

Monday, April 27, 1874.

The Tichborne Dole An Old Family Custom.

During the course of the great Tichborne trial it will be remembered that an allusion was made, in the evidence of Bogle, to the "Dole Picture," an oil painting which hangs in the dining room of Tichborne House, representing the distribution of the dole, and which was painted in the year 1670. The custom, which is an annual one, was instituted in the early part of the twelfth century, during the reign of Henry II., by Mabel, the wife of Sir Roger de Tichborne. The lady acquired a great reputation for piety and charity, and was also beloved by the peasantry to have wrought miracles. She is described in the family records as having been "so charitable to the poor, that not content to exercise that virtue all her lifetime, she instituted the 'Tichborne Dole' as a perpetual memorial of her goodness, and entailed it to her posterity." This beautiful custom was observed yesterday, March 25, at Tichborne House, being upward of seven centuries since its inauguration.

Tichborne House is one of those charming English homesteads which are found scattered over the land, the general beauties of which are formed by a frequent and gently undulating slope. It is approached from the high road through a well-wooded park, in which the clear waters of the Tichborne quietly ripple. In the immediate front of the house, which makes no pretensions to architectural effect, being simply a flat facade relieved by a portico supported by stone pillars, is a fine sheet of water, an artificial enlargement of the Tichborne, in which several white swans gracefully float, besides numerous wild ducks. The stream is thence conveyed under a lawn which flanks the western wing of the house into the old moat which is now used as a trout preserve, whence it again communicates with the Tichborne, a noted trout stream, which affords during the season a most pleasant sport to fly-fishers. From the western wing of the house can be seen the old parish church of Tichborne, with its tower crowning the crest of the hill, the intervening space being dotted over with the farms and cottages which comprise the village of Tichborne. The house and grounds have become of such interest to curiosity mongers during the course of the recent proceedings that its present occupants, Captain and Mrs. Wickham (Lady Alfred Tichborne), have found it imperative, in order to escape continued dunning, to refuse all applications to visit the interior.

The "dole" is distributed to all applicants residing in the parish of Tichborne and Cheriton, in the proportion of one gallon of best wheat flour to each adult, and half a gallon to each child. As early as nine o'clock, men, women and children were to be seen making their way across the park from various points, carrying with them bags and baskets in which to convey home the bounty about to be bestowed on them.

It had been intended that the distribution this year should be made on the lawn in front of the house, but the infant Harry, Sir Henry Alfred Joseph Doughty Tichborne, a fine little fellow in his eighth year, was unfortunately unable to be present, as he was recovering from an attack of the measles. The programme was therefore altered, and the lady members of the family, who were present at the ceremony, which took place at the rear of the house. The applicants, as before stated, were made up of persons of both sexes and of various ages. In one corner was a group of decayed agricultural laborers attired in old smock frocks, gaiters and slouched billycocks—men who had evidently seen hard work in their time. Some of these were bent forward from the effect of age and physical debility, but others, although bald-headed and nearly toothless, yet maintained an upright gait. The women were largely in the majority, and there were few of them who had passed middle age, being chiefly the wives and daughters of healthy laborers who were away at work, but whose share of the dole was handed over to them on application. The women, as a rule, looked comely and well fed.

All being in readiness, the first step was taken by a couple of ward-masters, who emptied several of the sacks of flour into an immense tub. Then the resident priest of the quiet little domestic chapel which forms part of the mansion, the Rev. Thomas Chubb, offered up a short prayer, and after invoking the blessing of heaven on the gift sprinkled the flour with holy water from a silver ewer, by an acolyte, Captain Wickham was present and Mr. F. Bowker, Jr., who does not look one whit the worse for his labors throughout the recent trial. These superintended the distribution. It was no uncommon thing for one person to carry away three or four gallons of flour, and the largest quantity awarded was in the case of a household consisting of man, wife, and seven children, the wife carrying away with her five and half gallons. The name of John Etheridge, the blacksmith who proved such a characteristic witness for the prosecution, was called out as one of the recipients. The old man did not personally appear, but a substitute conveyed his share. Then came the name of the Dowager Lady Tichborne until her death—a hale old man of seventy, spare and upright, with kindly looks, who now lives in a small freehold cottage at Cheriton, of which he is owner, having retired from work on a small competency—also came forward, and received three gallons of flour.

So, in due course the task of distribution went on, each recipient, by a courtesy or a pull at the forelock, being secured in alphabetical succession, and the work extending over a period of about two hours, until nine sacks, each containing fifty gallons of flour, had been distributed. The total number of recipients was upward of 600, and the entire quantity of flour was absorbed.—London Standard.

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for 20 per cent more work than any other drill

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Is being used by the St. Louis Tunnel Co., and where once used seeks for itself. But one more is necessary to start such a work, being secured in alphabetical succession, and the work extending over a period of about two hours, until nine sacks, each containing fifty gallons of flour, had been distributed. The total number of recipients was upward of 600, and the entire quantity of flour was absorbed.—London Standard.

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