

**THE GREAT DOMESDAY BOOK OF IPSWICH;
LIBER SEXTUS: WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO
THE ENTIRE VOLUME, FULL NOTES AND A
COMMENTARY; WITH A BRIEF ACCOUNT
OF THE EARLIER LITTLE DOMESDAY BOOKS
BELONGING TO THE SAME TOWN**

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The great domesday book of Ipswich; liber sextus: with an introduction to the entire volume, full notes and a commentary; with a brief account of the earlier little domesday books belonging to the same town by Richard Percyvale

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RICHARD PERCYVALE

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THE GREAT DOMESDAY BOOK OF IPSWICH,

COMPILED BY RICHARD PERCYVALE.

12 HENRY VIII.

LIBER SEXTUS.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ENTIRE VOLUME AND THE EARLIER
DOMESDAY BOOKS BELONGING TO THE TOWN.

The ancient Borough of Ipswich, besides possessing a rather remarkable and extensive collection of Rolls, Charters and Letters Patent, Deeds, both private and municipal, as well as other miscellaneous writings of varied worth, is fortunate in having among the town Archives, several books, both written and printed, which are of special value and importance, alike to the antiquary and historian, and of no small account in the eyes of the intelligent burgess, who rightly regards each as a link in the silver chain that connects the present with the past. The interest which attaches to these volumes may be said mainly to centre in those, known respectively as the 'New' or 'Great' Domesday and the 'Old' or 'Little' Domesday Book, concerning which, and especially the former, I desire to draw attention.

The ancient laws and customs of Ipswich, dating from a very early period of the town's constitution and history, were originally contained in certain Rolls, once the cherished inheritance of our forefathers, but which, alas! were in the 56th year of the reign of Henry III.

abstracted from the "Comyn Hutehe or Chestre" and, regardless of the grievous injury inflicted thereby upon the town, purloined by a certain notorious Town Clerk ("*un faus comun Clerk*") one, John le Blake, of whom, and the precious Rolls, it is almost needless to say, nothing further was heard. 'Men of the East' are proverbially '*wise*,' so that it is no cause for surprise, that we find the Ipswich townsfolk soon after this occurrence, deputing to twenty-four of their number, the task of compiling afresh an account of the ancient usages of the Borough, of the extreme importance of which they thus appear to have been fully sensible. These revived customs, ordinances and regulations, were embodied in the volume since known as the "*Domesday des Leyes e des usages de Gippeswiz*," but more commonly as the 'Little Domesday Book,' and appears to have been completed in the 19th year of Edward I. This work, however, seems very soon after to have disappeared, but not before two official copies had been made sometime during the reign of Edward II., and these were a little later on, increased to the number of three.

Of the fourteenth century transcripts, one is an octavo volume, containing within its leather covers, ninety-one leaves of vellum, upon fifty of which, appear in a neat hand, a copy in French of the former Domesday Book, while sundry other matters, of a later period, occupy the remaining forty one skins.

The other transcript, or duplicate copy, is apparently the work of the same penman, and also contains on the leaves not used for the original purpose of the book, much interesting matter of a subsequent date.

A third transcript of a similar character, and executed probably *about* the same time as the two copies just mentioned, but every way inferior to them, found its way some twenty-five years ago into the hands of the British Museum authorities,* under circumstances

* "*Le Domesday des Leyes et Usages de Gippeswiz* 19 Edw: I. Br: Mus: clvii. s. Add MSS. 25,011.

detailed at length in the Report recently made by Mr. J. C. Jeaffreson for the Historical MSS. Commission (Appendix ix, p. 242). Beside the French text, this copy has an English translation, and is easily accessible to the student in an admirable edition published in the Roll series,* which has an able introduction, pointing out especially the importance of the Ipswich Domesday as a unique volume among a rare class of documents: valuable foot notes, explanatory of obsolete terms, &c., are to be found on nearly every page.

In addition to this volume, a fifteenth century copy of this Domesday, was, at the same time as the other transcript mentioned, purchased by the Trustees of the British Museum, in whose custody it remains.

This latter volume was in all probability the precursor of the 'new' or 'Great' Domesday Book, so called from having been compiled in the 12th year of Henry VIII, and owing also to its great size, compared with the earlier transcripts of the former Domesday. Except only in point of priority of date, the Great Domesday Book of Richard Percyvale, (formerly one of the Portmen of the Town,) is a volume of far greater interest and importance than the earlier volumes to which allusion has been made, and supplied, what must have been a long felt want, in giving (to use the words of the compiler) "*as many of the old grants, liberties, ordinances, laws and good constitutions,*" as he could find "*prescription or good matter of record for, with divers and sundry other matters right necessary to be had and known in the town and borough of Ipswich.*" (see Prologue.)

The Great Domesday Book is a finely written thick folio, bound in old embossed calf, measuring 16 in. by 12 in. and containing 271 leaves of vellum, the whole being divided into seven Books (preceded by the prologue) which are as follows:—

LIBER PRIMUS, contains the Charter granted in the first year of the reign of King John, followed by records

* The Black Book of the Admiralty, Appendix, Part ii, vol. ii, 1873. Edited by Sir Travers Twiss, q.c., D.C.L.

of succeeding grants, &c., as far as 13 Edward I. This book is mainly taken up with matter contained in the Little Domesday Volume and consists of twenty-one vellum leaves, and one leaf blank. (It is preceded by five blank leaves, upon the back of one of these a memorandum is written.)

LIBER SECUNDUS, has an English rendering of the eighty-three chapters contained in the earlier volume, where it is given in French; to these ordinances and regulations affecting the municipal life, twenty others of a latter date are added in Latin, the most remarkable being those for the proper ordering of the religious observances connected with the famous Merchants Guild of Corpus Christi. This book occupies no less than fifty-eight leaves: there are beside seventeen that are plain.

LIBER TERTIUS, is taken up with

(1) An Ordinance for the regulation of the *beremen* or *Wynedraggers* (porters) as laid down in the Little Domesday.

(2) The Toune Custumes belonging to the Kynge's fee-ferme.

(3) The Assise of weying of brede after the Statute of Wynchester.

(4) The Assyse for bruers.

This book contains fifteen leaves, with one left plain at the end.

LIBER QUARTUS, has in Latin "the constitution for Corpus Christi procession and in what maner the Maundy shulde yerely be kepte with other dyuers remembraunces requesyte to be had in memory;" followed by an order "how euery occupacion or crattesmen shuld ordre themselves in their goyng * * * in the same procession." There are also between 30 and 40 other distinct entries consisting of copies of Indentures, acquittances, enrolments, grants, extracts, memorandums, &c., &c., the whole occupying seventy-eight leaves, 18 or 19 of which are written in a late (bad) hand (*temp.* Eliz: and Ph: and

Mary) and two blank leaves. Three leaves that follow, which may also be said to form part of Book iv, contain in several different hands, various oaths added at a subsequent time to those which appear in Book v. so as to meet the requirements of after legislation, viz.

- (a) The Bailiffs (as to Impanelling Juries.)
- (b) Justices of the Peace.
- (c) Searchers of Leather.
- (d) Sealer of Leather.
- (e) Fleshwardens.
- (f) Wardens of the Foundation (29 Sep. 1623)
- (g) Town Treasurer.
- (h) Clavigers.

The fourth book is thus by far the largest portion of the several divisions marked in the volume, and has the widest range of subjects.

LIBER QUINTUS, is by reason of its contents, that part of the book which in former days was most frequently called into requisition, and from it, the markets &c., were periodically proclaimed. It consists of twenty leaves, which bear marks of long continued usage, at the end of which are two blank leaves, and contains "alle the othes that euery bayliff, portman, burgeys and alle other officers be wonte to swere when they be admyttyd into ther romys and offices with other dyuerse articules that the bayliffes of this towne be bounde to se obserued and kepte and to proclayme them euery yere in dyuers places of this Town with the Libertyes of this town by water and by land."

LIBER SEXTUS, may claim to be regarded as a book possessing more general interest than the others. The greater part of the contents of this portion, is taken up with matters relating, not to Ipswich only, but to the whole County of Suffolk *i.e.* (1) Taxes paid by every town in Suffolk to the King's Grace. (2) List of Knights' Fees of the Honors of Lancaster and Leicester in the County of Suffolk. It contains also, (a) a curious heraldic

description of the arms borne by divers Sovereigns; (b) a quaint memorandum of ancient lineal measurements, and what I have elsewhere spoken of as, (c) a "Rhyming Chronicle of the Kings of England," (William I. to Edward IV.), and attributed to Lydgate, the Monk-poet of Bury,* which brings the sixth book to a conclusion. There are in this part, twenty leaves, three of which remain blank.

LIBER SEPTIMUS, is the last book: it contains the Charter confirmed to the town in the 3rd year of Henry VIII. with another Charter relating to the Admiralty, and sundry other matters, written upon nineteen leaves, and there are beside, nine leaves at the end left plain.

The character and contents of the Great Domesday Book, as well as the object and design of its predecessors, may, it is thought from this description, be deemed of sufficient interest to lead many to desire a further and fuller acquaintance with the volume, such as a study of the book in its entirety can alone give.

It will be seen that the Great Domesday Book, is in point of fact, what in process of time the earlier Domesday volumes were inclined to become, a veritable *olla podrida*, for, if not exactly a receptacle for "odds and ends," many of the entries there made, cannot but be regarded as altogether foreign to the original purpose for which such a book was designed. We have, however, abundant cause for satisfaction, that the Great Domesday Book, is in respect of its varied contents, just what it is; the antiquary especially will be sure to find pleasure in the preservation of such quaint things as some which are here recorded, and which might otherwise have disappeared altogether. This feature is prominent in, and indeed may be said in a great measure to be confined to, the sixth book. Beside all this the inhabitant of Suffolk may find therein matters of some importance to the whole County, which perhaps point to a position, more or less one of pre-eminence, which may have been

* *East Anglian, New Ser.*, vol. I., pp. 38, 41.

occupied by the town of Ipswich in the reign of Henry VI. and have caused the Borough to be regarded also as a 'remembrancer' and custodian for the County at large. The section which best illustrates this conjecture, is the following account, also from the sixth book, of the "*taxes paid by every Town in Suffolk to the King's Grace,*" which deserves to be made accessible to all who are interested in the history of the County. Of such taxes it may be said, that originally the amount payable to the King was uncertain, being levied by fresh assessments at each grant made by the Commons, but in the 8th year of Edward III. new taxations were made, by virtue of the King's Commission, of every township &c. in the kingdom, which quite settled the tax payable in each several case, and for the County of Suffolk, is that here recorded.

Richard Ferrabyale's Great Somesbury Book. 12 Henry iii.
Liber Sextus.

"HERE BEGYNNETH THE VIth PARTE OF THIS BOKE
AND FIRST FOLOWITH WHAT TAXES EȚY TOWN
IN SUFFOLK PAYETH TO THE KYNGS GRACE.

Villa de Gippō cū hamleta de Wyks Ufford hamleta de Wyks Episcopi hamleta de Stoke et hamleta de Brokys halle LXIIij ^s xs vd Et Inde p donat. in Anno xxxij ^o Rege henrici sexti p dictā dmā Regem	xxli ^s		
Et sic Remañ	XLIIij ^s	xs	vd.
Unde hamleta de Wyks Ufford soluit		xxvijs	viii ^d .
Item hamleta de Wyks epi soluit		xxiiij ^s	
Item hamleta de Stoke soluit		xvs	
Item hamleta de Brokys soluit		viijs	
Item Burgus Gippi soluit resid viz	XLi ^s	xvjs	ix ^d
Burgus dunwici soluit	xij ^s		
Burgus de Orford soluit	xi ^s		
Burgus de Eye soluit	viii ^s		ix ^d
Sū Burgoz β diet cū hamleta-iiii ^s	xii ^s	xs	ij ^d