

CHAPTER VIII.

NORMAN TIMES.

The peaceful country life in the Saxon village was rudely interrupted when in the latter half of the 11th century William of -Normandy possessed himself of the land.

The great Earl Godwin had died 13 years before, and when in January, 1066, Harold, his son, was defeated and slain at Hastings consternation reigned throughout the land. No long time elapsed before the people's misgivings were fully realised.

The landowners were for the most part required to surrender their estates, and as the French Feudal system was gradually enforced the conditions of village life became harder to bear.

More arduous times, at any rate for a season, fell upon the people. The new masters were far more austere than their Saxon predecessors, with much less sympathy and consideration for the well being of those under their rule.

King William was bent upon extorting the utmost amount of tribute in money from the conquered land, and the alien barons and minor landowners placed in power, demanded and obtained a bigger toll in kind and service from those under their control.

We are now on surer ground and are able to trace the history of the parish with more or less detail.

Let us see what the Domesday survey has to tell us. From the historian's point of view William the Conqueror's rate book is of inestimable value. It is here that we find the starting point for the local history of most of our country villages.

Here is the record for this parish in the original contracted Latin.

Radulph fili Turaldi ten de epo Erclei puno solin se defd
Trae. In dnio sunt ii car. ix uilli cu vi cot huc iii car ibi iii
serui silua x poro. Too m ualet iii lib. m.c. sol. queda
mulier tenuit.

This being interpreted reads :

Ralph, the son of Turald, holds Erclei (Hartley) of the Bishop. It was taxed at one shilling. The arable land is — (not stated). In demesne there are two caruces. There are nine villeins, with six cotters having three caruces, There are three slaves. There are woods for ten hogs. The whole manor was worth three pounds. Now a hundred shillings. Some woman held it.

In the first place we learn that Hartley in the year 1086 formed part of the vast estate of the Bishop of Bayeux, the Conqueror's half brother Odo, and, under him, was held by Ralph, the son of Turald.

We do not know the exact extent of the Hartley

domain at that time for the acreage of the arable land is omitted. In demesne, that is the land retained in the Lord's own occupation, there were two carucates. A carucate was equivalent to a Saxon hide. It was the amount of land which it was estimated a team of eight oxen could plough in one season, and hence the term plough-land sometimes used for it. Roughly it was about 120 acres. But the estimate varied somewhat in different parts of the country.

Three carucates we are here told were in the occupation of the villagers, which would include a certain amount of pasture, six hundred acres or thereabouts in all.

Then there was the woodland belonging to the manor. "Silua x porc."

The extent of woodland was estimated by the number of pigs for which it would provide forage. The Hartley woods at that time afforded pannage, as it was called, for ten hogs.

So much we learn about the land. We are also given some information about the inhabitants. In those days there were to be found in every village several classes of people.

Below the lord and his family there were, in the first place the socmen. Many of these were land-owners. Others of them paid a rent in goods or service. They were free men and not tied to the

Manor. In some ways they corresponded to the yeomen of later times.

Then there were the villeins, or Ceorls as they were called in Saxon days. They were not, except in special circumstances, permitted to leave the village, or to work elsewhere. They were each granted about 30 acres of land on which they supported themselves and their families, and in return for this they were obliged to work several days a week for the lord. There were nine families of villeins in Hartley at the time of the survey.

Then there were the cotters or cottagers. Borderers they were called in Norman times, a name derived from bord, a cottage. These were lower in rank than the villeins. They were labourers who worked for hire. They were granted an acre or two of land for which they rendered some service, but for the most part of the week they worked for a wage, and corresponded to our agricultural labourers. In Hartley at this time there were six cotters and their families.

And finally we are told that there were three slaves. These belonged to a lower and more servile class still. They were in complete servitude and could be bought and sold.

Thus much do we know about Hartley at the close of the 11th century. From the figures given

in this survey we may see that the manor fairly corresponded in area with the present parish, and we may estimate the population at about a hundred and ten.