were others. He left "a spruse hutche, a pointed (?) cofir, a salt tabill, iij tresils, iij fourmes," "a little tabil, ij trostill, ij long fourmes, a chaier turned." There were probably some other things in "the residue of cattelles meuabil and onmeuabil," but that is all that we read of. It would not do more than furnish sparsely a house of the size given above, just such a house as Robert Herrick died in at Deans Prior in 1674, which he describes in his "Thanksgiving to God."

#### TITHES.

The tithes of Corn, Wool, and Lambs seem to have been reckoned "Great" tithes, and all other tithes were called "Lesser." The great tithes were the main source of income in most parishes, e.g., at Cockfield, the whole income was £33 6s. 8d., of which £13 8s. 0d. came from great tithes, and at Melford £15 6s. 8d. out of a total of £20. The figures at Roughham were £16 out of £40, and at Woolpit £17 out of £20. As one looks over the details of the "Lesser" tithes in *all* the Parishes (not in any one only) it seems as though practically everything was subject to tithe. "Decimæ maris" were usual along the sea board, and brought in £8 at Blythburgh. Inland, "decimæ piscariæ" occurs generally in connection with water-mills, the profits of which were tithed, as were also those of the windmills. Cows, calves, sheep, piglings, hens, chicken, geese, pigeons, eggs (mentioned only at Preston and Glemsford), milk, butter, cheese, bees

(mentioned only once at Coney Weston, in contrast with the frequent mention of wax and honey in Sussex and Northumberland), the products of the garden, and curtilage, apples and other fruit, cyder, hay, flax, hemp, the teazles grown at Melford and Glemsford, probably for the use of the Melford and Lavenham clothworkers, the trees of the wood, and the underwood, the plantations of alder (possibly used, as to-day in Lancashire, for clogs), the turf, where cut for burning, the herbage growing in Stowe Park, Bungay (10/- p.a.), the reeds and bulrushes (valuable for thatching and closing in walls and folds), and the brushwood or heather—all these were tithed. Then there were the "decimæ vocatæ Fishingfar" at Walton, whatever they may have been, and "quædam decimæ que vocantur 'lokes,'" "broken wool, to wit 'lokys' collected at sheep shearing." It seems a very trifling item, yet it was tithed, and its tithe brought in as much as 10/- p.a. at Culford and Livermere Mag., 10/4 at Elvedon, and 13/4 at Honington. It is mentioned in 18 Parishes, of which 8 are in the Hundred of Blakebourn, 4 in the Hundred of Thedwastre, 4 in the Hundred of Lackford, and 1 in each of the Hundreds of Wayneford and Risbridge. At Livermere Mag. we read of "iiij. lokdayes" (worth 10/- per ann), which I suppose are connected with "lokes." In Suffolk we do not meet with "tithes of rabbit warrens and venison," as at Fyndon in Sussex (4/- p.a.).

#### RENTS OR OFFERINGS IN KIND.

There was wax at Livermere Mag., Lidgate, Glemsford (worth 10/- p.a.), and Melford, "cum cera proveniente die Purificationis B. Mariæ." Wax for Candlemas, and candles for the same at Pettaugh (2/-), and at Framsdon (6/8). There were eggs for Easter at Preston ("ova ad Pascha"), and possibly at Glemsford. But the current commodity was hens, which

were worth 1d. each. A capon was worth 2d., and at Dyneneton two (3d.) were given each year and one at Cowlyng. But hens abounded. One meets with them in about a dozen parishes. Christmas seems to have been a special time for paying in the rent of hens, e.g., at Preston, "gallinæ de consuetudine ecclesiæ ad natale Domini." At Hasketon 60 were given each Christmas, 84 at Otley, and 40 at Great Bealings. At Hoxne 61 were paid, 60 at Debenham, about 100 at Livermere Mag., and 120 at Framsdén, but in these four cases Christmas is not mentioned.

#### MONEY OFFERINGS.

In all the Parishes there were the Offerings on three or more usually four Great days. These were originally appointed in Anglo-Saxon times. Dr. Cutts (*Parish Priests*, p. 71) quotes from the "Canons of Edgar" (A.D. 959-975), made under the influence of Dunstan, that priests were to "teach the people to pay their dues to God, plough alms fifteen days after Easter, the tithe of young at Pentecost, fruits of the earth at All Saints, Peter's penny on St. Peter's Day, and Church scot at Martinmas." These were called the Festival Offerings or principal Oblations. With three of these was sometimes coupled the oblation (probably of wax) made at Candlemas. The four great offering days at Trimley St. Mary were, Christmas, Purf. B.V.M., Easter, and the Assumption B.V.M. (Aug. 15). I do not think any names of days are given elsewhere, except Purf. B.V.M. Perhaps these may have been generally observed in Suffolk, or the days may have varied in different parishes. At Newark in 1535 the great offering days were All SS. Day, Christmas Day, and the Sunday next after the feast of St. Mary Mag. (July 22), and *personal* tithes at Easter (cf. Cutts, *op. cit.*, p. 402).

These were the Festival oblations, spoken of at

Waldringfield and Britwell, as "oblaciones & apportum ad tres terminos principales," and at Clare as "oblaciones pro iij diebus solemnibus," Then there were the Ferial Offerings, called at Clare "oblaciones simplices," which may have been made on ordinary Sundays, or on week-days. At Exning we read of "Item cum oblationibus tam in festualibus quam in ferialibus in omnibus alijs decimis post servitium sacerdotis" (worth £16 4s. 5d.). Again offerings were made at the Churching of Women, in connection with the burial of the dead—"mortuaria," "anniversaria," "sepulturæ," "exsequiæ mortuorum." "Request" or "requestu" occurs pretty often, e.g., "oblaciones minutæ cum requestu & anniversariis & exequiis defunctorum." and I am not sure as to its meaning. Could it have been the retaining fee paid when a special mass was "bespoken," the *denarii memoriales* or *perquisiti*? (cf. Gasquet, *Med. Parish Life*, p. 86).\* Then we meet with "apportum," revenue, e.g.,

\*I cannot certainly tell what is the meaning of *requestus*, which occurs in the Suffolk returns nine times, and I have also noticed it twice in the Wilts' returns. It seems to have been a kind of surplice fee. Five times it is followed by the word "mortuar'," but we also find it disconnected from mortuar', e.g., at Rougham, "oblat' ferial' mortuar' pur' & request'," or at Alpheton, "ferl' obl' & requeste purf' & annivsar'." I referred the matter to three Roman Catholics who were likely to know. One of them writes "*Requests* may have been requests for masses, as you suggest from the context, but it may refer to works, etc., which had to be done at the request of the lord." Another, a Jesuit, writes, "as for *requestus*, I give it up. I can make no better suggestion than yours, which seems to me probable enough." A third, a well-known Jesuit antiquary, writes "I am sorry I can only say I don't know. The word in that connection is new to me. Could it possibly be a term used to denote 'the month's mind'?" But I do not know how that meaning should have become attached to it except that an attendance of clergy and others was generally 'invited' on such occasion, and they were each paid a small sum for being present and taking part." From the Record Office I get the suggestion, which they admit is "only a guess," that *requestus* "has no highly technical sense and can adequately be rendered in most of the passages, where it occurs, as 'services done at the request of a parishioner.'" Canon F. E. Warren kindly writes that in Du Cange *requestus* "seems to be a military money contribution due from certain manors, not from all, to the Lord of the Manor, . . . but that does not seem to be an appropriate meaning for the word in the sentences which you quote." Upon the whole, then, it seems that we shall have to be content with the explanation that *requestus* was a "surplice fee" of some sort, and that it may have been paid when a private mass was bespoken.

"apportum die Epiphanie cum oblationibus die Pentecost pro cor' (?) carucarum,' 'which, possibly means the "plough alms" mentioned above. † This item comes from the return from Shadenfield. A similar one is found at Weston in the same hundred worth 18/-. I have not noticed this elsewhere. Only once have I come across any reference to what might be a wedding fee, viz., at Coney Weston, "sponsal" (? sponsalibus), "Item de principalibus mortuorum xx<sup>s</sup>. Item de purificationibus sponsal' & aliis minutis oblationibus." (£4 p.a.). Cardinal Gasquet, (*op. cit.* p. 9) says that offerings were made "as an acknowledgment of special services, such as baptisms, marriages," etc. And Dr. Cutts (*op. cit.*, p. 403-3) 'gives from the *Valor* amongst the items of the income of the Vicar of Newark, "offerings at marriages," and so also at Lenton. That was in 1535. But Dr. A. J. Stephens, in his *Notes on the Book of Common Prayer* (1854, Vol. iij., p. 1610), quotes a canon of Archbp. Langton (Lyndwood, Prov. Const. Ang. 278), "We do firmly enjoin that no sacrament of the Church shall be denied to any one upon the account of any sum of money, nor shall matrimony be hindered therefore. . . ." Archbp. Langton died in A.D. 1228. Did the common custom of marriage fees come in later than 1341? At any rate I do not find any reference to that source of income in these Inquisitions, except, possibly, that one word "sponsal'," which really means "betrothal." I am told that "sponsalitiu[m] ecclesie" means an "endowment." But it seems scarcely likely that that is its meaning here, coming as it does next to "purificationibus," and followed by "& aliis minutis oblationibus."

† The Record Office suggest that the doubtful word *cor'* is *corveia*, which means "compulsory work." So it would be "compulsory ploughing of the demesne land." another suggestion is that the word is *coronatione*, "crowning." Was there any such local custom.?

A word which frequently occurs is "altaragium," which may be translated "altarage," i.e., money or goods given in return for special services at the Altar, e.g., at Debenham, "Item de altiragia ut in lactagio & vitulis vij marks"; so also at Framsdon, Pethagh, Wynston, Asschfeld, and Thorp, all in the same hundred. In the Hundred of Carleford in the case of each Parish, after giving the details of income including "Fees," this sentence occurs, "Et dicta ecclesia, taxatur ad (so much) unde terra dominica (land held in demesne) & altg' (or altr' or altar') valent (so much)." "Et sic est summa ix<sup>e</sup> garbarum, etc. (so much)." So there, clearly (at any rate sometimes), "altarage" means all the other income except that from the great tithes and glebe. At Chatesham the income consisted of 160 ac. of glebe worth 80/- p.a., and great tithes worth 26/8 p.a., and "alt'ag" nichil." The same phrase occurs in the next parish Felcherche, which makes one wonder what kind of parish work was going on in these parishes. At Wynston, the Rector had an annual pension belonging to his church of 7/6, and at Woolpit there was "quædam oblatio forinseca die Nativitatis B.V. Mariæ" (worth £6 13s. 4d.) That brings us to the end of our details. I venture to add three notes.

1. The value of the benefice given was its gross value,† and a good deal would probably have to come off it. For instance, at that very time the clergy had voted a Tenth of their income to the King. That would probably affect all incomes of over 5 marks or

† My expert friend, who has kindly looked over the proofs of this paper, writes, "I think you have made as much out of these *Nonæ* returns as can be done." But it is only fair to add that he also says, "The chief point on which I should disagree with you is as to the values being 'gross values.' I don't believe they were anything of the kind, but I have never seen any statement of the method by which the values were arrived at or what deductions were made." Yet I think we may be sure that then, as now, deductions would have to be made. There is nothing in the *Nonæ* to show that they had already been made from the income stated.

possibly over 10 (cf. Cutts, *op. cit.*, p. 387).\* There is no mention in the *Inquisitiones* of any drawbacks. But in various returns there is a mention of Wax or Candles and offering for Candlemas, and this is reckoned as a part of the rectorial income, though it, clearly, was earmarked for a special purpose. This lends colour to Cardinal Gasquet's statement (*op. cit.*, p. 84) that the "upkeep of choir books and other things necessary for the services" had to come out of the rector's pocket. Dr. Cutts (*op. cit.* p. 402) gives an extract from Henry VIII's *Valor* of the income of the Vicar of Newark, which came to £30 10s. p.a. But the drawbacks came to £21 5s. 1d., so that the net income was only £9 4s. 11d., and amongst the drawbacks were the following: Wax, 16s. 9d., Wine, 17s. 6d., Oil, 9s., Bread and frankincense, 2s. 8d., Bellstrings, 4d., etc. So it probably would be in Suffolk in 1341. The income would be still further reduced by the help given to the poor, and by hospitality shown to strangers, which seem to have been considered a regular part of the parish priest's duty (Gasquet, *op. cit.* p. 85 ff; and Cutts, *op. cit.*, p. 159).†

\*In the *Valor* two deductions are always mentioned, viz., "synodale episcopo Norwic' p.a.," so much, and "Procuratio archidiaconio Norff' p.a.," so much. No doubt these payments would have to be made in 1341 also. Then in some parishes chaplains would be required, and the rector would have to pay them. Thus at Trowbridge in Wilts in 1341 the "rector fuit oneratus ad inveniendum duos capellanos annuatim," and to pay them xj. marks. He refers to this again as an "onus."

The *Valor* (Vol. I., 68) deducts from the income of the Vicar of Mylton (Kent) "for a prest wags that he is bound to fynd by composition reall £6 13s. 4d., and for fynding of a lampe and ij. principal lights yerly 4/-."

At Ampton in 1535 the chantry priest had a clear annual endowment of £6, while the Rector had a gross income of a little over £5.

† The Rectors were evidently expected to keep their chancels and buildings in order. Archbp. Bouchier (A.D. 1455) complains that some of the clergy did "actually leave alone (the houses, etc.) notoriously suffering their notable and enormous decay as regards walls, roofs, etc., without repair" (Gee and Hardy, *Documents*, p. 142).

In the First Royal Injunctions of K. Henry 8th (1536) "all parsons . . . having churches . . . or mansions . . . shall bestow yearly hereafter upon the same mansions or chancels of their churches, being in decay, the 5th part of their benefices, till they be fully repaired, and the same, so repaired, shall always keep and maintain in good order." Gee and Hardy, *Op. Cit.*, p. 274.

2. What was the value of money in 1341 as compared with the present day? I asked the Record Office to tell me if they had any rule for computing. They referred me to Thorold Rogers and other authorities. Dr. Cutts worked at this subject, and he (*op. cit.*, p. 387) thought that "the purchasing power of money at the end of the Thirteenth Century was about 24 times as great as now, so that a pound was then equivalent to about £24 now." That was in 1898, since when money has greatly depreciated in value. But it so happens that in the late Mr. Prigg's *Icklingham Papers* is given the roll of the Accounts of the Bailiff of Icklingham Manor for the years when the Nonæ were paid. There were at that time 2 Rectors at Icklingham, at All Saints, and St. James. The income of the former was £13 6s. 8d., and of the latter £10 13s. 4d. The value of money is what it will buy. Let us see from the manor accounts what one of the Rectors of Icklingham could have got for his money in 1342. He probably had his glebe in hand. To three men with ploughs working for two days he would pay 1/-, or he might have a ploughman, or carter, or shepherd for the whole year for 10/-. If he wanted his curtilage pond cleared out, eight men would do it for him in one day, and be content with 3 halfpence each. A thatcher would cost him 2d. a day, or 2½d. perhaps, and a carpenter about 3d. He would get a good strong "boy" for about 2/6 or 3/- a year. And so on. Apparently these people would have to be supplied with some oaten pottage, but he would grow the oats, and the "boy" would make the pottage in the court, as well as do such work as laying a dung-bed, and helping in the garden. He would have to find gloves for his ploughman and pitcher, but he could buy them for 1½d. a pair. Candles cost a little over 2d. a lb. He could buy as many hens as he wanted for 1d. each, or for the same money he could hire a hen for a whole year, and eat her eggs. He could buy five ducks for 9d.,



a goose for 3d., and a sheep for 16d., or even 6d. If he wanted a new plough he would get it for £d. 3d. would buy a “woolly hide,” and 3½d. a “weak” fleece. Wheat was from 3/8 to 4/-, a quarter, barley 4/2, and oats 1/4. The prices in last week’s (Mar. 19) “Guardian” were wheat 72/6, barley 95/5, oats 57/11]. Clothing was probably dear, for the bailiff’s boots cost 6/8 p.a., and his “robe” 8/-. But a later rector of St. James’s could afford to wear a couple of furred coats, for at his death he left to one sister his “blewe gown furred wt ottys,” and to another his “side Russet gown furryd wt white lambe.”

3. It is obvious that to complete the subject of clerical incomes in 1341 it would be necessary to follow it much further, but there our book does not help us. The *Valor* does not carry us much further.\* I can only say that reading the details of the *Nonarum Inquisitiones* makes it clear that the financial welfare of the Parish Priest then was bound up with that of his people much more closely than at present. All, not merely the Squire, helped to maintain him, yet he was not entirely dependent upon their goodwill, for he had his own “land in demesne,” and the power of the Church was great. But how did he fare when times were bad? † How did his people in their heart of hearts regard him? What did the Cockfield ploughman on 10/- a year and oaten pottage really think of his Rector, whose dovecote and garden were valued at 10/- p.a., but towards whose stipend of £33 6s. 8d.

\*It mentions one source of income which I have not noticed in the *Non. Inquis.* viz., a personal donation, e.g., at Sellyng (Kent). “Item an augmentation of my lord of Saynt Austen’s yerly in money £1. Item of my said lord ij. Qrs. of whete, ij. Qrs. of barley, one Qr. of pese, viij. lods of Wood, 32/-.” (*Valor Eccl.* Vol. i., 68).

† As for instance in 20 Yorkshire parishes, where similar returns to the following occur; the rector used to receive in ordinary years tithes of wool worth £30, and of lambs worth £5, but in that year he did not receive more than wool tithes worth £5, since nearly all the sheep had died.

he had to contribute four times a year at least? Again, how were the difficulties which, obviously, must often have arisen, surmounted? What is the real point of the bequests so often met with of so much for "my tythes forgotten and negligently paid"? We have our difficulties, not inconsiderable ones, in these days. Who would wish to go back to the Fourteenth Century methods? And yet have we nothing to learn from them? I can only suggest these considerations, and close, with an apology for not having closed earlier.

W. A. WICKHAM.

POSTSCRIPT (4th Jan., 1921).

On p. 107 I have mentioned the Dovecote as an appendage of the Parsonage House. I think it must have been a frequent appendage. I have said in the text that the House is often not mentioned in *Non. Inquis.* In the Hundred of Thingoe what may be a Parsonage House (*tenement*), or may not, is mentioned in every parish, but there is no mention of any dovecotes. In the Hundred of Babergh there were thirty-two Benefices. In the case of twenty we read of neither House nor Dovecote; eight are credited with both; three speak of a house, but not of a Dovecote; and one of a Dovecote and Garden, but not of a House. (I noticed a similar case in the Hundred of Corff). Thus out of these thirty-two Parishes we are sure that there were Dovecotes in nine. Of course they may have existed in others, and probably did.

Mr. A. O. Cooke in his recently-published *A Book of Dovecotes*, said to be the only one on the subject, points out that for many centuries the right to erect and maintain a Dovecote was strictly limited to the Lord of a Manor, a class which frequently included the parson of a parish, whose pigeons fattened daily on the scanty crops of the peasant agriculturists. The pigeons would "yield a never-failing stock of appetising food," being "exceedingly prolific; and, moreover, capable of procuring its food over a wide range of country and at little cost." Mr. Cooke gives some interesting information about various clerical dovecotes.

W. A. WICKHAM.