

point is not material, having satisfied ourselves that Perton had no more to do with pears than Netherton had with apples.

The privileges of ancient demesne, that we have already stated appertained to the Manor of Perton, do not appear to have been very highly appreciated by its apparently apathetic inhabitants; for while the neighboring Manor of Worfield across the Shropshire border, but at one time in Staffordshire, as also its next neighbor Claverley or Clareley Home, exerted extraordinary means to assert their ancient demesne privileges, the former obtaining a charter from King Edward the first, and afterwards spending considerable sums of money and much energy to get the same recognized even down to the time of Queen Elizabeth; Perton has few records that even mention their substantial rights in this respect. Those notices that exist are only during the course of litigation chiefly against the lords of the manor. Perhaps the small number of the tenants is the most ostensible reason that can be assigned for this apparent negligence. As just mentioned, however, we shall presently see that when protesting against the oppressive rapacity and extortion of their lords, they made mention of their ancient demesne inheritance, and from this mention we gather that the Ancient Demesne of Perton was derived from its having been formerly part of the original royal manor of Tettenhall Regis which was evidently of considerable extent.

Saxon Perton is to us almost a sealed book, and the only points we can fix at that remote age are the tenure of the Westminster monks succeeding that of King Edgar. To this king's possession was handed down, most probably from the long line of the Kings and Earls of Mercia, the whole of the extensive tract extending from the Severn bank, which in those times was the boundary of Staffordshire, down to Areley Kings and Kington in the south part of Worcestershire, across by King's Norton and Birmingham, by Rowley Regis in the west; Newton Regis, King's Bromley including Needwood Forest, Kingston, Kanok Chase, Brewood, and Kingswood at the Shropshire borders. This territory included the forests of Kanok, Needwood, Brewood, Kingswood, Morfe and Kinver; and in point of fact, at that period, nearly the whole of the County of Stafford, was a sort of grand centre of the royal shooting and hunting ground, and surrounded by and more or less in connection with other forests of even larger extent, such as Arden, Sherwood, Dean, Wyre and Shirlet; the whole forming a truly royal chase. From Edgar, probably the whole of these crown possessions came down to Edward the Confessor almost intact, but this crowned votary of superstition made sad havoc with their integrity, bestowing manors and meres, woodlands and wastes, on the different monastic bodies that were increasing at this period with such alarming strides. In fact two or three such kings would have put England irretrievably under the entire rule of the priesthood and rendered it a more complete waste than Italy was some years ago; a country of paupers and slaves, looked down upon everywhere by the frowning walls of ecclesiastic strongholds and palaces. The Manor of Perton did not escape the ruthless dissipation of this royal priest in disguise, for he bestowed it, by a deed or letter, one of the earliest in existence, in the Anglo-Saxon tongue, still extant amongst the archives of Westminster Abbey, upon the abbot and brethren of that establishment, shortly before his own death, in 1066. Although this deed or royal letter has appeared in print at least thrice previously, viz., in the 'Codex Diplomaticus' of Kemble; in a volume published by the Record Office in 1883, entitled 'Facsimiles of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts'; and in James P. Jones' 'History of Tettenhall' in 1894; its great age and immense