

CASTLEGUARD SERVICE OF DOVER CASTLE.

BY F. W. HARDMAN, LL.D., F.S.A.

THE standard historians of Kent all narrate the early history of the office of Constable of Dover Castle and there is remarkable unanimity in their story. According to them the Conqueror, after the forfeiture and imprisonment of Bishop Odo, made a new arrangement for the ward of Dover Castle. He appointed a kinsman of his own, one John de Fiennes, to be hereditary constable and endowed him with numerous knights' fees to bear the charge of his office. John de Fiennes retained fifty-six of these fees in his own hands, but associated with himself eight other knights and bestowed on them 171 fees. This arrangement continued for some time and John de Fiennes was succeeded by his son James de Fiennes and by his grandson John de Fiennes. It was disturbed in the troubled days of Stephen but again restored and continued in the persons of Allen de Fiennes and James de Fiennes.

Such in outline is the story told by Lambarde (1570, p. 157), Darell, chaplain to Queen Elizabeth (1797, p. 19), Philipott (1659, pp. 12, 16), Kilburne (1659, p. 79), Somner, Roman Ports and Forts (1693, p. 118), Harris (1719, pp. 372, 484), Jeake, Charters of the Cinque Ports (1728, p. 47), Hasted (1799, IV, 60) and Lyon, History of Dover (1814, II, 87, 192). It has been copied from these authorities by countless other writers of smaller note and is generally believed to-day.

And yet the story is completely untrue. "John de Fiennes, kinsman of the Conqueror," is unknown to history, and certainly never was constable of Dover Castle. No person of that name is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 either as tenant in chief or as undertenant, or in any

other extant record of the Conqueror's period. None of the fiefs associated with the wardship of Dover Castle was ever held by a Fiennes. John de Fiennes and his son and grandson are the imaginative reconstructions of pedigree makers of the Fiennes family of a later age.

The true story of the emergence of the Fiennes family in English history in the middle of the twelfth century and of their inheritance through marriage from Pharamus de Boulogne had been told in 1676 by Dugdale (Baronage, II, 243), and this makes more surprising the tenacity of the early fable. Doubt has also been cast on the story by Hasted himself in a note (IV, 60), by Burrows and by Round (Commune of London, 278-82). It is too much to hope that the traditional story will be given up, but it is fitting that the true facts should at least be put on record.

It should be said that the Fiennes story was not invented by Lambarde. Prior to his day it was recorded in the Merton Register that the Conqueror granted the wardship of Dover Castle to the Lord of Fienes with the service of fifty-six Knights who kept guard each month in turn some four or five at once.¹ According to an old manuscript found by Canon Puckle among the records of Dover Castle, the Conqueror bestowed the Constabulary of the castle on the Lord of Fenes in perpetual fee and gave him 56½ Knights fees.² Before the end of the thirteenth century Stephen de Pencestre, who was Warden between 1268 and 1296, found the origins of the Constabulary tenures buried in obscurity.³

The history of castleguard service at Dover may be summed up in the following propositions :—

- I. The care of Dover Castle rested under the Conqueror with the Crown, the Earl of the shire and the Constable of England.
- II. The appointment of a local Constable began under Stephen.

¹ *Red Book of the Exchequer*, II, CCXXXIX.

² *Church and Fortress of Dover Castle*, pp. 60, 61.

³ *Red Book*, *ibid.*

- III. The Constable of Dover Castle and eight knights associated with him were first endowed with estates in 1166, and the obligation of castleguard service was changed into scutage in 1216.
- IV. The earlier practice of appointing a great officer of State was reverted to for a short time in an emergency under John and Henry III.
- V. The office of Warden of the Cinque Ports was annexed to the office of Constable about the beginning of the thirteenth century.
- VI. Castleguard rents became a mere perquisite of the Crown under Henry VIII and gradually disappeared in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

I. After the Conquest, Odo was Earl of Kent and Hugh de Montfort was the hereditary Constable of England. The Constable co-operated with the Earl of the shire in the defence of the Kingdom. Neither of them at any time held the subordinate office of Constable of Dover Castle. Dover, however, at the time was the most important fortress of England, "the lock and key of the whole Kingdom," and the most likely of attack. In the course of their duties it received the special attention of the Earl and the Constable.

When the Conqueror went to Normandy in 1067 he left Odo as regent of the Kingdom. During his absence Dover Castle was besieged by Eustace of Boulogne. The narratives of the Chroniclers on this occasion have led to the belief that Odo was the Constable of the Castle and Hugh de Montfort his second in command. But this is to misunderstand them. In dealing with the attack on Dover, William of Jumièges says: "The Knights of Odo, bishop of Bayeux, the *praesul* (i.e. regent) and of Hugh de Montfort to whom the custody of Dover had been entrusted." William of Poitiers says: "The chief protectors (custodes) of the fortification, the *praesul* of Bayeux and Hugh de Montfort, had gone beyond the river Thames with the greater number of their Knights." Orderic says: "The bishop of Bayeux

and Hugh de Montfort, who were principally charged with the defence of the coast, were on the other side of the Thames." These statements mean no more than that Dover and the Kent Coast being at the time the point of enemy attack were the special concern of these two great officers of state. Residence at Dover Castle was an impossibility for both of them.

The Constable was a royal officer of high standing in the King's Court both in war and peace. He was *magister militum* and had cognisance of matters touching feats of arms and of war. When not engaged on military expeditions he attended the King at his Court or accompanied him on his numerous journeys. He frequently attested royal charters as *Constabularius Regis* or *Constabularius Angliae* or simply as Constable.¹

Hugh de Montfort had come over with the Conqueror and fought at Hastings. Throughout his life he was one of the most trusted of William's servants. The office of Constable of England remained in the Montfort family for nearly a century (1066-1163). It was held after Hugh's death by his son Hugh de Montfort II, and after him by his brother Robert de Montfort who was described by Orderic in 1098 as *magister militum* and in 1108 as marshal of the army of Normandy by hereditary right. The two brothers appear to have died childless, and the office passed by inheritance to their half sister, Alice de Montfort, who carried it in marriage to her first husband Gilbert de Gant (died c. 1095), and afterwards to her second husband Robert de Ver. Alice de Ver was living in 1140 and soon afterwards we find the Constablership in the possession of Henry of Essex. His relationship to the Montforts is obscure, but in a charter of Monks Horton priory he speaks of *antecessores mei Hugo de Montefort et Robertus filius eius parentes mei* (*Arch. Cant.*, X, p. 273), and he is described in the Chronicle of Jocelin de Brakelond as a kinsman of the Robert de Montfort who in 1163 accused him of cowardice in his office of standard bearer and vanquished him in the ensuing trial by battle.

¹ Madox, *History of the Exchequer*, pp. 27-9.

Henry of Essex then lost all his offices and possessions and the Constablership finally passed from the House of Montfort.

The history of the office of Constable of England after 1163 can be related in a few words. Walter of Gloucester probably had it and it was certainly enjoyed by his son Miles. The daughter of Miles carried it by marriage into the great house of Bohun which was raised to the Earldom of Hereford in 1200. In 1373 the male line of Bohun became extinct and their vast inheritance was divided between co-heiresses who married two princes of the Royal house, Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, the son, and Henry of Bolingbroke (afterwards Henry IV), the grandson of Edward III. The Constablership then became dormant. Richard III recognized as Constable Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, the descendant of Thomas of Woodstock, but sent him to the block. Soon afterwards his son was restored in blood but executed in 1521 by Henry VIII, and the office of Constable has never since been granted save for the single day of the Coronation. Lord Crewe was Constable for the Coronation of King George VI.

II. But for some time before 1163 the defence of Dover had been taken out of the hands of the Constables of England and placed in the care of a resident Constable. In the anarchy and dynastic wars of Stephen's reign (1135-54) the Empress Matilda at one time obtained possession of Dover Castle and thereafter a local Constable of the Castle was maintained by Stephen and frequently changed; his own son, another Eustace of Boulogne, at one time holding the office. After the death of Eustace the office was conferred on a trusty follower, Pharamus de Boulogne, who had been put in charge of Stephen's family when he was captured at Lincoln in 1141. Sybilla the daughter of Pharamus married the Norman Ingelram de Fiennes and their son William de Fiennes succeeded about 1184 to the Constablership of Dover Castle. Thus came about the earliest association with Dover Castle of the Fiennes family. William de Fiennes continued as Constable until 1216 when he was

displaced and given by way of compensation the Manor of Wendover in Bucks.¹ The change was hastily made in a dire emergency, Louis of France having invaded England and laid siege to Dover Castle. A charter of this date states that "the King [Henry III] and his magnates with him, considering it unsafe for an alien born and the subject of another King to have the custody of the chief Castle of the whole Kingdom, made satisfaction to the Lord of Fiennes elsewhere, and appointed the lord Hubert (de Burgh) Constable."² In these circumstances the practice of appointing a local Constable to Dover Castle was interrupted for a time.

III. The charges of maintaining his great office had been defrayed by the Constable of England out of his numerous possessions. Hugh de Montfort had been granted at the Conquest many fiefs in Kent, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk, and these had remained with his successors until they escheated to the Crown on the forfeiture of Henry of Essex in 1163. The local Constables appointed by Stephen appear to have been supported by grants from the Exchequer and perhaps by the revenues of the office of Warden. But the charge of Dover was burdensome and the need of maintaining a strong garrison there was growing. Henry II met the case by a device that was characteristic of the feudal ideas of the time. He had at his disposal not only the revenues of the Montforts but also those of Bishop Odo which had escheated in 1084 and had remained in the hands of the Crown. He set apart a group of about fifty-six fees of the Montfort estates which became known as the "Honor Constabularie" in virtue of their origin. The "Honor Constabularie" first appears in the Pipe Rolls in 1166 when account is rendered for two years, and frequently reappears in subsequent years there and in the *Red Book of the Exchequer*. In and after 1205 it is more frequently called the Honour of Haganet, its *caput baroniae* being at Haughley (Haganet) in Suffolk.

¹ Farrer, *Honors and Knights Fees*, III, p. 423; *Book of Fees*, pp. 234, 876.

² Harris, *History of Kent*, p. 372. Harris misdates the Charter 1263, but Hubert was dismissed in 1232 and died in 1243.

At first the service of this barony was devoted to the defence of the Kingdom in general and the maintenance of its different fortresses, but gradually as more peaceful conditions prevailed elsewhere it seems to have been attached to Dover alone and this was certainly the case in 1211-12.¹

At the same time Henry made another important provision from a different source for strengthening the garrison of Dover Castle. In 1166 persons holding Knights fees by barony were required to certify them in the Exchequer, and in the return for Kent we find eight baronies the fees of which are identifiable with those of the eight associated Knights owing custody to Dover Castle in 1211-12. (*Red Book*, p. 189-97.) The lists of these baronies, more or less complete, recur frequently in the *Red Book* and in the Pipe Rolls between 1166 and 1211. These fees had nothing to do with the Montfort Estates but were derived from the forfeited possessions of Bishop Odo.

The Honour of the Constable contained a fraction over fifty-six Knights fees and less than half of them were in Kent. They were divided into thirteen groups of four or five each and each group performed ward for four weeks in the year. The Kent fees were in Ashford, Eastwell, Wilmington (in Sellindge), Postling, Sellindge, Polton, Blackmanstone, Bonnington, Monks Horton, Street, Trienstone (in Burmarsh), Brabourne, Ruckinge, Orlestone, Kenardington, Sillowsbridge (in Newchurch), Woodchurch, and other places in and near Romney Marsh. They correspond closely to the Kent fees held by Hugh de Montfort in Domesday.

The eight associated baronies mentioned in the *Red Book* lists are named after their holders in the reign of Henry II and these names are reproduced in the names still attached to various towers of Dover Castle. They were as follows :—

- (1) *Barony of Averenches* (Abrincis) had its *caput* in Folkestone and consisted of 21 Knights fees of which 14 were in Kent, 5 in Norfolk and 2 in Suffolk. The service was ward to the Castle for 28 weeks by 21 soldiers.

¹ *Red Book*, II, p. 813.

- (2) *Barony of Fulbert* had its *caput* in Chilham and consisted of $15\frac{1}{2}$ fees with ward for 20 weeks by 15 soldiers. The lands were all in Kent.
- (3) *Barony of Arsic* consisted of $18\frac{1}{2}$ fees of which 3 were in Kent, 3 in Dorset, Wilts and Oxon, $5\frac{1}{4}$ in Lincoln, $6\frac{1}{4}$ in Oxford and 1 in Surrey. Ward was performed for 24 weeks by 18 soldiers.
- (4) *Barony of Peverel* consisted of 15 fees of which 11 were in Kent, 1 in Bucks, 1 in Essex and 2 in Surrey. Ward for 20 weeks by 14 soldiers.
- (5) *Barony of Port* consisted of 12 fees of which 10 were in Kent and 2 in Hertford. Ward for 24 weeks by 12 soldiers.
- (6) *Barony of Mamignot* consisted of 25 fees of which 16 were in Kent, 2 in Bucks, 2 in Hertford, 3 in Northampton and 2 in Suffolk and Surrey. Ward for 32 weeks by 23 soldiers.
- (7) *Barony of Crevequer* consisted of 5 fees all in Kent, Ward for 24 weeks by 5 soldiers.
- (8) *Barony of Ada FitzWilliam* consisted of 6 fees all in Kent. Ward for 24 weeks by 6 soldiers.

In this way from different sources and by somewhat different methods the system devised by Henry II provided a garrison for Dover Castle. The system endured for half a century but it had obvious defects and it was radically altered by the reforming zeal of Hubert de Burgh in 1216. The charter of that year quoted above goes on to say : " And (Hubert) considering that it was not safe for the Castle at different months to have new guards to ward, procured with the consent of the King and of all the aforesaid Knights that every Knight due for ward of one month should pay 10s., and that henceforth certain men chosen and sworn, both Knights and foot soldiers, should be hired for guarding the Castle." The service of castleguard was thus changed into a money payment called " Castleward rent " and henceforth the holders of the fees became discharged from all

personal service and attendances, and the Castle was manned by the King's soldiers.¹

IV. In 1216 the barons were in revolt and the French King was besieging Dover Castle. Normandy had fallen to the French in 1204 and William de Fiennes, the Constable of the Castle, had done homage to Louis for his possessions in Normandy and was in a difficult position. In this emergency John fell back on the old method, superseded the local Constable and placed his justiciar, Hubert de Burgh, in charge of Dover. The Castle was defended by Hubert with energy and success and the danger averted. John died the same year and under the young Henry III honours and emoluments were showered on the victorious general. He not only held the great office of Justice of England, but also the Castle and Port of Dover with the revenues of that Haven and likewise of the Castles of Rochester and Canterbury with the fee of 1,000 marks per annum for the custody of these Castles to be paid out of the Exchequer and a further 200 marks for the custody of Montgomery Castle, and in case of war a further augmentation of these fees.² He was Sheriff of Kent in the first seventeen years of Henry III and between 1217 and 1220 expended £1,656 18s. 6d. out of the revenues of the County in fortifying Dover Castle and in the subsistence of Knights, Sergeants and Engineers who served in the Castle.³ By Charters of 1227 and 1228 he was made Earl of Kent and Constable of England with the Knights fees thereof and appurtenances.⁴ But this experiment was short-lived. Five years later Hubert lost the favour of the fickle young King and most of his offices; and from 1232 local Constables of Dover were again appointed.

V. The naval force of the Cinque Ports had long played an important part in the defence of the Kingdom and the loss of Normandy in 1204 had increased the danger of invasion.

¹ Harris, p. 372.

² Dugdale, *Baronage*, I, p. 695.

³ Madox, *History of the Exchequer*, p. 255.

⁴ *Charter Rolls*, I, pp. 12, 82.

Special "Custodes" or Wardens of the Ports and Maritime parts had been appointed by John, and about the time of the Barons' war the Cinque Ports seem to have been united under a single custos or warden. In the Constable of Dover Castle was found a Royal officer who was fitted to control the Channel traffic and organize the coastal defence, and gradually the offices of Constable and Warden became united in the hands of the Constable. Separate commissions ceased to be issued, and before the end of the thirteenth century the Constable was always Warden also. The revenues of the Wardenship helped to support the double office.¹

VI. The Castleguard rents continued for some centuries to be payable at Dover Castle. But in 1540 it was ordered by Henry VIII that they should henceforth be paid into the Exchequer and in lieu thereof that a yearly fee of £160 should be paid to the Constable and Lord Warden.² After this date the Castleguard rents became a mere unattached perquisite of the Crown and except in name their association with Dover Castle was lost. They appear to have been disposed of in parcels from time to time by later sovereigns.

In the MS. Estate Book of Thomas Wotton of Boughton Malherbe of 1580 (*penes* Dr. Gordon Ward) is a note of a payment from the Manor of Thorneham to Edwarde Rawlyns, gent. for Queen Elizabeth of 24s. 1½d., for castlewarde, and this sum appears to have been collected in numerous small sums from the tenants of the Manor. In the same year 6s. for Castlewarde was paid to Queen Elizabeth from the Manor of Mollande and Deanese in Cliffe.

The later history of thirty of the Castleward rents amounting to £29 16s. 2½d. can be traced in a Conveyance of August 15th, 1738 (*penes* Kent Record Society). They were vested in 1729 in one William Hawley of St. Clement Danes, Middlesex, gent. and were described as ffee ffarm rents and Castleguard rents issuing and payable out of divers manors, &c. in Kent for the residue of a term of 500

¹ Murray, *Const. Hist. of C.P.*, Chap. VI.

² Harris, p. 372.

years from September 3rd, 1694. This was doubtless the date on which they were sold by the Crown and the term of years was a device to satisfy the scruples of the lawyers. The rents formerly paid by the tenants of the Constable and of each of his eight associated Knights are all represented in the list. The deed of 1738 contains a schedule of the lands out of which the rents issued and of the amounts, and this is reproduced below. The occasion of the deed of 1738 was the extinguishment by purchase of the rent payable out of the Manor of Easole in Nonington, and many of the other Castleguard rents were doubtless ended in the same way, though Hasted notes that in his day some of them were still paid.

THE SCHEDULE

The Mannor of Burstead [Bearsted] (Crevequer)	1	1	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
The Moiety of the Manor of John Dive Arnold Easling [in Eastling] (Fulbert)		13	4 $\frac{1}{4}$
Mannor of Eastwell alias ffredvile [Fredville in Nonington] (Fulbert)		8	1 $\frac{3}{4}$
Mannor of Ripton alias Chariton [Cheriton] (Averanches)		18	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
Mannor of Sweet Arden [in Cheriton] (Averanches)		9	4 $\frac{1}{4}$
Mannor of Wickham Bushes [in Lydden] (Mamignot)		16	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
ffarningham Mannor (Arsic)	1	1	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
Mannor of Maplescomb [in Kingsdown, nr. Wrotham] (Arsic)	1	1	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
Mannor of Horston Chilham [in Chartham] (Fulbert)	1	6	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Mannor of Evering [in Alkham] (Averanches)		18	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
Mannor of Kernsey [in River] (Mamignot)		8	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Mannor of Coddesland Easling called Woods Court [in Badlesmere] (Fulbert)		13	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Mannor of Solton [in Westcliffe] (Peverel)		13	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Mannor of John of Easling called North Court [in Eastling] (Fulbert)	1	6	1 $\frac{1}{2}$

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Mannor of Eastwell alias Essoles alias St. Albans Court [in Nonington] (Fulbert)	8	13	$\frac{3}{4}$
Mannor of Withereing [in Molash] (Peverel)	1	6	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Mannor of Downe alias Downe Court [in Woodnesborough] (Crevequer)	1	1	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
ffor the moiety of the Mannor of Woodnes- borough (Crevequer)	7	4	
Mannor of Treiniston [in Burmarsh] (Constable)	10	0	
Mannor of Buckwell [in Boughton Aluph] (Arsic)	1	1	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
Mannor of Kenarton [Kenardington] (Constable)	10	0	
Mannor of Popeshall [in Coldred] (Port)	10	10	$\frac{1}{4}$
Mannor of Harthanger [in Barfrestone] (Ada FitzWilliam)	1	1	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Mannor of William Solely [Soles in Nonington] (Crevequer)	1	1	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
Mannor of Oldefeild and Kingston [in Kingston] (Fulbert)	13	0	$\frac{1}{2}$
Mannor of Ashurst (Peverel)	1	6	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Mannor of Touleigh alias Trouleigh [Throwley] (Peverel)	3	5	1
Mannor of Battlesmore [Badlesmere] (Crevequer)	14	8	
Mannor of Orleston (Constable)	1	0	0
One full moiety or half part of the Mannor of Lydcourt [Cocklescombe in Lydden] (Mamignot)	1	16	9 $\frac{1}{2}$