

Pitchford and Richard de Pitchford were killed. In 1326 John de Perton had to find sureties, in the matter of the same riotous disturbances. This great quarrel, that for a length of time, convulsed the whole of west Staffordshire and north east Shropshire, and terrified the peaceable inhabitants by the violence of its episodes, was a kind of family feud, relative to the advowson of the Church Eaton living, and it would appear that almost every family of importance in this neighborhood was drawn into the vortex of its turmoil, and more or less mixed up in the embroilment. The fatal result to John de Pitchford of Blumenhull (Blymhill), at last brought the affair under the notice and active interference of the authorities. This extensive and intricate emeute, for a long time dragged its weary course and occupied the judicial mind for a number of years, leading to many complications in its course. Its origin was in the death of John Bagod who had been lord of Blymhill Manor and patron of Church Eaton living, when he left the latter right equally to his four daughters, who married, respectively William de Iptanes, Ralph de Covene, Richard de Pitchford and Geoffrey de Bromley. Their second daughter Margaret Covene, left three daughters and co-heiresses, who had equal division of their mother's share in this advowson, and duly married husbands, all the four daughters of John Bagod, in fact leaving heirs. Thus the advowson rights were divided up into many shares, which resulted in this deplorable county convulsion. At Easter 1329 Adam Gilbert of Codsall, executor of the will of William de Codsall, sued Walter Perton, a prebendary of Tettenhall church of saint Michael, for a debt of nine marks, and the bishop had been ordered to produce the said Walter at this date, and had done nothing. Another mandate was therefore sent to the bishop to produce the said Walter, at the quindene of saint Michael. One other of the many cases that proved the loop hole of escape for sainted scoundrels, called 'benefit of clergy,' this was simply a legalized fraud, devised by priestcraft, by which the sanctified defaulter and criminal too often escaped from the stern hand of justice. A most disreputable case of public swindling on a wholesale scale, in connection with the county tax farm, cropped up, previous to this period in 1324, when Sir Thomas Pipe knight and Philip de Lutteley, late principal taxers and collectors of the 10th and 6th in the County of Stafford were found to have appropriated much money from the villis, to their own use, and its details are as bad as those of any modern Irish ring, and worse in the fact that they emanated from men of supposed integrity and respectability. The investigation into the matter took place at Tutbury in December 1323 before John de Stonore and his fellow justices, when the jury presented that "under color of their office, they had taken a great sum of money from various villis, to their own use." Richard Oxyete shaye (Ivetsey) clerk of Sir Thomas Pipe, and Philip de Lutteley, being summoned, could not deny that he had been badly conducted in his office, and was fined twenty marks. "The juries presented, that the accused misconducted themselves, by taking a great sum of money, by extortion from the various villis, so that the same villis might be spared in the taxation, and not be taxed according to the true value of their chattels. The Sheriff was therefore ordered to summon all the principal taxers, to be at Tutbury on the Monday before the feast of saint Lucy the virgin." William de Stafford and John de Perton, had been the chief taxers for the 20th; William de Mere, and John de Perton for the 18th; and John Giffard and John de Perton for the 16th, William de Mere was dead and John de Perton appeared for himself, and the other chief taxers and Simon Francis, for the sub-taxers. They stated that they did not tax the men of the villis in the county, accord-