

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN KENT 1480-1660

VI. THE IMPACT OF THE COUNTY ON THE NATION

KENTISH donors were by no means parochial in their concern with the needs of the poor and the extension of social and educational opportunity. Excluding benefactions to the universities and for university scholarship endowments, Kentish donors during the course of our period gave the relatively large sum of £10,566 14s. towards the charitable endowments of other counties and countries. This total was the gift of 186 separate donors and amounted to the not inconsiderable proportion of 4·20 per cent. of the whole of Kentish charitable funds amassed during our period. This proportion compares very favourably with that noted in the other counties studied,<sup>1</sup> and it not only suggests strong ties with nearby counties but likewise indicates that certain Kentish donors, particularly those interested in the foundation of grammar schools, seem to have felt that the needs of their own county had been fulfilled with reasonable adequacy and that other and poorer counties stood in greater need of their generosity.<sup>2</sup>

It will be observed in Table C that a heavy proportion of these extra-Kentish benefactions were concentrated in Middlesex and Surrey, the counties with which Kent enjoyed the closest of geographical and cultural bonds. It will not be amiss to note that Kentish donors returned to London, for a great variety of uses, at least a tiny fraction (3·1 per cent.) of the immense endowments which the county had gained from the great and generous merchants of the capital. Moreover, at least nominal benefactions were made to the charitable institutions of twenty-seven other English counties, the only surprising area of neglect being found in the counties of southwestern England. Small benefactions were made in Calais, in Ireland, and in Rome, while four donors made substantial gifts, totalling £840, for schools, the poor, church repair, and the maintenance of the clergy in distant Wales.

A very large proportion of these donors were members of the upper gentry who held lands or who had family connections in other counties. In all, thirty-two members of this class made gifts or bequests in all parts of England, totalling slightly more than £2,500 and being designated for schools, poor relief, and almshouses, in that order of preference. A slightly larger number of the lower gentry, thirty-nine in all, gave £2,034 9s. to the charitable needs of the remainder of the realm, only four of them giving as much as £100 each, though one gift, totalling

<sup>1</sup> The proportion of total charitable wealth provided for other counties ranges from 0·79 per cent. for Bristol to 30·95 per cent. for London. It is interesting that the two cities should constitute the poles in this regard.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide ante*, 88-89.

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TABLE C.

<i>County benefiting</i>	<i>Number of donors</i>	<i>Total benefactions</i>	
		£	s.
Bedfordshire	1	5	0
Berkshire	4	42	5
Bristol	22	18	7
Buckinghamshire	2	11	0
Cambridgeshire	1	132	0
Cumberland	1	700	0
Devon	2	10	0
Durham	1	2	7
Essex	9	156	17
Gloucestershire	3	207	0
Hampshire	7	121	4
Lancashire	2	202	0
Leicestershire	3	520	0
Lincolnshire	1	35	0
Middlesex (London)	64	3,202	7
Norfolk	6	367	0
Northamptonshire	1	1	0
Northumberland	1	0	13
Nottinghamshire	1	1	0
Shropshire	1	200	0
Staffordshire	1	10	0
Suffolk	4	212	0
Surrey	13	2,994	9
Sussex	18	361	10
Warwickshire	2	35	6
Westmorland	1	2	0
Wiltshire	3	58	0
Worcestershire	2	71	5
Yorkshire	1	2	10
	[178]	[£9,682	0]
Calais	1	13	7
Ireland	2	31	0
Wales	4	840	0
Rome	1	0	7
	186	£10,566	14

£864 7s., and made for the endowment of lectureships and poor relief in London, accounted for a very large fraction of the total for the class. The generous total provided by the upper clergy, and particularly by several archbishops of Canterbury, is to be expected and would of course be much larger were it not for the rigorous rule which has credited to Kent only those endowments for the benefit of that county and as Kentish benefactions in other counties only those in which the property constituting the endowment was situated in Kent. There was likewise a considerable number of yeoman benefactors to other counties, though it should be observed that most of them lived near the borders of Kent and that their gifts, largely for poor relief, were principally designated for parishes in Sussex, Surrey, and Essex in which they held property or to which they were connected by family ties.