

FEUDALISM IN GUERNSEY.*

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL T. W. M. DE GUÉRIN.

THE history of feudalism in Guernsey begins early in the 11th century, at which date we find the island divided into two great fiefs; one held by Nigel, Vicomte du Cotentin, comprising the parishes of St. Peter-Port, St. Sampson's, St. Martin's, the Forest, St. Andrew's and Torteval; and the other consisting of the parishes of the Vale, the Castel, St. Saviour's and St. Peter-in-the-Wood, held by Anchetil, Vicomte du Bessin.

For some cause unknown to us Duke Robert of Normandy deprived the Vicomte du Bessin of his lands in Guernsey, and gave them, along with certain dues called "melagia," on the other portion of the island, held by Nigel, Vicomte du Cotentin, to the famous Abbey of Mont Saint Michel by charter sometime between the years 1028 and 1034.† These lands did not long remain in the possession of the Abbey at this period, for William the Conqueror by a charter of about the year 1042‡ restored them to Ranulph, Vicomte du Bessin, son of Anchetil, and gave the Abbey the islands of Alderney and Serk in exchange. Sometime later Mont Saint Michel again became possessed of one-half of the Guernsey fief of the Vicomtes du Bessin, but no record exists to show how this came about.

Nigel II., Vicomte du Cotentin, son of the above mentioned Nigel, was one of the chiefs of the conspiracy against William the Conqueror, which was crushed at the famous battle of Val es Dunes. He escaped from the battle field, and took refuge in Brittany, and his fief in Guernsey was forfeited, and the advowsons of his six parishes, and two carucates of land, were given by the Conqueror to the great Abbey of Marmoutier, near Tours. Nigel received pardon some years later, and by several charters he and his children confirmed to the Abbey the gifts made by Duke William.

* Lecture delivered in the Ladies' College, February 25th, 1909.

† Calendar of Documents in France. H. Round, p. 251.

‡ Calendar of Documents in France. H. Round, p. 281.

Some writers have supposed that Nigel never recovered possession of his lands in Guernsey, but this is not correct, as we find another Nigel, his son or grandson, confirming, about 1090, certain gifts made by his tenants in Guernsey to the Abbey of St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte, Normandy, which had been founded by the Vicomtes du Cotentin under the shadow of their great castle. It is therefore probable that the Vicomtes du Cotentin continued in peaceful possession of their Guernsey manors until the commencement of the reign of Stephen.

The Vicomtes du Bessin also remained in possession of their portion of the island down to the same period, for a Bull of Pope Alexander, dated 1178, mentions the churches, lands, etc., belonging to the Abbey of Mont St. Michel, in Guernsey, including certain dues (called melagia) on the lands of *Earl Ranulph* ("terra comitis Ranulphi") showing that Ranulph II., Vicomte du Bessin, was still possessed of them after he had been created Earl of Chester by Henry I. in 1120, and though in 1178 he had long been dead, and his Guernsey lands had been in other hands for two generations, yet the name "terra comitis Ranulphi" still clung to his fief, and still clings to that portion of it known to us as "le fief du Comte."

Up to the end of the reign of Henry I. we find only two great lay fiefs existing in Guernsey, out of which two ecclesiastical fiefs had been dismembered by William the Conqueror, those of the Abbeys of Mont St. Michel, and Marmoutier.

We may here glance at the condition of the island at this period. The population must have been small and chiefly engaged in fishing, the chief industry and wealth of the people during the next two centuries. The town, if it yet existed, can only have consisted of a few houses straggling along the sea shore. Our parishes known by their present names already existed early in the century. The Duke of Normandy owned no lands in the island, which was divided, as we have seen, into two great fiefs, but these were already subdivided into arrear fiefs held by persons of sufficient wealth to make considerable gifts to religious establishments in Normandy. Some of these seigneurs may have been resident in the island, but the bulk of them were owners of property, and lived in Normandy.

Our two viscounts were the representatives of a class of hereditary officials possessed of great powers. When the Normans overran Neustria in the tenth century, they conformed to the Frankish administration they found already in existence, and mapped out their new domain into counties

and viscounties, the latter granted to prominent chiefs of the Norman host. These viscounts, if not from the first hereditary, soon became so, and by the eleventh century were the representatives of the duke in the provinces committed to their charge. To them the abbots and bishops looked for help from the oppressions of the barons. We have no reason to suppose that the administrative and judicial powers of our two viscounts over the tenants of their fiefs in Guernsey were not as full and complete as those they possessed on the main land. Their courts, composed as were similar feudal courts in Normandy, of a seneschal or bailli, sitting as president, with their suitors or chief tenants, as judges, would have judged all causes of their tenants, have held pleas of the sword as well as pleas of land and chattels.* The few cases reserved for the duke's judgment would not have been sufficient to warrant the assumption that anything approaching a permanent local ducal court was in existence in the island at this period. Assault in the duke's court, or on the way to or from it, offences committed in the host, or within a week or its setting forth or its return, offences against pilgrims, and violations of coinage, being the only causes reserved for the duke's judgment by the "Consuetudines et Justii" of William the Conqueror 1091.†

The reign of Stephen probably ushered in a new era of our history. Stephen was the chosen king of both the English and Norman barons who hated the Angevin Geoffrey. The latter's first attempt to conquer Normandy, to establish his wife Matilda's claims, failed conspicuously, and it required two years of Stephen's mis-rule to pave the way for his second and successful attempt in 1138. Both our overlords were partisans of Stephen. Ranulph, Earl of Chester, was a strong supporter of his up to 1140, though he afterwards changed sides frequently during the civil wars, as occasions offered for his own advantage. Roger, Vicomte du Cotentin, was one of Stephen's justiciars, and chief supporters in Normandy, and was killed in an ambushade by the partisans of Geoffrey of Anjou, in 1138. The result when Geoffrey became master of our island must have been the forfeiture of their fiefs, which probably may account for the altered condition of the island when we next hear of it under Henry II.

* Pollock & Maitland's *History of English Law*, Vol. I., p. 72, and F. M. Powicke's *Angevin Administration of Normandy*.—*English Historical Review*, October, 1906, pp. 635-645-647.

† *English Historical Review*, July 1908, p. 503.
The Norman *Consuetudines et Justii* of William the Conqueror, Professor C. H. Haskins.

We have no documentary evidence of these forfeitures, but about the year 1168 we find that the Fief du Comte had passed from the Earls of Chester and had already been for two generations in the hands of the Wakes, for at that date Hugh Wake gives to the Abbey of Longues, which he had recently founded in Normandy, certain lands, on his fief in Guernsey, still called "Le Fief de Longues," at St. Saviour's, formerly belonging to his father, Geoffrey Wake, a contemporary of Stephen. Roger, Vicomte du Cotentin, left no descendants, and his vast possessions in Normandy went to his niece Letitia, wife of Ralph Tesson. The viscountship of the Cotentin, however, remained escheated to the Crown. Letitia seems to have possessed some lands in Guernsey, probably those of the demesne lands of the viscounts, but she is only mentioned in connection with the island in one charter whereby she confirms, as overlord, the gift made by Robert Le Boutillier to the Abbey of Marmoutier of certain lands that he held on her fief.

From the charters of the Norman abbeys of the twelfth century, and the Extente of 1274, which mentions many of the lands forfeited in the reign of King John, we get an idea of the feudal holdings in Guernsey previous to the separation of Normandy. We find the island was divided at the end of the 12th century into a number of fiefs mostly held by the great Norman families of the Cotentin. The fief of the Vicomtes du Bessin was divided between the Wakes, Seigneurs of Fief du Comte, and the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel. These held the two largest manors in the island, and of them, Roger Suhart, member of an important family of the Bessin, held the Fief Suhart in the Castel and St. Peter's-in-the-Wood, and Robert Legat, another large fief at the Vale. The remainder of the island, representing the old fief of the Vicomtes du Cotentin, was also divided into a number of small manors. Of these, the Sires du Rosel held the Fief Rosel at St. Peter-Port; the Seigneurs of Anneville en Saire held the Fiefs of Anneville and Foville at St. Sampson's, which had probably been in their possession for three generations, as they were forfeited, in the reign of King John, by two cousins, John and Sampson d'Anneville; the Le Boutilliers held manors at St. Martin's and St. Andrew's; the de Barnevelles, descendants of the Sires de Rosel, seem to have held the Fief of Jerbourg, now known as Sausmarez Manor, and another member of the same family, Robert Mauvoisin de Rosel, held the Fief of Mauvoisin, at St. Saviour's, which he gave to the Abbey of Blanchelande;

Richard de Martinvast held the Fief of Beggeville at Torteval, and the Le Canellys were probably already possessed of the Fief au Canelly, which straggles over part of Torteval, St. Peter's-in-the-Wood and St. Saviour's. Serk belonged to the de Vernons, and was given about the middle of the twelfth century by William de Vernon, Baron of Nehou, to the Abbey of Montebourg, whilst Alderney belonged to the l'Enginours, one of whom, William l'Enginour, Lord of Alderney, gave part of the island to the Abbey of Notre Dame du Vœu, Cherbourg, in 1184. The bulk of these Seigneurs were great landowners in Normandy, therefore we must suppose it was the importance of our fisheries that caused our lands to be so much sought after, as the possession of a fishery was a valuable asset in those days.

The manors in the possession of the Church had also greatly increased in numbers.

The Abbey of Marmoutier les Tours held a large fief stretching over part of St. Peter-Port and St. Martin's, now merged in the "Fief le Roi," but for lack of documents it is at present impossible to locate its position.

The Abbey of Mont Saint Michel held nearly one-fourth of this island, consisting of the fiefs of Saint Michel, Lihou, etc., straggling over part of the Vale, the Castel, St. Saviour's and St. Peter's-in-the-Wood.

The Abbey of La Trinité, Caen, held the Fief of l'Abesse de Caen at St. Andrew's.

The Abbey of Cormery, near Tours, held the Fief of Sainte Helène, and probably also that of La Haule at St. Andrew's.*

The Abbey of La Croix St. Leufroy, near Evreux, held the Fief of La Refrerie, at St. Andrew's, now corruptly called "La Rue Frairie."

The Abbey of St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte also held a fief at St. Andrew's, of which the Franc-fief de St. Sauveur is a portion.

The Abbey of Longues held the Fief de Longues at St. Saviour's.

The Abbey of Blanchelande held the Fief of Martinvast at St. Martin's, now known as Blanchelande, which had originally belonged to the canons of Cherbourg, who were dispossessed of it by King John, who gave it to Blanchelande.

* Cal. Pat. Rolls, 20 Edw. I., p. 486, April 24, 1292. Ratification by Edward I. of the sale by the Abbot and Convent of Cormery to Master William de Sancto Remigio of their lands and rents in Guernsey belonging to the priory of St. Elena in Hagna.

Lastly, the Bishop of Coutances held a fief at St. Andrew's, still called the Fief l'Eveque.

At the end of the 12th century we also find the first record of the existence of a local Ducal Court in Guernsey. When such a court was first established in the island it is impossible to say. It may date from as early as the reign of Henry I. for it is now being recognised that the bulk of the administrative and judicial reforms which were formerly attributed to Henry II., had not only their origin but were fully developed under Henry I.* To his reign is now attributed the creation of the Norman Exchequer, with its permanent judicial officers, who not only sat as the judges of the supreme Ducal Court, but were also employed as justices to hold pleas throughout the duchy. Besides these permanent local courts, with restricted jurisdiction, under ducal justices, were already established throughout the duchy to keep in check the oppressions of the barons and viscomtes.†

It is in the great Roll of the Norman Exchequer of 1180 that we get the first glimpse of the existence of such a local court in Guernsey, a court under the presidency of a royal officer, who would have executed justice by judgment of the chief tenants, the suitors of the duke's court, whom we still summon three times a year at our Court of Chief Pleas. For at this period in the local courts of the viscounts and baillis in Normandy, and in those of the sheriffs in England, judgment was given by the knights who held lands by suit of court in the district, in other words who owed the service of executing the king's justice.

The jurisdiction of our court must undoubtedly have been much more restricted at this period than we find it after the alterations made in our constitution by King John. Already the system of assizes, which Henry II. had re-instituted early in his reign in Normandy, had been extended to our islands, for in the Great Roll of 1180 we find Ralph de Havilland, the deputy of Gislebert de la Hougue, the fermor of Guernsey, accounting for £37 19s. 6d., the fines imposed at the last pleas or assizes. Further, he had been president of the local Ducal Court and, as such, had been fined by the justices £40 for being present and assisting in compounding a felony of maiming. In other words for allowing the court to exceed its jurisdiction, as maiming was one of the cases reserved for the duke's judgment at this period. This last entry proving the existence of a local court in the island.

* See Administration of Normandy under Henry I., by Professor C. H. Haskin, p. 209-232. *English Historical Review*, 1909.

† Do., do., pp. 220-221.

The assizes at this period were the supreme court of the king, travelling throughout the land executing justice in the king's name to all and sundry. They were held by royally appointed officers, either members of the Exchequer or great barons of the king's council, and when they sat all local courts in the neighbourhood were closed, whether those of the vicomtes and baillis, or of the feudal seigneurs, and all had to come to the king's court for justice. But the justices' commission did not end with the administration of justice, they had also to enquire into the whole administration of the district since the preceding assizes, who of the tenants in chief had died during the interval, who had been enfeoffed with new lands, so that the king might claim his dues, what crimes had been committed and by whom, what had become of the chattels of the felon, and what punishment if any had been inflicted. These enquiries had to be answered by the juries, twelve men, chosen from each of the divisions of the district. The whole of the fines inflicted by the justices had to be accounted for to the Exchequer by the fermor or bailli, over and above the sum that he owed for the ferm of his bailiwick, and he or his deputy was subject to a heavy fine if he had not administered justice rightly in the court under his charge.

We thus see at the end of the twelfth century what we may call political feudalism in the island being gradually restricted. The seignorial courts being supervised by the local ducal court and the latter by the justices of the assizes. Still the government of the Isles was feudal, the knights executed judgment under the duke's officers, not because they were chosen as the best fitted to do so, but because they held their lands as suiters of his court, bound by the service of performing his justice.*

It is rather difficult to say what were the powers of the fermors of the Isles, whose names figure on the Great Rolls of the Norman Exchequer, whether their functions only consisted of receiving the revenue, of which the balance, if any, went into their own pockets, after paying into the Exchequer the sum due for their ferm; or whether they also acted as baillis responsible for the administration of justice and for the order and safety of the portion of the duchy committed to their charge; as did the fermors of the bailiwicks and viscounties on the mainland. Anyway they were usually important barons or knights. The first we know of was no less a personage than William de Courcy, "dapifer"

* See Pollock & Maitland's *History of English Law*, pp. 538-550.

of the King of England, a favourite minister of Henry II., who died in 1177. Then followed Gislebert de la Hougue in 1180 and lastly Robert de Saint Mère Eglise, in 1198, member of an important family of the Contentin and near relative of William de Saint Mère Eglise, Bishop of London.

On the loss of Normandy by King John many of the owners of our manors adhered to Philip Augustus, and in consequence lost their lands in the island. The principal fiefs forfeited at this period were—Rosel, St. Peter-Port; Anneville, St. Sampson's; Suhart, Castel and St. Peter's-in-the-Wood; Lemminge, Fortescue, Vielesse, Buard, and Gorges, St. Martin's; Beggeville, Torteval; Legat, Vale, and several small manors at St. Andrew's. The lands of all the Norman abbays were also forfeited for a time, and were only restored about 1238, by Henry III.

If we glance at the list of the Ecclesiastical and Lay Seigneurs owing suit of court at the Chief Pleas of the Royal Court at a later period, who, as we have seen were the judges of our early local court, we get an idea of the effect of these forfeitures on its composition.

SEIGNEURS OWING SUIT OF COURT.

Bishop of Coutances.	} Lands forfeited on account of war.
Abbot of Mont St. Michel.	
" of Marmoutier-lez-Tours.	
" of Blanchelande.	
" of La Rue Frairie (de Longues).	
" of La Croix St. Leufroy.	}
Abbess of La Trinité Caen.	
Seigneur d'Anneville (lands forfeited).	
" de Sausmarez, St. Martin's.	
" des Bruniaux, St. Martin's.	
" des Mauxmarquis (lands forfeited).	
" des Bruniaux de Nermont (not yet in existence).	
" de Vaugrat.	
" des Philippes.	
" au Canelly.	
" de Fantome.	
" des Rohais.	

Of these seigneurs, no less than nine for certain were deprived of their lands by King John. The judges of the king's court were thus reduced by more than half their number to seven or eight at most, that is supposing that all the smaller fiefs now owing suit of court were then in existence, of which we have no proof. This number would

have been too small to carry on the business of the court, and probably was one of the reasons leading to King John's alterations in our constitution by the institution of a bench of twelve jurats, elected by the magnates of the island, under the presidency of the Governor of the Isles, or his lieutenant, to replace the feudal judges holding their lands by service of suit of court. Another factor leading to this change was undoubtedly the danger of leaving the administration of justice entirely in the hands of the remaining chief feudal tenants, many of whom had probably lost their lands in Normandy, and who were connected by family ties with that province.

Guernsey had also become of increased political value on the loss of Normandy, from the importance of our roadstead as a place of safety for vessels trading between England and Gascony, for we must remember that the ships of those days were very small, without compasses, steered by the sun by day or the stars by night; they rarely sailed far out to sea, but coasted along from one port to another, making for the nearest harbour of shelter on the approach of bad weather. After the loss of Normandy had closed its ports to English shipping, we became the first harbour of refuge after leaving England on the trade route to Gascony.

It has been suggested by some writers that we were in possession of special privileges before the reign of King John, and in proof they have been pointed to the existence of similar customs to ours, such as the privilege of electing their magistrates, possessed by several towns of Normandy in the time of Henry II., and perhaps earlier. But they forget an all-important difference. The towns possessing communes in the twelfth century were the principal centres of trade in the duchy, towns which may have had particular privileges of jurisdiction, even from Frankish days, which only obtained formal recognition at a later period; while we were only a small rural district of no importance, until the loss of Normandy brought into prominence the value of our roadstead as a place of shelter on the trade route to Gascony. In granting us the privilege of electing our judges, King John was following a policy already initiated by Henry II. in Normandy and Gascony, which he and his successors developed most largely in the latter province. The granting of communal privileges to localities situated, as we were, near hostile frontiers, had for its object the creation of centres bound to the king by these privileges of self-government, centres whose interests formed a counterpoise to the power of

the feudal seigneurs of the districts, who more often than not studied their own particular interests rather than those of the State. Many of our privileges, which differ from the customs of Normandy, bear such a marked resemblance to those of many towns in Gascony, which owe their communes to the early Plantaganet kings, that it is evident that they have a common origin in the general policy of the English kings for the government of their continental dominions after the loss of Normandy.

With King John's establishment of what, for want of a better expression, we may call our "commune," political feudalism came to an end in Guernsey. True, the chief tenants of the Crown still retained some share in the administration of the island even at the time of the assizes in the early part of the fourteenth century, but this share was consultative only, and gradually even this was lost. It is an instance of the continuity of our customs that to this day the Abbots of ruined Norman Abbeys and the Seigneurs of the principal manors in the island should still be summoned to appear three times a year at our Court of Chief Pleas.

We must now turn from what may be called the political side of feudalism in Guernsey to glance at the tenures of our manors and then at the economical side of feudalism in the island, the relations existing between the lord of the manor, the owner of the soil, and his tenants. What first strikes one is the marvellous vitality of the manorial system. Once a manor always a manor. It matters not whether, as in the case of many of our Guernsey fiefs, that a manor was escheated to the Crown in the days of King John, or at a much later period, it never loses its identity, is never merged into one general royal fief, but preserves through all these centuries its own individuality. It had its own court and administration, and even to this day it is its "douzaine," twelve sworn men, tenants of the manor, who draw up the "extente," or survey, of the holdings of the tenants.

There were two classes of manors in Guernsey, (1) those held by military service, grand serjeantry or little serjeantry, what are styled in France "fiefs hauberts," and "fiefs nobles," and (2) those held by yearly rent or its equivalent, such as a pair of spurs, &c., which may be compared with vavassories.

Fief du Comte, the largest in the island, was held in 1240, by Baldwin de Vere, of Hugh Wake, as half a knight's fee, and an annual rent of £6 sterling. Its Seigneur, Nicholas de Chesney, claimed in 1309 the right of court of his tenants; one fourth of the wreck of the sea of the whole island,

except from the Abbot of Mont St. Michel's manors of the Clos du Vale, and Lihou, and from Matthew de Sausmarez's fief of Jerbourg; also the right of chase throughout the whole island.

Sausmarez Manor, St. Martin's, originally the Fief of Jerbourg, was held by grand serjeantry of acting as the third butler to the king whenever he should visit the island. Undoubtedly this tenure places it in the first rank of Guernsey manors, but why the seigneur was to act as third butler is puzzling, for it is the only manor mentioned in the Extente of 1331 as held by serjeantry of butlership. The seigneur owed suit at the three Chief Pleas, and held the Castle of Jerbourg, built on his lands, about 1327, by the people of the island. This castle was granted to Matthew de Sausmarez by Edward III., in 1330, on condition "that the men of the commonalty of the said island shall be received there with their goods and chattels in time of war."*

He had also right of court for his tenants, held by his vavassors under his prévôt, "who would execute his justice for him, and owed him certain spurs valued twelve sols tournois," † as well as "wreck of the sea on his fief, free warren, right of chase, and his windmill, to which his men ought to bring timber and millstones at their own cost."

The Fief of Anneville was held by petty serjeantry of keeping the king's prisoners convicted of minor offences. The seigneur owed suit of court at the Chief Pleas, and had right of free warren by grant of Prince Edward (afterwards Edward I.), 9 June, 1261.

The manors of Rohais and of La Refrerie at St. Andrew's, were also held by petty serjeantry of keeping the king's prisoners. The other military fiefs of Bruniaux, St. Martin's; Mauxmarquis, St. Andrew's; Bruniaux de Nermont, Vale; Vaugrat, des Philippes, Canelly and Fantome, were held in common with the above by homage, relief and suit of court, with right of court for their tenants and of chase.

It is probable that most if not all of the military fiefs had also the right of colombier, or the cherished privilege of possessing a dovecot standing as an isolated tower. The remains of two such buildings exist, one at Le Colombier, Torteval, originally the dovecot of the Fief au Canelly, and

* In 1811, the Governor, Sir John Doyle, issued an order to Mr. Matthew de Sausmarez, Seigneur of Sausmarez, saying that as he had been shown documents proving that he was warden of the Castle of Jerbourg from the earliest times, he should take command of the peninsula of Jerbourg in case of invasion.

† *Special Publication Société Jersiaise*, 1902, pp. 91-94.

the other at Lihou, to the north of the ruins of the priory. The sites of others are, however, indicated by such names as Le Colombier, near Ronceval, St. Sampson's, &c. Probably also La Colombelle, near Les Ruettes Brayes, may owe its name from being the site of one of the smaller dovecots which the lesser seigneurs were permitted to have attached to their farm buildings.

The administration of a feudal manor has been regarded from two points; (1) the old view, which represented everything feudal as a grinding tyranny, whether from the king as supreme in the State, down to the lord of the manor; (2) the modern view, which sees the power both of king or baron great, but not absolute. The king, the chief of the State, but regarded by his barons rather as chief among equals than as a superior. As the barons of Aragon said to their king—"We, each of whom is as good as you, all together better than you."*

So the feudal baron ruled his estate as chief among his principal tenants, who formed his court and administered justice under his representative, the seneschal. This system is clearly shown in the records of manor courts in England, and by the old "franchises" of our Guernsey Fief du Comte, the earliest copy of which dates from 1406. Here we find the seneschal, or president of the Manor Court, and the greffier, or clerk, appointed by the Lord of the Manor. The eight vavassors, or judges of the court, were the seigneurs of the eight principal frank-fiefs of the manor, who held their land by suit of court. By the sixteenth century only three of these frank-fiefs retained hereditary seigneurs, namely those of Du Groignet, Du Pignon, and De Carteret, the two first held by the Le Marchants, and the latter by a Blondel. These seigneurs served as vavassors either in person or by deputy chosen by themselves, subject to the approval of the Seigneur du Comte. The vavassors of the other five franc-fiefs, De Longues, Des Reveaux, Du Videclin, Des Grantes, and De La Court, were chosen by the lord of the manor, and presented by him to take oath before the Manor Court. They bore the title of seigneurs of the franc-fief they represented whilst acting as vavassors.

The next important officer, the prévôt or grangier of the manor, whose duties in some measure corresponded with those of the prévôt or sheriff of the Royal Court, was curiously chosen by the tenants of the thirty-two vellein bouvées of the manor. Two of these bouvées in turn choosing

* Lord Acton's *Circle*, p. 231.

the prévôt for the year. That this rather important officer, who also acted as receiver of the revenue of the manor, should have been elected yearly by the vellein tenants is a very interesting fact, one certainly quite contrary to the generally conceived notions on feudalism. The same custom prevailed in most of our Guernsey manors, with the exception of that of La Rosiere, belonging to the Seigneur d'Anneville, of which the "prévôté" was hereditary in the family of Prey, who were considerable landowners near "Les Grandes Capelles."

There were also seven bordiers of Fief du Comte who held their lands called "bordages" by service of acting as police officers to the court. They had to attend its sittings, execute its orders, help the prevot in arresting tenants of the manor, and taking them to prison; also in early times they had to assist him in receiving from the hands of the king's officers, felons, tenants of the manor condemned to execution by the Royal Court, and hang them on the manorial gallows, otherwise the king and not the lord of the manor, got their escheats.

The court of Fief du Comte judged all minor cases of disputes of the tenants of the manor concerning lands and chattels. But there was appeal from its judgments to the Royal Court. Some of the arrear fiefs of the manor, such as de Longues and Groignet, had also their own manorial courts. Of that of Fief de Longues we have most information, and even in the seventeenth century we find records of appeals from its judgments to the court of Fief le Comte. We may picture to ourselves the weary length of a lawsuit in those days, beginning in a lower manor court, then wending its way through the chief court of the manor on to the Royal Court for final decision.

The plea rolls of the court of Fief du Comte begin in 1479, and are perfect, with the exception of some few years in the sixteenth century down to the suppression of the judicial functions of the court in 1775. Unfortunately they do not contain matters of such varied interest, throwing light on the social condition of the people, as do similar records in England. The court had little correctional power over the tenants. Only very few cases of the exercise of this power appear, chiefly referring to contempt of court, or misconduct of officials. The ancient seal of the court still exists. It represents a knight on foot in full plate armour in the act of drawing his sword; the nimbus round his head and the letters S.G. above his shoulders show that the figure

is intended to represent St. George. According to Sir Edgar MacCulloch it "dates from about the middle of the fifteenth century." It was used to seal documents concerning sale of land or records of judgments of the Court.*

The court of the Priory of St. Michel du Vale was the largest feudal court in the island, and consisted of a Seneschal, eleven Vavasseurs, a Greffier, six Bordiers and a Wand-bearer. It was also the only other court in the island possessing an official seal, which represents the Archangel Michael trampling Satan under foot.†

Every other important fief in the island had also its court, though with more restricted jurisdiction than the two just mentioned. Most of them still hold their Courts of Chief Pleas three times a year, but their functions are now confined to calling over the roll of the tenants and receiving the chief rents due to the seigneur. Their places of meeting early in the nineteenth century are recorded by the late Mr. F. C. Lukis, and are worth mentioning, as it is probable that these were the traditional sites.

The Court of Fief du Comte was formerly held in the Chapel of St. George. That of Anneville in the great barn of the Manor House.

Sausmarez, St. Martin's, in the quaint old lodge, or Court House, bordering the high road, near the gateway leading to the back of Manor House.

The Court of St. Michel was held sometimes in the Vale Church, at others at "*L'Abbaye*"—the old priory to the south of the church—and sometimes in the cemetery of the Castel Church, on a spot marked by some flat stones, under the trees bordering the path to the north of the church.

The Court of Fief du Groignet was held in a large room in the old Manor House, near the King's Mills.

The Court of Fief de Longues at Le Haut, St. Saviour's, near the house of that name.

The Court of Fief Gaillard in the steep lane running to the south of the cemetery of St. Saviour's Church. The stone seats for the seneschal and vavassors are still to be seen at the foot of the flight of steps leading up to the cemetery.

The Court of Fief des Gohiers, in "le champ de l'Église," near St. Saviour's parish schools. The stone seats for the seneschal and vavassors are still to be seen along the hedge bordering the lane.

The Court of Fief de Beval in the courtyard of Mr. Simon,

* Miss E. F. Carey's *Channel Islands*, p. 83.

† Miss E. F. Carey's *Channel Islands*, p. 86.

des Sages, St. Peter's-in-the-Wood. The stone seats for the officials of this Court are also still in existence.

The Court of Fief de la Corvée in the court yard at the farm of Le Pont, St. Pierre-du-Bois.

The Court of Fief de Suart in the lands of Le Long Frie, St. Pierre-du-Bois.

The Court of Fief de Lihou in the court yard of Mr. de Garis, Des Adams, St. Pierre-du-Bois.

The Court of Fief des Reveaux, in the high road near Les Islets, St. Pierre-du-Bois.

The Court du Fief des Coltons in the court yard of the farm at Le Grais.

The Court of Fief de St. Martin, alias de Calais, alias de Fermain, was formerly held near the Town Church, on a spot marked by a large stone, near le Pont Orson, the bridge which used to span the mill stream.

It will be noticed that nearly all these courts were held out of doors, as was very frequently the custom in the middle ages. The Abbot of St. Alban's, for instance, held his court under the great ash tree at St. Alban's in 1257.

Early in the sixteenth century the Royal Court was already attempting to restrict the powers of the Manor Courts by various *ordonnances*. In spite of these they still continued to flourish up to the middle of the seventeenth century, after which date they declined rapidly. The court of Fief du Comte retained its jurisdiction up to 1775, when it was suppressed by Bailiff William Le Marchant. That of Fief St. Michel was only abolished in 1861. These courts still exist in name, their duties, and those of the other Manor Courts in the island, now consisting merely of the appointment of officers for the collection of the revenue due the seigneur, or on some fiefs for the supervision of the streams, to see that the water has free course.

Manors were usually divided into the demesne lands, and the tenures. The demesne, the lands surrounding the Manor House, kept by the seigneur for his own use. The tenures, the lands held by the tenants. The latter, in Guernsey, were usually divided into frank-fiefs, if the manor was a large one, free tenements and villein "bouvéés." At the present day many of our manors are entirely held in tenures, the seigneur owning no land, only receiving his seignorial dues from his tenants.

The seigneurs of the frank-fiefs and the free tenants held their lands by homage, relief, or one year's revenue on succession to them, and by suit at the Manorial Court at the

three Chief Pleas. They also paid dues called chef-rente or "rente censière," but were free from all villein servitudes. This suit of court is still demanded by the seigneurs of our manors from their tenants, and if the latter fail to appear they are subject to a fine, and if defaulters for more than three years their lands may be seized by the seigneur. There is nothing of the nature of homage in this attendance of the tenants at the Manor Court. Homage was only done on succession of a new seigneur to the fief or of a new tenant to his lands and never more than once in either case. Suit to a Manorial Court was exactly the same as suit to the King's Court. The principal suitors, the chief tenants of the seigneur, were in early times the judges of the court, which could not be held except the requisite number were present. They were also required to attend for the equally important purpose of giving the seneschal and court information of all that had happened in the manor since the preceding Chief Pleas.

The villein tenants did not formerly owe suit of court. Besides chef rente they had to pay their seigneur tithes of their crops, champart, the twelfth sheaf of their corn, or the twelfth bundle of flax, "revart de champart," on lands uncultivated, "pouillage," a couple of chickens for each house, "pesnage," for the right of running their pigs loose on the manorial common, "mouillage," a tithe on their wheat ground in the manorial mill, &c. They also owed a number of personal services to their seigneur, which varied on different manors. We hear little of these services on Fief du Comte, only of the duties of the villeins in carrying their corn rents to the manor corn stack, and covering and watching it day and night until it was threshed and garnered into the manor barn. On Fief Sausmarez, St. Martin's, we find numberless personal services demanded by the lord of the manor from his tenants. The documents which refer to these services are of 1330, Inquisition Post Mortem, and two "Lettres" under the seal of the island, of 1390, and 1487. These give the fullest and most valuable details we have of services due by villeins in the island. From the deed of 1390 it would seem that most if not all the holdings on this fief were villein. The tenants had to carry their lord's corn to Normandy, whenever required, between Vauville and Mont St. Michel at their own cost, to cart his wine and ale to the Manor House, give him one white and one black loaf from every baking of bread, the half of each fat beast or the quarter of each sheep they killed, and

a gallon of ale from each brewing. Also to provide him with firewood and furze for the use of the Manor House, carry their lord or his family to Jersey three times a year, receiving for this the same payment "as given by our lord the king to his tenants," as well as to pay tithes of their fish, cart the lord's corn wherever ordered in the island, besides paying other dues such as chef rente, chickens, loaves of bread, and money rents. In return, the lord of the manor provided the seneschal and vavassors for the Manor Court.

These services give us an idea of the different working of two important Guernsey manors in feudal times. On Fief du Comte, a large manor straggling over four parishes, from St. Peter's-in-the-Wood to the Vale, with no Manor House attached to it, but consisting principally of frank-fiefs and free holdings, with two compact groups of villein holdings, the "Trente-deux vilaine Bouvées," at the Castel, and "Les Onze Bouvées Nord-Est," at St. Saviour's; the villein tenants only owed personal service to their lord in connection with the collection and guarding the tithes of their corn and flax, until such time as the grainger of the manor took charge of it. On Sausmarez Manor, a smaller and compact estate, the holdings were almost entirely villein, and held by a variety of personal services. These services formed part of the rent due by the tenants, and they provided the lord of the manor with provisions for his household, and for the carriage of his goods and produce. In neither case do we find any provision for working the farm lands of the seigneur, which in England always formed part of services of the villeins.

Already, by the end of the fifteenth century, these personal services were found irksome, for the villein tenant of one lord was frequently the free tenant of another, or of the king, and often a large landowner. In 1480 we find record of a dispute between the Seigneur of Saumarez and one of his tenants, who had refused to cart "la feugere du seigneur a son hostel," and though the tenant was a member of an important family, and a large landowner on other fiefs, he was sentenced to "une journée au regard du chateau." We must hope that twenty-four hours' contemplation of Castle Cornet brought him to a proper sense of his duties.

We also find some tenants owing such rents as chickens with tails an inch long, capons, geese from their ponds, eels, eggs, and even congers. The latter seem to have been looked upon as an important article of barter even down to the beginning of the seventeenth century. So many

congers of good merchantable size often figure in the note book of George Fashion, Seigneur d'Anneville, as part of the rent due from the tenants of his farms. No doubt they were salted down for future household use. Owing to the subdivision of property by our laws of inheritance, these small rents became sometimes divided up into minute particles, one notable lawsuit in 1887 was brought by the prévôt of Blanchelande against three of the tenants of the fief for the payment of "one fowl, one half and one sixteenth of a fowl, one fortieth and one four hundred and eightieth part of a fowl, twenty-eight eggs, and three-fourths and one-eighth of an egg," fivepence being the usual fine for non-payment.

In old Guernsey documents are also to be found curious redevances. For instance, the Abbot of Mont St. Michel owed the Crown Officers three dinners a year, and the Prior of Lihou owed one to the tenants of the Fief Thomas Blondel. In 1393 a rent of a chaplet of roses on St. John's Day was owed by John Benest to the heirs of Denis Le Marchant, and another even more curious one of "a dozen butterflies," was the subject of a lawsuit in 1591. Cakes at Christmas time or at Easter are also frequently met with. These nominal rents are supposed to owe their origin to gifts of land, and as it was impossible to give outright land held of another person, they are simply a "pro forma" acknowledgment of tenure.

Dinners to tenants on special occasions were frequently given in the middle ages. To this day the Royal Court, the Crown Officers, and the Seigneurs of fiefs owing suit of court, dine at the king's expense after each of the Courts of Chief Pleas. The ancient name of these dinners was "Diner avec le Roi." Formerly they were held much more frequently than three times a year, as at present. An old document now in the archives at St. Lo, dating early in the reign of Edward I., gives a list of the following other occasions:—When the Bailiff chose the juries of the parishes for the assizes, when he inspected the king's highways, and when he taxed the fines of the assizes. Also, when a felon forfeited his goods to the king, or when a trial by battle was appealed and when it was fought.

The seigneurs of the principal fiefs also owed their tenants a dinner after the three annual Courts of Chief Pleas. This custom is still kept up on many fiefs at the present day.

MANORIAL CHAPELS.

The de Chesneys, Seigneurs of Anneville and Fief du Comte possessed four manorial chapels in the fifteenth century.

(1) The chapel of St. Thomas d'Anneville, the ruins of which still exist in the rear of the old Manor House at Les Annevilles.

(2) The chapel of Notre Dame de Pulias, supposed to be the same as Notre Dame de l'Epine, which was destroyed at the Reformation by the Governor, Sir Thomas Leighton, much against the wishes of the inhabitants of the Vingtaine de l'Epine. The site of this chapel has not yet been satisfactorily identified. Probably it may have been the chapel of the Fief des Bruniaux de Nermont, and built by the de Burnels or their predecessors, the Legats, long before this fief came into the possession of the de Chesneys.

(3) St. George, which originally belonged to the Abbey of Mont St. Michel, and is mentioned in a Bull of Pope Adrian IV., in 1156. How it came into the possession of the de Chesneys is not known. It was unfortunately pulled down at the end of the eighteenth century by Mr. J. Guille, of St. George, on account of a dispute with his neighbours concerning a right of way to it over his land.

(4) St. Brioc, Torteval. This chapel stood on the Fief de Beuval, which was already in the possession of the de Chesneys early in the fourteenth century.

Another manorial chapel was that of St. Michel du Manoir, St. Peter's Port, the chapel of the "Manoir de Haut," which stood on the site of the present Constables' Office, and which belonged to the Le Marchants for several centuries. The chapel was to the south of the arch leading from High Street. It is mentioned in an old document of 1388, whereby Pierrot Le Marchant and his brother Janequin sell a plot of land to the south-west of this chapel, and stipulate that the buildings to be erected thereon shall not obstruct the light of its windows. This chapel was still in existence in 1521. When the old house in High Street to the south of the arch was pulled down, at the beginning of the last century, the remains of some of the old walls of the chapel were discovered. On the northern one was found a fine "piscina," which is now in the hall of Rosenheim, St. Andrew's.

We may now glance at the history of a few of the principal manors we have mentioned.

THE MANOR OF ANNEVILLE.

As already stated, it derived its name from the Seigneurs d'Anneville-en-Saire, in the Cotentin, its owners in the twelfth century. After the separation of Normandy in the reign of King John, it was forfeited by John and Sampson d'Anneville, who adhered to Philip Augustus. It remained in the hands of the Crown until 1248, when Henry III. gave it to Sir William de Chesney, a kinsman of the Governor of the Isles, Philip d'Albigny, the elder, whom he had accompanied on his last voyage to the Holy Land in 1236, where Philip died and was buried in the church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. William de Chesney also owned large estates in the counties of Devon, Herts, Somerset Lincoln and Cambridge, as well as several manors in Jersey. He was also an important personage at the Court of Henry III. In 1253 he purchased the Fief du Comte from Baldwin de Vere, and thus became the largest landowner in Guernsey.

For two hundred and fifty years the de Chesneys occupied in insular affairs a position very similar to that of the de Carterets in Jersey, but they only occasionally resided in the island. No less than three of them were Governors of the Isles. Sir Nicholas de Chesney, 1297-1298, Sir William de Chesney, 1331 and 1343, and Sir Edmund de Chesney from 1359 to 1366. Another, Edmund de Chesney, member of a junior branch of the family, was Bailiff of Guernsey in 1480, but was deposed from that office the following year. He then became jurat of the Royal Court, but would seem to have been a sort of extra jurat, as during his term of office there were no less than thirteen jurats on the bench.

The de Chesneys, as jurats, claimed precedence over all their colleagues, a precedence allowed to Nicholas Fouaschin, Seigneur of Anneville, on his election in 1519. Lord Willoughby de Broke, heir through his grandmother of the senior branch of the de Chesneys, sold, in 1509, the manors of Anneville, Le Comte, and the whole of his estates in Guernsey to Nicholas Fouaschin, of Guernsey, merchant of Southampton, one of the gentlemen ushers of the Household of Henry VIII.

In 1595 Queen Elizabeth sent commissioners to Guernsey to hold an enquiry concerning the manors held of the Crown, and Thomas Fashion, then Seigneur d'Anneville, was called upon to show by what tenure he held his lands. This inquiry was the origin of the extraordinary legends that have passed for history concerning the manor of Anneville. Thomas Fashion produced before the commissioners what purported to

be an extract from the rolls of the Exchequer of Rouen, of the reign of William the Conqueror: it is almost needless to state that the Exchequer of Normandy had no existence before the reign of Henry I., and that rolls of its proceedings for the twelfth century even do not exist. According to this remarkable document, William the Conqueror, having heard that Guernsey had been ravaged by a pirate called Le Grand Sarasin, who had established himself in "le chateau du Grand Sarasin," on the site of the present Castel Church, despatched his Esquire, Sampson d'Anneville, to expel him. Sampson was successful and was given the Manor of Anneville, which was said to have then included Fief du Comte, as a reward. On the death of his son, Richard d'Anneville, the manors were escheated to Robert, Count of Mortain, the Conqueror's step-brother, who gave them to his Esquire, Robert de Vere, whose son Baldwin sold them to Sir William de Chesney. Well, Robert, Count of Mortain, was dead before 1100, and Sir William de Chesney was still alive in 1261: still Elizabeth's commissioners seem to have swallowed this little difficulty of dates without question.

Anneville passed from the Fashions to the Andros family in 1663, on the marriage of Charles Andros and Alice, daughter and heiress of Thomas Fashion, and has remained to this day in the hands of their descendants. The old Manor House is mentioned in a charter of 1350, concerning the division of the estate of Sir William de Chesney, by which Sir Edmund de Chesney, his eldest son, who received as his portion the Fief du Comte, stipulates that he shall have the use of it whenever he shall come to the island.

This manor has been looked upon as the most important in the island, but it owes this position more to the accident of its having been the residence of the de Chesneys and consequently the head of their possessions in Guernsey, rather than to any particular nobility of its tenure, for it was only held by petty serjeantry of keeping the King's prisoners.

LE FIEF DU COMTE.

This manor originally belonged to the Vicomtes du Bessin, who, early in the reign of Henry I., became Earls of Chester, and derives its name from this circumstance. Early in the reign of Henry II. it passed into the hands of Geoffrey Wake, whose descendants possessed it, until 1240, when Hugh Wake granted it to Baldwin de Vere, to hold of him by service of a half a knight's fee and the yearly payment of £6 sterling. It was one half of the original fief of the Vicomtes

du Bessin, the other half being in the possession of the Abbey of Mont St. Michel, so it would seem that the entire fief of the Vicomtes was reckoned as a knight's fee. In 1253, Baldwin de Vere, grandson of the above mentioned Baldwin, sold his fief to Sir William de Chesney. Sir William did not long enjoy peaceful possession, as in 1260, the Abbot of Mont St. Michel claimed the whole fief as overlord, pleading the original gift of Duke Robert II., 1028-1032. He died shortly afterwards, leaving his widow, Felicia, to continue the lawsuit. In 1268 the Abbot promised the Governor, Hugh de Troubleville, "his dear friend," for his counsel and advice, half the revenue of the market of "Les Landes du Marché" which he also claimed, and should he win his cause, half of the Fief du Comte to hold of him by homage. In other words, the Abbot tried to bribe the judge to rob the widow.* He was, however, unsuccessful, and the king confirmed the de Chesneys in the possession of their lands.

At the Assizes of 1299 and 1309, the de Chesneys were called upon to show by what right they claimed one-fourth of the wreck of the sea throughout the whole island, also the right of court for their tenants, and of chase on the King's Fief. Their reply was the first of the legends which grew up around this fief,—namely, that Robert, Count of Mortain, had given it to his servant, Baldwin de Vere, whose son and heir had sold it to Sir William de Chesney, and that Sir William Baldwin and the Earl had all enjoyed these privileges. In face of documentary evidence still in existence, it is incomprehensible how such a statement could have been made.

Fief du Comte was sold by Lord Willoughby de Broke, in 1509, with the rest of his manors, to Nicholas Fouaschin. It remained in the possession of the latter's descendants for upwards of a century, when it was sold in 1630 by George Fashion to Peter Priaulx. It was sold in 1722 by the Priaulxs to the Le Marchants, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century it passed by marriage from the latter to the Hutchessons. The present seigneur, Mr. T. Hutchesson, has a splendid collection of manuscripts relating to the fief. The Plea Rolls of the Manor Court and the "Extentés" or Surveys of the manor commence in the middle of the fifteenth century. Other earlier documents referring to Fief du Comte are now at Warwick Castle. They came into the possession of the ancestors of the Earl of Warwick through the marriage of Sir Fulke Greville with the heiress of the Willoughbys, in the sixteenth century.

* Tupper. *History of Guernsey*, 2nd Ed., p. 73.

From the importance of its court and other ancient liberties, Fief du Comte was by far the most important manor in the island. It has no less than thirty-eight minor manors dependent of it, viz. :—

Pomare	St. Peter's-in-the-Wood.
Rozel	Vale.
La Court	} Câtel.
Grantée	
Longue	
Fouqués	} St. Saviour's.
Bequepée	
Au Crochon	
Au Mière	} St. Pierre du Bois.
Huchon	
Gouïe	
Des Cherfs... ..	} St. Saviour's.
Cobois	
Bellenzère	
Grangier	} Câtel.
Besongnes	
L'Ecachier	
Effards	
Saumier	
Des Feuvres	
De la Landelle	
Des Queux... ..	
Des Forgiers	
Moullinets	
Canvière	
Au Breton	
Clercs de l'Érée	
Mauxconvenants	
Hillaire	} Vale.
Trois Vattiaux	
Du Quartier du Camp Rouf	
Au Carpentier	} Vale.
Robert Gosselin	
Richard de Nermont	
Du Quartier des Goubies...	
Du Camp des Hais	
Richard de la Felie	} Vale.
Dame Alianor	

In addition to these, the Seigneurs du Comte formerly held the fiefs of Le Groignet, Videclin, and Carteret, Castel ;

Beuval, St. Peter's-in-the-Wood ; Bruniaux, St. Martin's ; Bruniaux de Nermont, St. George and Le Canelly, but only the first three were dependencies of Fief du Comte, the remainder being distinct fiefs.

SAUSMAREZ MANOR, ST. MARTIN'S.

The ancient name of this manor was "le fief de Jerbourg." From a letter which has very recently come to light in the Patent Rolls of 1230, it seems to have belonged in the twelfth century to the great Norman family of de Barneville. At the commencement of the following century it had descended to an heiress, Nicholaa de Barneville, wife of Maurice de Lucy, probably a relative of Geoffrey de Lucy, Warden of the Isles, 1206-7 and 1224-26. Maurice was killed during an invasion of Guernsey in the reign of John, and his estates fell to the Crown during the minority of his heir. On the 27th January, 1230, * the king restores to Jordan de Lucy (in another letter called de Barneville) † son of Maurice de Lucy, his father's and mother's lands of Jerbourg (Gereburg). How it passed into the possession of the de Sausmarez is not known, possibly by marriage with a de Barneville heiress. Anyway, in a King's Writ of the year 1319, relative to proceedings of Placita de quo Waranto concerning Matthew de Sausmarez' rights on his fief of Jerbourg, it is stated that his father Matthew, and grandfather Nicholas, had enjoyed the manor and all its privileges before him ‡.

The manor was held, as already stated, by grand serjeantry of acting as the third butler to the king when he should visit the island, also by homage, relief, and suit of court at the three Chief Pleas.

In the sixteenth century Sausmarez Manor passed to the Andros family by marriage in 1542 of Judith, daughter and heiress of Thomas de Sausmarez, with John Andros, of Northamptonshire, who came to Guernsey with the Governor, Sir Peter Meutis. About the middle of the eighteenth century Mr. Charles Andros sold it to Mr. John de Sausmarez, a descendant of a junior branch of its former owners.

LA RUE FRAIRIE, ST. ANDREW'S.

The name of this manor is a corruption of La Refrerie which belonged in the 13th and 14th centuries to the Abbey of La Croix Saint Leufroy, near Evreux. Through some

* Cal : Pat : Rolls, 14 Henry III., p. 282.

† Cal : Pat : Rolls, 15 Henry III., p. 514.

‡ Record Office, Exch. Accts. Bundle 89. No. 8.

inexplicable cause not only has its name become most barbarously corrupted, but an imaginary Abbot of La Rue Frairie has dispossessed the Abbot of Longues from the list of Seigneurs owing suit at the Court of Chief Pleas and consequently the Abbot of La Croix Saint Leufroy virtually figures twice over. At the Assizes held in 1304 the Abbot of La Croix St. Leufroy was sued for failing to perform his duties in connection with this manor and by an inquisition then held it appears that he was bound to keep monks at La Refrerie (apud Refreria) in the parish of St. Andrew's to say masses for the souls of "our lord the king, his ancestors and successors." The suit ended in a compromise, the Abbot being permitted to let his lands in Guernsey for a year, and was excused the saying of the masses on payment of 100 sols tournois to the king.

Another reference to this manor is to be found in the accounts of John des Roches, Governor of the Isles, 1327-1330, as follows:—"labe de la referie (corrected to l'abé de la Croes) a une priorté a Saint André et i doivet estre moignez residens et chantez III messes checune semaine en la dite eglise por le roi dengleterre et fera aumones."

The correction of "l'abé de la referie" to "l'abé de la Croes" is instructive as it gives a possible clue to the origin of our modern "*Abbé de la Rue Frairie*," and it would seem to indicate that the Abbot of La Croix Saint Leufroy was locally called l'Abbé de la Refrerie as early as the 14th century.

At the Inquest held 1248 it is recorded that the Abbot of La Croix Saint Leufroy held three carucates of land by service of keeping the king's prisoners.

The charters of this Abbey are now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, but as far as I am aware they have never been examined by our local historians. It is quite possible that much interesting matter concerning the Abbey's Guernsey fief might be found in them.

THE GREAT METEOR OF FEBRUARY 22ND, 1909.

BY MR. B. T. ROWSWELL.

RESIDENTS in the Channel Islands, in common with the dwellers along the south coast of England and the north of France, were privileged to enjoy a magnificent view of the great Meteor of Monday evening, February 22nd, and of the long-lived trail of light it left behind. Had the phenomenon occurred with an overcast sky we should have missed what Mr. W. F. Denning, of Bristol, the celebrated observer of comets and meteors has described as "*the meteoric spectacle of a generation*." But as it fortunately happened the weather was perfect for the observation of celestial phenomena; we were passing through a delightful interval of cloudless days—in fact the 22nd was the fifth successive day of unbroken sunshine, each of which five days was followed by a clear starlight night. On the evening in question a very light E. breeze prevailed and the moon, a delicate crescent less than two and a half days old, lay low in the S.W. sky.

The regrettable thing of course in connection with the passage of meteors is that the time of their visibility cannot be foretold. Eclipses of the sun and moon are predicted to the second, every movement of the planets among the starry host is charted long before, and occultations of stars by the moon can be tabulated years in advance if necessary, but the day and hour on which a magnificent meteor will flash through our sky no man knoweth or can venture to predict. Without the slightest warning of its approach the celestial visitor is in our midst, and before we have time to realize the fact it is gone—streak and all as a rule.

The most that astronomers can do in connection with shooting stars is to say that on certain days of the year the earth, in its revolution round the sun, is likely to encounter a larger number of these little bodies than at other times, so that a careful watch on these well-known dates may result in something out of the ordinary being seen—perhaps a shower of fiery trails, or, it may be, a large meteor. Owing to the fact that these several known meteor

[1909].