

SOME EARLY KENTISH WILLS.

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THE complete refurnishing of the Treasury of Canterbury Cathedral, which, a few years ago, the Dean and Chapter were able to undertake through the munificence of an anonymous benefactor, necessitated the removal of certain documents, hitherto kept in cupboards in this apartment, to the Chapter library. For the most part these documents were merely expired leases of the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, but a few were of much greater antiquity and interest, notably certain wills of a date much earlier than any of those registered in the books of the Consistory or Archidiaconal Courts.

The earliest and most important of these wills is that of Peter de Aquablanca, the Savoyard bishop of Hereford who died in 1268, and its importance lies in the fact that it is dated at Sugwas, the bishop's manor house near Hereford, on the day before he died, thereby proving that the bishop ended his days in his own diocese and not in his native Savoy as the historians have repeatedly stated. I do not propose, however, to give a copy of the Bishop's will here, as it is not a Kentish Will, and I have already edited it for the Royal Historical Society, see *Camden Miscellany*, Vol. XIV, pp. i.-xi., 1-13.

Of the Kentish Wills, the earliest and most interesting is that of Robert le Pere of Romney, dated Saturday next after the Feast of the Assumption A.D. 1278.

Robert le Pere must have been a person of importance in the Marsh in the thirteenth century, though its records have left, as far as I know, no memorial of him. Indeed he lived at a period earlier than that covered by the municipal records of New Romney; but he was evidently a wealthy and, from his numerous bequests to churches, religious houses and poor people, a pious man. From the fact that

he left instructions for the burial of his body in the Church of St. Laurence—which, by the way, he describes as being in *Old Romney*—we may infer that he lived in that parish. In his Will he mentions his wife Alice, his son John and two daughters, Ellyce and Joan. Amongst the witnesses is one Richard, whom the testator calls “ my chaplain ” (*capellano meo*), and Sir Adam, Vicar of Romney, probably the earliest recorded name of a vicar of that parish. Attached to the will is a slip of parchment on which is written (in Latin) an inventory and valuation of the live and dead stock found on the testator’s estate, which contains much useful information concerning prices in the second half of the thirteenth century.

The next two wills, of which abstracts only are given below, are of less interest, but since they are of an earlier date than any of the wills preserved in the District Probate Office, I have thought it worth while to note their contents.

The last will of the present series is that of Joan, the widow of John Denys of Welle next Littlebourne, which is dated Febr. 8. 1441, and so falls within the period covered by the Calendar of Wills proved in Canterbury; but it contains so many interesting bequests that I have given below a full abstract of its contents. The lady was probably the widow of the John Denys who in the year 1393 founded a chantry in Ickham Church, but, apparently, was still living in 1433. An account of his chantry, from the pen of the late T. S. Frampton, was published in *Arch. Cant.*, XXV, pp. 207-21.

I

ABSTRACT OF THE WILL OF ROBERT LE PERE OF ROMNEY DATED SATURDAY AFTER THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION (AUGUST 25TH), A.D. 1278.

The Testator directs that his body should be buried in the church-yard of the church of St. Laurence of Old Romney (*de veteri Romenal*).

To the high altar of the church of St. Laurence, for tithes kept back or forgotten half a mark ;

To the fabric of the same church 40^s.

To the light of blessed Mary in the same church 1 cow and 3 sheep.

- To the light of the Holy Cross, in the same church, 1 cow and 3 sheep.
- To the light of St. Bartholomew, in the same church, 1 cow and 3 sheep.
- To the light of the high altar of the same church, 1 cow and 3 sheep.
- To the chaplain of the same church 4^s.
- To the clerk of the same 12^d.
- To the fabric of every church and chapel as well within the town of Romenal, as in the marsh 2^s.
- To each light of the same churches and chapels 12^d.
- To the high altar of the church of St. Clement for tithes forgotten 4^s.
- To the high altar of the church of Hyueth¹ for tithes forgotten 4^s.
- For two annual commemorations to be celebrated in the church of St. Laurence, Old Romenal, for testator's soul 12 marks.
- For four trentals (monthly celebrations) for testator's soul, 10^s, in the Hospital of St. Thomas the Martyr, in the church of St. Laurence, old Romenal, in the church of St. Clement, old Romenal, and in the church of Hyueth, to each 2^s. 6^d.
- For the purchase of bread and cheese to be distributed to poor people on the day of testator's death 10 marks.
- For the same on his month's day 8 marks.
- For the same on his anniversary 8 marks.
- For lights on the day of his death 24 lbs. of wax.
- For the purchase of 100 ells of white cloth to be distributed to poor people for testator's soul 100^s.
- For the purchase of shoes for the same 50^s.
- To each of testator's godsons 2 sheep.
- To Robert Ruffyn the Wardship of Robert the heir of Thomas Yoke (*De jugo*).
- To testator's daughter Elyce for a dress (*roba*) 20^s.
- To his daughter Joan 10 marks.
- To his niece Joan half a mark.
- To Stephen his sister's son 2 sheep, and $\frac{1}{2}$ a seam of wheat.
- To his niece Juliana of Promhell 2 sheep and $\frac{1}{2}$ a seam of wheat.
- To the Friars minor of Romenal 1 mark.
- To the brothers and sisters of the Hospital of St. Bartholomew in Wynchelsea 2^s.
- To the brothers and sisters of the Hospital of St. Thomas in Romenal 20^s.

¹ I believe Hyueth to be an early form of Ivychurch, and not Hythe.

To the house of St. John of Romenal, 1 feather bed, 1 coverlet, and 2 sheets.

To the Hospital of Holy Cross in Wynchelsea 4^s.

To the fabric of the Church of St. Thomas the Martyr in Wynchelsea 4^s.

To the Friars Minor of Wynchelsea half a mark.

To the Hospital of poor chaplains in Canterbury half a mark.

To the Hospital of Eastbridge, Canterbury, 4^s.

To every bridge beyond Lymenhe, (*sic*) between Romenal and Apuldre, 2^s.

To be distributed to poor people for the soul of the lord Boniface sometime Archbishop of Canterbury 40^s. (d. 1270).

To testator's son John the fourth part of a ship with all things thereto pertaining.

Exōrs : Alice his wife, his son John, Robert Ruffyn and John Helys. Witnesses : Richard " my chaplain ", Sir Adam vicar of Romenal, Thomas Alekyn, and Robert Alcorn.

An Inventory of the goods of Robert le Pere made in the 6th year of King Edward (I). [1277-8.]

1 horse valued at	..	..	..	..	..	30 ^s .
1 horse	..	..	..	..	..	2 marks.
3 stallions	..	..	..	..	..	40 ^s .
8 colts, of one year	..	..	..	..	..	53 ^s . 4 ^d .
1 colt	..	..	..	..	..	2 marks.
2 colts born in the present year	..	..	..	..	..	12 ^s .
2 oxen valued at	..	..	..	..	..	33 ^s .
15 cows	..	..	..	..	..	£6. 0. 0.
5 heifers	..	..	..	..	..	35 ^s .
1 ox	..	..	..	..	..	12 ^s .
8 two year old oxen	..	..	..	..	..	36 ^s .
10 calves	..	..	..	..	..	15 ^s .
33 wethers	..	..	..	..	..	55 ^s .
62 ewes	..	..	..	..	..	£4. 2 ^s . 8 ^d .
130 chotes ¹	..	..	..	..	..	£6. 19 ^s . 9 ^d .
61 lambs valued at	..	..	..	..	..	40 ^s . 8 ^d .
17 pigs	..	..	..	..	..	51 ^s .
9 younger pigs	..	..	..	..	..	18 ^s .
12 ditto	..	..	..	..	..	13 ^s .

¹ I have not met this word elsewhere. Perhaps a chote was a sheep under two years old, corresponding to what in Kent is now called a Teg.

16 little pigs	8 ^s .
Also, half a ship lying at Wynchelsea valued at ..	£6. 10 ^s . 4 ^d .
„ 1 'Ward' worth	£6.
3½ weys of cheese (wey=224 ^{lbs} .)	36 ^s . 9 ^d .
26 small weys of cheese	65 ^s .
Also timber lying in the court	1 mark.
„ 5 quarters of wood	5 ^s .
Also a cup of maple-wood with a silver foot ..	10 ^s .
2 silver cups	12 ^s .
2 casks	18 ^s .
3 chests	18 ^s . 8 ^d .
2 broks (<i>large jars</i>)	2 ^s . 6 ^d .
2 chests (<i>forsarie</i>)	4 ^s .
Arms	1 mark.
Domestic utensils	½ mark.
2 brass vessels (cum honder (?))	16 ^s .
Tables with trestles	4 ^s .
Also in land let out to various persons ..	£7. 0 ^s . 6 ^d .
For various rights and dues connected with land let out	£4. 3 ^s . 1½ ^d .
Also silver found in a coffer	£77. 7 ^s . 6 ^d .
Valuation of the corn: Wheat 114 seams value £28. 10 ^s .	
	(=5 ^s . per quarter).
Barley 80 seams value £13. 6 ^s . 8 ^d .	
	(=3 ^s . 4 ^d . per quarter).
Oats 60 quarters value £10.	
	(=3 ^s . 4 ^d . per quarter).
Beans 60 seams value £7. 10 ^s .	
Pease 20 seams value £2. 10 ^s .	
Tares 10 seams value £1. 10 ^s .	
Hay	45 ^s .
Flax	£4. 0. 0.
Debts owing to Testator £30 15 ^s . 11¼ ^d .	

II

ABSTRACT OF THE WILL OF RICHARD DE MORTON SENIOR (*patris*)
CITIZEN OF CANTERBURY, DATED MONDAY NEXT AFTER THE
FEAST OF THE ASCENSION, 1349.

Testator directs that his body be buried in the cemetery of Christ
Church, Canterbury.

- To his wife Agnes, Alexander Hanekyn, clerk, and Richard, testator's son he leaves all his messuages at Dodyngdale together with all his gavelkind lands lying within the liberty of the city of Canterbury, in the parishes of St. Mary of Natyngdon, and St. Mary atte Bredene; and an annual rent of 6 quarters of palm barley, which William Bredhurst used to pay to testator for 15 acres of land in the suburbs of Canterbury, which were sometime the property of Sir John Polre, knight, in trust to the use of the said Agnes and Richard and the heirs of the body of the said Richard, and in default of heirs to Richard's brother William and his heirs, and in default to William's brother John, and his heirs, and in default to John son of Elye de Morton and his heirs.
- To his son John a house in the parish of Westgate, Canterbury, which formerly belonged to Robert at Bregge, with remainder to testator's sons Richard and William in turn, and then to Elye de Morton.
- To his wife and his son Richard all his tenements in the parish of St. Mary Magdalene and a curtilage, formerly the property of Clementine Petit, lying near the Worthgate, together with a rent of 6^s. issuing out of a tenement which Stephen Tavernyer occupied in the parish of St. Andrew, Canterbury, for which rent the said Stephen shall be exonerated from paying 20^d. yearly to the Treasurers of Christ Church, Canterbury. . . . To the said Agnes, his wife, and to Richard his son testator leaves all his right in 28 acres of arable and pasture land in the parish of Hardres, and 212 acres of woodland, in the parishes of Waltham and Petham, which he had lately leased for a term of 20 years from Richard son of Thomas of Petham. To the Prior of Christ Church he leaves two gold nobles, and to each monk of the same church one gold noble.

Executors: His wife Alice, his son John, and John, son of Elye de Morton.

Supervisors: John Sheldwiz and Alexander Hanekyn.

Endorsed: Examinatores Joh Chich, Rob' Lapyn, Joh. Elys, Adam de Bysschoppesgat.

Witnesses: Tho. Everard, Edm. Stablegate, Will. Besyle, Will. att Lese.

Proved Tu. in the feast of Whitsuntide 23 Edw. 3 (1349) before John Sheldwych and John Chicche then bailiffs of Canterbury.

III

ABSTRACT OF THE WILL OF GEOFFREY DE RUTONE OF WESTWELL,
DATED MONDAY AFTER THE FEAST OF THE HOLY TRINITY,
1361.

Testator directs that his body be buried in the Chancel of the church of St. Giles, Westwell.

He leaves to his son Richard all his goods and chatels on condition that he shall distribute a portion for testator's soul in accordance with the ordinance and disposition of Sir Richard, perpetual vicar of Westwell.

To find a priest to celebrate in the chancel of the said church, for testator's soul, and the soul of Joan his wife 4 silver marks.

To the high altar of the same church for tithes forgotten half a mark.

To Sir Thomas Lamberherst, chaplain, 40^d.

To each of testator's servants one quarter's wages or 2^s. in money.

To his nephew Richard 6^s. 8^d.

To John Brokman his wages and 20^d. *pro labore suo*.

To testator's son Geoffrey of Smethe 3^s. 8^d.

To Geoffrey Campneys his godson 40^d.

To John son of Will of Herst 2^s.

To Geoffrey son of his son Richard 40^s.

To his daughter Mabel 20^s.

To his daughter Alice 10^s.

To William Terry his clerk for his pains 20^s.

To his daughters Alice and Joan 20^s.

To Joan the wife of his son Richard his two best beds.

To the work of the church of Westwell 20^s.

To the light in the high chancel 2s.

To every clerk of the same church 1^d.

To three boys saying the salutation for my soul to each of them 1^d.

Exōr. : son Richard. Proved 4 June, 1361, before John de Wymbourne, commissary general of the diocese of Canterbury.

IV

ABSTRACT OF THE WILL OF JOAN WIDOW OF JOHN DENYS, LATE
OF WELLE NEXT LITTLEBOURNE, DATED 8TH FEBR. 1441.

Testatrix directs her body to be buried in the cemetery of St. Augustine's Abbey next Canterbury.

- To the prior and convent of Christ Church, Canterbury that they may pray for her soul £40 sterling.
- To the abbot and convent of St. Augustine's 20 marks sterling.
- To the prior and convent of St. Gregory, Canterbury, 20^s.
- To the prioress and convent of St. Sepulchre's, Canterbury, 20^s.
- To the Hospital of St. John of Northgate, Canterbury, 20^s.
- To the Hospital of Harbledown 20^s.
- To the sisters of St. Laurence, Canterbury, 20^s.
- To the repair of the house of St. James next Canterbury £10 sterling.
- To the Augustinian Friars of Cant. 20^s.
- To the Friars minor there 20^s.
- To the Friars preachers there 20^s.
- To Edmund chaplain of the hospital of St. James aforesaid, on condition that he go to Rome and there celebrate the divine mysteries for testator's soul for one whole year £20 sterling.
- To the fabric of the church of Welle 20^s.
- To the chapel of Lokyndane in the parish of Littlebourne 13^s. 4^d.
- To the fabric of the church of Bekesbourne 6^s. 8^d.
- To the fabric of the church of Patrykkesbourne 6^s. 8^d.
- To the fabric of the church of Bregge 6^s. 8^d.
- To Joan Eldrichgate and Joan Morys my goddaughters 40 marks [? 40/-] each.
- To the repair of the foul way before the gate of St. James aforesaid 20^s.
- To 3 poor persons to pray for testatrix's soul every Sunday for a whole year one meal a day after the *obit* and 1^d. a piece.
- To John Dygges esquire a cup called le Note mounted in silver-gilt.
- To the said John Dygges my mantle lined with grey fur.
- To Margaret May, my servant, my best cloak.
- To the *prioress of St. James* (pen struck through and the wife of John Isaac substituted) a cloak lined with menyver.
- To Agnes, sister of the house of St. James, a cloak lined with bokeram.
- To Alice Harnhelle a mantle lined with bokeram.
- To Isabel Morys a cloak lined with byss (*cotton-stuff*).
- To the shrine of St. Thomas the martyr my profession ring (*anulum de professione mea*).
- To the shrine of St. Augustine my wedding ring (*anulum nuptiale*).

- To the house of St. James aforesaid a cloth painted with the life of St. James.
- To the subprior of St. Augustines 10 marks.
- To the brothers and sisters of Maynerspytell 13^s. 4.
- To every priest celebrating for testatrix's soul on the day of her burial and on her month's mind 4^d.
- To the subprior of Christ Church Cant. my best piece of white silver with a cover to the same, to make a chalice to serve for daily use at the high altar of the Church of Christ.
- Testatrix's executors are directed to sell the rest of her silver plate to make such provision for her soul's health as shall seem best to them.
- To her exōrs, Edmund, chaplain of St. James' Hospital, John Nynne, and John Morys, 40 marks between them, and to John [*Sarisbury*] prior of Christ Church, whom she names as supervisor of her will, £20 sterling.