"KIRBY'S QUEST."

By SIR HENRY BARKLY, K.C.B., G.C.M.G., &c.

Kirby's Quest derived its title, not from *Adam* Kirkeby, (who does not appear ever to have been Treasurer of England), but from John de Kirkeby, who was appointed to that office on 6th January, 1284,[1] and whose name appears as presiding in several counties over the Commissioners who held this Inquiry as to Knight's Fees. He is supposed to have continued Treasurer till his death, in 1290; but as he became Bishop of Ely on the 26th July, 1286, and is not so designated on these occasions, it seems probable that the inquiry took place between the beginning of 1284 and the middle of 1286. These dates are corroborated by internal evidence supplied by the Return for Yorkshire.[2]

They agree well, likewise, with the one for Gloucestershire; as, for example, under the Hundred of Berkeley, Thomas de Berkeley, who succeeded his father, Maurice, as Baron in 1281, is given as Lord; John Botetourt, who inherited, in right of his wife, from a brother-in-law, who died in 1282, is returned as holding a Fee in Dursley of the said Thomas; as also Anselm de Gournay, whose writ of "diem clausit" is dated 28th Oct., 1286; whilst Henry de Berkeley, whose writ of "diem clausit" is dated in July, 1287, appears as holding Dursley and Newington of the King *in capite* as two Knights' Fees.

John Smyth, who was evidently acquainted with Kirkeby's returns, recorded his opinion, nearly two hundred and fifty years ago, that they were "somewhat more ancient than the 'Inquisitio post mortem' of the aforesaid Henry."[3] In his "Description of the Hundred of Berkeley," completed in 1639, though only published last year by the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society, he quotes in several instances as his authority "an ancient book of Knight's Fees of the time of Edward I. in the Exchequer, with the Remembrancer to the Lord Treasurer,"[4] and

[1] *Vide* Beatson's *Political Index*; Eyton's *Shropshire*, &c., &c.

[2] *Vide* The Survey of the County of York, *temp.*, Ed. I., published in 1867 by the Surtees Society.

[3] BAGPATH (page 75).—In 15 Ed. I, Henry Berkeley, of Dursley, is by Inquisition found to die seized *(inter alia)* of the Manor of Newenton, holden of the Kinge *in capite*. And by a booke of Knights' Fees in the Exchequer, somewhat more ancient than the foresaid Inquisition, remaining with the Remembrancer to the Lord Treasurer, Henry de Berkeley, of Dursley, holds Dursley and Newington of the Kinge *in capite* by two Knights' fees.

[4] DURSLEY (page 173).—An ancient booke of Knights' fees of the time of Kinge E. I. in the Exchequr, with the Remembrancer to the Lord Treasurer, thus: Henricus Berkele tenet Dursley et Newenton de Rege in capite per servicium duorum militum.

explains further that "this book was compiled of divers inquisitions taken by Richard de Rowell and others." [5] His quotations agree word for word with the Return already referred to, which has a heading to the same effect; and as that forms part of "Kirby's Quest," as copied about the middle of the 16th century into a Paper Book now at the Public Record Office, there can be no question that he quoted from a MS. derived from the same *original*. His extracts, however, appear to have been made from a much earlier compilation, and not from the Paper Book. The latter can hardly have been the official document which he speaks of, for it contains memoranda on many miscellaneous matters, both in the pages preceding those appropriated to the "Quest" (which is apparently defective, comprising only twenty Counties) and in those which follow it; and besides,—so experienced an antiquary as Smyth would never have designated as "ancient" a book scarce a century old.

The point is placed beyond doubt, however, by his having appended a reference in two cases to "folio 337," [6] whereas the Return for the County of Gloucester in the Paper Book only extends from folio 247 to folio 253.

If my deductions are correct, a Book containing a very early abstract of the Inquisitions of 1284-6 remained in the Exchequer down to 1639. It must have disappeared thence soon afterwards,

[5] EWELEY (page 186).—A booke of Knights' fees, with the Remembrancer to the Lord Treasurer in the Exchequer, in the time of King E. I., compiled of divers Inquisitions taken by Richard de Rowell and others, saith: Robart de Brampton and William de Bett hold severally of Thomas, Lord Berkeley, two halfe Knights' fees in Eweley.

BARKELEY (page 96).—The old booke of Knights' fees in the Exchequer, taken by Inquisition, before Richard de Rowell and his fellowes, saith: Thomas de Berkeley holds the Burrowe of Berkeley of the Kinge *in capite*, and that the Abbot of St. Augustine's, by Bristoll, holds the sixth part of the said town of the said Thomas in franke almes, and hee *in capite*.

OSELWORTH (page 308).—An ancient booke of Knights' fees in the Exchequer with the Remembrancer to the Lord Treasurer, in the time of King E. I., saith: The Abbot of Kingswood holds Oselworth of Henry de Berkeley of Dursley, And hee of the Kinge.

HUNTINGFORD (page 240).—More of this manor may be read in this record, viz., Liber feod. militum in Scaccario in temp. E. I.

HORFEILD (page 233).—A booke of Knight's fees in the Exchequer, with the Remembrancer to the Lord Treasurer, saith: John Gifford holds halfe a Knight's fee in Horefield of Thomas de Berkeley.

OULPEN (page 313).—A booke of Knights' fees, with the Lord Tre'ors Remembrancer, in the Exchequer, in the time of Kinge E. I., saith: John de Oulpenn holds there half a Knight's fee of Thomas, Lord Berkeley.

[6] CROMHALE (page 167).—Liber feod. militum in scaccario cum Rem. Thesaur. (folio 337) William de Wauton (sonne of John) holdeth the fourth part of Cromhale of Thomas de Berkeley; and Christiana de Mariscis holdeth another fourth part, *ut antea*. Which (being a booke of Knights' fees) is soe to bee taken and expounded.

KINGESCOTE (page 251).—The ancient booke of Knight's fees with the Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer in the Exchequer (fol. 337), hath this: Ricardus de Kingescote tenet dimidium feodum in Kingescote de Thoma de Berkeley.

probably in the revolt against Feudal Tenures during the Civil Wars, for Madox, when preparing his History of the Exchequer at the end of the seventeenth century, appears to have been totally unaware that it had ever existed.[7]