

be the case with Garth Bledodyn.

This particular group would seem to have been the largest collection of Cymer Abbey lands granted to any one beneficiary. It contained nine parcels of land in Llanfachreth, with all the buildings and other appurtenances, including mines and quarries.¹ One of the beneficiaries was a certain Robert Multon of London, Esq., "late one of the Auditors of The Exchequer of our saide Sovereigne ladie the Quene"². Multon "seems", writes T.P. Ellis, "in his official capacity, to have

1. The tenements were:-

- (1) Two tenements called Tyddyn Mayse Kyneghe and Wenalte.
- (2) A tenement called Kay Devett, late in the tenure of Howel ap David ap Mourig (Hugh Nanney's grandfather).
- (3) A tenement called Kelly giewrcaghe.
- (4) A tenement called Lloyn kynthell.
- (5) A tenement called Haved Jouan.
- (6) A tenement called Hire haved newed.
- (7) A tenement called Yr Toyne Fryde.
- (8) A tenement called Yr Hengrett.
- (9) A messuage or tenement called Brech Bede, late in the tenure of Lewis Owen and Richard Nanney (Hugh Nanney's uncle, of Cefndendwr). - Nannau MS. 892.

2. Nannau MS. 892.

appropriated to his own use, no doubt under an official grant, the whole of the Abbey lands in Llanfachreth."¹.

That T.P. Ellis's conjecture is false is proved by various later deeds.² After Hugh Nanney had bought these Llanfachreth tenements³, he sold two of them - Gelli Glewrach to David ap John Lloyd Wyn for £72. by a deed dated the 14 December 1584⁴, and Tyddyn y Wenallt to William Vaughan ap Hoell ap Gwilym for £60. by two deeds, one dated the 7 March 1585, and the other dated the 4th. December 1585.⁵ In both cases

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1. T.P. Ellis, "Merioneth Notes", in "Y Cymroder", Vol. 38, P. 17.
 2. Nannau MSS. 904, 905, 908.
 3. Vide Infra, P. 204; Nannau MS. 899.
 4. Nannau MS. 904.
 5. Nannau MS. 905, 908. T.P. Ellis has a note on Tyddyn y Wenallt: "The farm of Tyddyn y Wenallt seems to have been also granted by the Crown to John Powis. At any rate, he sold it to one Hugh Nanney, and he, in 1585, transferred it to one William Vaughan." - "Merioneth Notes", PP. 17 - 18. It is impossible to reconcile this statement with the irrefutable evidence of Nannau MSS. 905 and 908, where it is categorically stated that the original grant was made by the Crown to John Barry and John Goodrich. It is also recorded as having passed through several hands before reaching Hugh Nanney.

the deeds recite the previous history of the tenements, which is the same for both, and presumably for the rest of the Llanfachreth tenements. From this it appears that the Queen, by Letters Patent dated the 4 April 1562, granted the tenements to a certain John Parry and John Goodrich, who "by their deeds Indented and inrolled in her Ma^{ties} high Corte of Chancerie" dated the 8 April 1562, sold them to Robert Multon, Esq.¹.

By a deed dated the 2 May, 1564, Robert Multon leased some of the lands to Ryce ap Robert of Llanfachreth and Howel ap Robert of the parish of Delgelley, yeoman², for a term of twenty one years at an annual rent of fifty shillings. One clause in this lease illustrates perfectly the commercial exploitation of these Cymer Abbey lands by the London speculator. The lessees receive the tenements, with "all and singler Landes meadowes pastures voide grounds and other hereditaments to the saide tenements or to any of them blonginge or apperteyninge..... EXCEPTE and out of this presente Lease and graunte allwayes reserved to the said Roberte Multon his heires and Assignes All woodes underwoods tymbers and Trees nowe standinge growinge and beinge and that hereafter shall stand growe or be of in and uppon the premisses and every parcell therof Together

1. Nannau MS.904.

2. Nannau MS.890

with free ingresse egressse regressse passage course and recourse into and from all and singular the premisses to and for the said Roberte Multon his heres and assignes wth his and there horses carts and Carryage to fell cutt downe and carrye all and singular the same woods underwoods and trees from tyme to tyme and at all tymes during the terme thereunder written."¹.

In 1579 Robert Multon's will was made and soon afterwards he must have died.² On the 10 November 1582 his son Thomas Multon of Maple Durham, Oxford, gentleman, quitclaimed to his widowed mother Elisabeth Multon all his claims to these lands situated "within the fields Towne and Parrish of llanvacreth in the Countie of Merioneth late parcell of the late dissolved

1. The exploitation of Merionethshire, - as shown by this document, by Gruffydd Wyn's spoil of Cymer woods (Supra, Ch. 5, P. 158, n. 1), and by the Penrhos Common case (Infra, Ch. 7, PP. 144-45; Supra Ch. 5, PP. 154-55) - continued over the years. It may be of interest to quote on this point John Byng's comment (writing 1781 - 1794) on the number of trees being cut throughout the county, "the air being quite impregnated with the smell of the charcoal fires", - C. B. Andrews (editor), "The Torrington Diaries", Vol. 1, P. 149.

2. Nannau MS. 892.

monastery of kimmer",¹. One of the witnesses was a certain John Hill. By a deed of Bargain and Sale dated the 4 December of the same year this John Hill, of London, gent., bought these Llanfachreth lands from Elizabeth Multon for £500.² It appears that Robert Multon in his will had made Elizabeth his executrix and had stipulated that she was to sell these lands "amonge other things..... to thintente to paie and discharge his legacies with the menny thereof Cominge."³.

After certain preparatory transactions John Hill eventually, on the 6 August 1584, sold the property for £500 to one Edward Price⁴, stated in one document to be of Bernard's Inn, Middlesex⁵. and in another to be of Cynfael, Merionethshire.⁶ From these transactions it would appear that John Hill married the

1. Nannau MS.891.

2. Nannau MS.892.

3. *ibid.*

4. Nannau MS.896; associated deeds: Nannau MSS. 893 - 898.

5. Nannau MS.893.

6. Nannau MS.895. For Edward Price of Cynfael vide "Augmentations Records", PP.432-5.

widow Elizabeth Multon, for in one document provision is made for Edward Price to pay part of the purchase price to Hill "at the nowe mansion howse of the saide Elizabeth Multon in the saide parishe of St. Alban in greate woodstreete in london", and elsewhere in the same document is a reference to "Elizabeth nowe wief of the said John Hill."¹.

Finally, by a deed dated the 8 August in the same year, (1584) Edward Price sold the lands to Hugh Nanney Esquire, his fellow-countryman, for an unspecified sum of money.².

The future history of these tenements is simply a record of Hugh Nanney's mortgage on them to a Francis Albany of Lincoln's Inn for £240 on the 29 August 1584³, the redemption of the mortgage⁴, and the subsequent sale of two of the tenements by Hugh Nanney.⁵ One of the tenements was sold to David ap John Lloyd Wynn, whose father John Llwydwyn held it as a tenant for some

1. Nannau MS.893.

2. Nannau MS.899.

3. Nannau MSS. 900, 901.

4. Nannau MSS. 906, 907.

5. Vide Supra, PP.101-2; Nannau MSS. 904, 905, 908.

time.^{1.}

While T.P. Ellis's claim that the facts "show, fairly conclusively, that local landowners in Merioneth were not grantees of Abbey land"^{2.}, is generally correct, there are instances where local landowners did benefit directly - two of which concern the Manney family. T.P. Ellis has himself elsewhere remarked upon one of these: "The only instance I have found where local residents acquired any of the Cymer lands direct from the Crown was in the reign of Edward VI, when Baron Owen's father and Richard Manney of Mannau became lessees for twenty-one years of three small holdings in Delgelley and one in Mannau. Probably at a later date they bought the

1. Mannau MS. 904; Mannau MS. 188 bears the following heading: "Evidences delivered to the hands of Dd. ap John Lloydwyn be set down hereunder particularly by him to be redelivered to Hugh Lewis Owen." Then follows a list of the transactions following the sale by Elisabeth Multon to John Hill.

2. T.P. Ellis, "Merioneth Notes", P.18.

lessor's rights as well".¹.

The other record of a direct grant to the Nanneys is in 1589. An undated lease from the Court of Augmentations records the grant to Griffith ap Hoell ap David (i.e. Gruffydd Wyn, later Nanney), of a tenement with appurtenances called Brynyllyn y Cwmkedryn, at a rent of 26/8. A note is added to the effect that the tenement called Bryn-y-llyn "stands for the more part in two barren mountains and between the same a valley of well moorish ground containing all in circuit about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, very difficult to be measured, whereon is built one cottage or dairy house

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1. T.P. Ellis, "Delgelley and Llanelltyd", P.85; Arch. Camb. 1847, P.328; Cal. Pat. Rolls, 5 Eliz., P.499. Presumably the grant referred to is that recorded in the "Augmentations Records", P.430. This involves the lease to Richard Nanney and Lewis Owen of three tenements in Delgelley, three in Mannau, and a parcel of mountain in Trawsfynydd. One of the Mannau tenements - Braich Bede - is one of those included in the Llanfachreth group (Mannau MSS. 890 - 913) and is stated to have been late in the tenure of Lewis Owen and Richard Nanney - Mannau MS. 892; Supra, P.201, n.1. We know that the Delgelley tenements and two of these in Mannau were demised by the Crown to Owen and Nanney by Letters Patent dated 6 April 6 Edward VI, for 21 years at an annual rent of 44s. 8d. - "Augmentations Records", P.440.

for summer and no other buildings."¹. (i.e. a "hafed"). On the 11 May 1589 two messuages and tenements, late of Cymer Abbey, in the vill of Trawsfynydd, called Bryn y llin and Ceu Kedrin, and all lands in the said vill, as demised to Rethergh ap David ap Mereddithe and William Jones by Letters Patent dated the 16 July 1548 for twenty one years, were granted to Hugh Nanney, his wife and son during their lives at an annual rent of 26s. 8d. and a fine of three years' rent.²

The Nanneys had been connected with these tenements for several years before the dissolution of Cymer Abbey. Letters Patent preserved in the Nannau family archives, dated the 26 November 1589, which record the grant of these tenements, state also that "Galfridus", once abbot of Cymer, had leased them to Hywel ap Dafydd ap Meurig for ninety nine years by a deed dated the 12 May 1501.³ An earlier document, dated the 1 November 1573,⁴ records the lease from Gruffydd Nanney, alias Gruffydd Wyn, to Hugh Nanney of the remainder of the original lease.

1. "Augmentations Records", P. 429.

2. *ibid*, P.433.

3. Nannau MS. 915.

4. Nannau MS. 914.

This document provides the details of the original lease, although its date does not exactly coincide with that given in the Letters Patent:

".....Gruff by the name of Galfrid Semetyne
Abbote of the Suppressed monasterie of kymer wth
the full assent and consent of the convent of the said
monasterie and by their deed under there comen seale
beringe date the xii daie of maye in the yere of oure
Lorde 1500 gave graunted and demised to hoell ap David
ap meyricke all and singular those ii^o messuages or
tenements of lands comenly cauled and knowen by the
name or names of bryn y llyne and kwn kedyn.....to
have and to hould the sayd ^{four} messuages or tenements to
the sayd hoell ap david ap Meyrike his executors or
^{the date thereof untill the end and tearme of}
assignes from the daie of ^{four} And nyntyne yeres
then next and immediatly folowinge fully to be ended
and completed yeldinge and painge therefore yerely
duringe the sayd tearme to the said Abbote or his
Successors the some of xxvi^{viii}d of Lawefull current
money of England....."

It will be seen that in this case the Crown simply took over the original lease, and received exactly the same rent as had previously been paid to the abbey, renewing the lease periodically.

Eventually the Nanneys must have bought the lesser's rights, for in 1608, by a deed dated the 14 June, Gruffydd Nanney agreed to sell Bryn y Llin and Cwm Cedryn, containing "Two Messuages Fower Tofts Twoe Gardens Forty acres of Land Threescore Acres of Meadowe Three hundred Acres of Pasture Thirty Acres of wood and Twenty Acres of Furr & Bruer in Trawsfynydd" to John Wynn Esq. of Llanrwst, presumably Sir John Wynn of Gwydir.¹

The fifth group of documents² records the devolution of a tenement called Cwm Hsegyn in Trawsfynydd. In this group the development is similar to that of Garth Bleddyn and the Llanfachreth tenements.

Like the other Cymer Abbey lands this tenement had gone to the Crown after the Dissolution. Nothing more is heard of it until the Queen granted it, with other lands, by Letters Patent dated the 27 June 1588,

1. Nannau MS. 916.

2. Nannau MSS. 917 - 925.

to Henry Sereope, Knight, Lord Sereope of Bolton.^{1.}
 It is stated to be "scitnat infra villam de trawsbryn
 alias trawsvoneth" and to have been late in the
 occupation of a certain Heoll ap William.^{2.} On the first
 of the next month Sereope sold it to Edward Powys of
 Cymer, whose son and heir, John Powys, sold it by deed
 dated the 14 July 1589 to a certain David Lloyd ap Howel
 ap Ithel of Trawsfynydd.^{3.} Cwm Hsegyn is stated is stated
 to be at that time, the tenure or occupation of the said
 David Lloyd. At the foot of this document, incidentally,
 is a note of enrolment at the court of Hugh Nanney Esq.,
 Justice of the Peace, and the list of witnesses includes
 Gruffydd Nanney.

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1. Ninth Baron Sereope of Bolton (1534 - 1592) - D.N.B. Vol.LI, P.140 - 1.
 2. Nannau MS.921.
 3. Nannau MS.921. Plans had been made for this Edward Powys to marry a daughter of Richard Nanney, later of Cefndeuuddwr but at this time of Llanelltyd. Richard Nanney was bound to Edward Powys by a deed dated the 25 April 1566 "specially for & concerning not only all such goods and cattell heretofore delivered by the said Richard Nanney to the said Edward Powys, but also for and concerning a pretended spousall to be had between the said Edward Powys and Gwen Nanney, daughter of the said Richard Nanney" - Nannau MS.94. The plans must have miscarried, however, for Edward Powys married Mary, daughter of John Wyn of Ynysmaengwyn (Griffith, P.237), and Gwen Nanney married Howel ap Rhys ap Hugh of Maesypandy. (Griffith, P.165) Vide Infra, PP.114-7. for John Powys.

Meanwhile by a deed dated the 20 April, 1589^{1.}, the property was leased by William Rowland of Rhiwaeleg, gent., and Margaret verch David Lloyd, his wife, to David Lloyd ap Howel ap Ithel. The document refers to the marriage settlement of William and Margaret dated the 13 May, 1588, and in return for "certen maraige goods" delivered by David Lloyd they now lease to him Cwm Mesgyn, which he already occupies, "for and duringe the terme and space of such and so many yeres as are yet to come and unexpired in the Originall lease graunted by the late & last Abette and covent of the late dissolved monastrey of Kymer unto one hcell ap Willm beinge for nenty and nyne yeres wherof their ys as yet unexpired three and thryttye yeres". The original lease must therefore have borne the date 1523.

Then by deed dated the 10 July 1589 David Lloyd assigned the remainder of the lease to his son Hugh.^{2.} Four days later, as we have seen^{3.}, John Powys, son and heir of Edward Powys, sold the property to David Lloyd. Eventually the tenement came into the possession of Gruffydd Manner, when he bought it from David Lloyd by a deed dated the 2 June 1598.^{4.}

1. Nannau MS.918.

2. Nannau MS.920.

3. Supra, P.211....; Nannau MS.921.

4. Nannau MSS. 923, 924.

There are details of the acquisition of one other tenement from the Cymer Abbey lands by the Nanneys. On the 18 January 1602 a certain Gruffydd ap John ap Lewis Gruffydd had mortgaged for £12. to John ap John ap William of Dyffrydan, all that parcel of land which was in the occupation of a certain David ap Jenan ap Llewelyn ap Die and which was part of one messuage or tenement called Y Glasdir in Cefnyrowen.¹ On the 30 April of this same year Gruffydd ap John Lewis, described as a free tenant, of the vill of Cefnyrowen, sold the whole of Y Glasdir to Gruffydd Nanney.²

Other Cymer Abbey lands went to John Powys, believed to have been originally a resident of Llanegryn.³ He was attached to Henry VIII's household - a s^a, "Serjeant at Arms" - and when the Dissolution came he seems to have secured for himself the post of King's Bailiff and Collector of Cymer Abbey property.⁴ In 1557 he was granted by the Crown the site of the abbey of Cymer and all its houses, and the parsonage of Llanegryn with all

1. Nannau MS. 927.

2. Nannau MSS. 926, 928.

3. T.P.Ellis, "Deigelley and Llanelltyd", P.84; John Powys bought and sold one of the tenements which the Nanneys eventually obtained - Cwm Hoesyn - in 1589 (Vide Supra P.212., Nannau MS. 921).

4. "Augmentations Records", PP. 123, 288; E.G. Jones, "Exchequer Proceedings (Henry VIII - Elizabeth)", P.47.

its tithes and other appurtenances, for twenty one years.¹ In 1537/8, he assigned the parsonage of Llanegryn to William Stumpe (one of the King's Commissioners in North Wales in 1536)², who in turn conveyed his interest therein to Lewys ap Owen of Peniarth.³ It seems that John Powys also received the rectory of Llanfachreth.⁴

According to T.P. Ellis, the Powys family also obtained the farm of Delyclechydd, as well as the fishing rights of Cymer Abbey in the Pentre watercourse.⁵ It is difficult to follow this, however, in view of a document dated the 10 April, 1578, by which Edward Powys re-assigned a lease of 1548 from Gruffydd Wym to John Powys, in accordance with the award of Richard Nanney, to Ieuan ap Howel for thirty two years at an annual rent of ten

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1. "Augmentations Records", P.121. The claim that "John Powys..... had granted to him in perpetuity, or on lease, the Abbey of Cymer, with the greater portion of its possessions" (T.Nicholas, "Annals and Antiquities of the Counties and County Families of Wales", Vol.1., P.685), is an obvious misconception. In reality all that was leased was the site of the abbey and most of its spiritual possessions. c.f. Letters and Papers, Henry VIII, Vol.XIV, Part 1, P.604.
 2. Cromwell addressed him as "my loving friend" - "Y Cymrodor", Vol.29, P.22. He is elsewhere described as one of the King's Surveyors, and he held leases of Conway as well as Cymer Abbey lands - "Augmentations Records", PP.22, 41, 54, 114, 121, 206.
 3. "Augmentations Records", P.121.
 4. *ibid*, P.121; Letters and Papers (For. & Dom) Vol.XIV, Part 1, P.604.
 5. T.P.Ellis, "Dolgelly and Llanelltyd", P.85; "Merioneth Notes", P.17.

shillings, payable to Gruffydd Wynn and his heirs.¹ The original lease was for sixty years, at twelve shillings and twopence per annum, on the two tenements of Dolyclochydd and Tyddyn y Rhiw, together with Gruffydd's part and portion of the fishing within Llyn Cynwch, and his part of the watercourse "that runneth to the mylls of Kynner" - Pentre Mill, according to the dorse. In this document Edward Powys lets only Dol y Clochydd; the Cynwch fishing and the mill watercourse are not mentioned. In another document, dated the 14 November, 1594, Hugh Nanney and Gruffydd, his son, leased Dolyclochydd to a certain Lowry verch Howel ap Watkin of Nannau for twenty one years at an annual rent of forty shillings.²

In his official capacity as the King's Bailiff and Collector, moreover, John Powys became involved in a case at the Court of Augmentations with Gruffydd Wym (later Nanney). In an undated case in the proceedings of the Court from Henry VIII to Edward VI, John Powys complained

1. Nannau MS. 121.

2. Nannau MS. 174. John Powys also received in 1550 a lease for forty years of the corn rent in the former Cymer Abbey grange of Neigwl in Caernarvonshire. ("Augmentations Records", P.288). He also received the vill of Llanaber, with the passage of Abernaw for thirty years. There is no record, however, of these forming part of the lands of the suppressed monastery of Cymer. (ibid, P.444)

that the defendants, Gruffydd Wyn and others, wrongfully entered into ten acres of a close pasture called Yrallt llwyd, and fifty acres in Trawsfynydd, late of the abbey of Cymer.¹ Elsewhere the same charge is made of wrongful entry into these lands, demised, it is stated, by Letters Patent to the complainant, in addition to a charge of wrongful entry into four messuages and two hundred acres of land, meadow and pasture, also in Trawsfynydd and likewise demised to John Powys.²

Part of the story of the devolution of other Cymer Abbey lands can be told.³ In 1530 Lewis, then abbot of Cymer, leased Tyddyn y Doren Las and Gweirgloedd Y Penrhyn in Llanelltyd to William ap Rhinon ap Griffith and Catherine verch John, his wife, for ninety-nine years at an annual rent of two separate sums of 16/8d.⁴ In 1551 William quitclaimed the rest of the lease to his son Evan ap William.⁵ Finally, in 1561 William and Evan, for twenty marks, quitclaimed to a certain Lewis ap Maredudd ap Dafydd all their right and term of

1. "Augmentations Records", P.123.

2. *Ibid.*, P.124.

3. *Vide also*, *ibid.*, PP.430,433,437,441.

4. *Hansen MS.67.*

5. *Ibid.*

years to the same - that is, for the remainder of the original ninety-nine year lease.^{1.}

The story of other Cymer lands illustrates the general theme stated above - that these lands went mainly to strangers at first, and did not come into the hands of the local families until later years. Two messuages called Bryn y Mynygh and Tythin Bach, for example, in the parish of Llandegwyn, were granted by the Crown in 1589/90 to John Wells, scrivener, and Richard Price, gent., both of London. They later conveyed the lands to a certain Humphrey Pritchard, clerk.^{2.} This Richard Price also received a lease on a tenement called Tiro Mullan in 1584.^{3.} In 1587/8 John Wells and a certain Hercules Wythame of London were granted Tythin Mawre and Pantillyvegh in Llanelltyd by the Queen. They later sold them to a John Roberts of Penrhyn (Merioneth).^{4.} Another grantee of Cymer Abbey lands was Sir Humphrey Gilbert^{5.}, who in 1564/5 received a thirty-one year lease on a tenement called

1. Harman MS. 84.

2. E.G. Jones, "Exchequer Proceedings (Henry VIII - Elizabeth)", P.62.

3. "Augmentations Records", P.440.

4. T.I. Jeffreys Jones, "Exchequer Proceedings (James I)" PP.231 - 2.

5. Is this Sir Humphrey Gilbert the famous Navigator? (1559? - 1583); D.N.B., Vol.XXI, P.327 ff.

Gavillon in Rhyderiw.¹ It appears that he later demised the tenement to John Owen (son of John Lewis Owen, of Llwyn?)². In 1590/91, moreover, the parsonage of Llanuwchllyn was demised by the Crown to two Englishmen - William Typper and Robert Dawe - who in turn demised it to a Denbighshire man, Thomas Price, in 1592.³

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1. Jeffreys Jones, op.cit., P.231; "Augmentations Records", P.434. John Wells, Hercules Wythame and Sir Humphrey Gilbert seem to have been active speculators in Welsh lands - including the monastic properties. John Wells was particularly active. In 1589/90, for example, he was associated with a certain Henry Beese in the purchase of lands which had belonged to the abbey of Aberconway for £1,508. 5. -. (E.G.Jones, op.cit.P.155). In the same year he received a grant of the reversion on a tenement in Helywell, late of Basingwerk. (ibid, P.199). He also received lands in Anglesey, Brecon and Caernarvenshire. (Jeffreys Jones, op.cit. PP.12,28, 31). In 1595/6 both John Wells and Hercules Wythame were among the defendants in an Exchequer case concerning an attempt by Sir John Perret, late attainted of treason (ob.in Tower, 1592 - "Bywgraffiadur", P.704), to defraud the rightful tenant to monastic properties (Whitland) in Carmarthenshire. Sir Humphrey Gilbert received lands in Caernarvenshire and in Merionethshire ("Augmentations Records", PP.298,434,443,467), and in 1564/5 received the office of rhaglaw of Carmarthen for thirty years. In 1591/2 John Wells received a grant of the reversion of this office, which he conveyed in the same year to a certain Roger Rante, H.M. Receiver-General for Lincolnshire.) E.G.Jones, op.cit., PP.107,108,127)
 2. Jeffreys Jones, op.cit. P.231.
 3. ibid, P.234; Robert Dawe was a servant to this William Typper. They received lands in the marches, around Oswestry, and were defendants in an Exchequer case in 1593/4, brought by the Prebends of the recently created College of Brecon of which, it was claimed, the two Englishmen had fraudulently obtained a grant from the Crown. (E.G.Jones, op.cit., PP.305 - 7, 342.)

The evidence set forth above has, it is hoped, proved above all that the Crown did not grant monastic lands in Merionethshire, immediately after the Dissolution; to local magnates, in order to secure their adherence to the new policy - or, indeed, with any other intent. The very opposite seems to have occurred with most of the Cymer lands. The exceptions prove the rule - that the lands of the suppressed monastery were taken over by the Crown and sold to men like John Parry and John Goodrich. It was only by many devious routes that these properties found their way through the speculations of the land market to the hands of the local magnate.

These acquisitions consolidated the achievement of the previous century in expanding the estate. By the end of the sixteenth century the Mannau estate had grown considerably. This was indeed fortunate, in view of the vast inroads made into their resources by the many court cases in which the Nanheys were involved.^{1.}

1. Vide Infra, Ch. 7.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1540 - 1623 (111)

"This county was much beholding to a ludwall their prince, who did in a manner free this county from wolves. It is my desire, that, seeing that ill-natured creature is at this day totally removed out of it, the people wholly lay aside all strife and animosities, and give no longer occasion to the proverb, 'Homo homini lupus'."

Thomas Fuller, Merionethshire, in
"The History of the Worthies of England."

Edmund Burke, in his famous speech on conciliation with America, claimed that whereas before 1536 the Welsh people "were ferocious, restive, savage, and uncultivated; sometimes composed, never pacified," yet after the Act of Union "the tumults subsided as by a charm, obedience was restored, peace, order and civilization followed in the train of liberty."¹ The state of Merionethshire under the Tudors completely belies Burke's picture. It was not true that

"Like brethren now, doe Welshmen still agree,
In as much love, as any man alive."²

Towards the end of the century, it is true, disputes were taken to law and not solved simply by force of arms. The litigiousness of the Welsh squire during the later sixteenth century is itself an indication of a greater respect for the due process

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1. "The Works of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke", (Bohn Standard Library Edition, 1886), Vol.1. P. 485-6.
 2. Thomas Churchyard, "The Worthiness of Wales" (1587), 1776 ed., P.2.

of law, and the consequent decline of lawlessness. This was to lead eventually to the happy position in the eighteenth century, when it could be reported that "a Highwayman is an Animal of Prey unknown in these parts."¹.

The opinion of the English officials connected with Wales during the sixteenth century was far different. Disorder was rife in Wales for many years after the Wars of the Roses. In the words of the preamble of the statute 26 Henry VIII, C.6:

"the People of Wales and the Marches of the same, not dreading the good and wholesome Laws and Statutes of this Realm, have of longtime continued and persevered in Perpetration and Commission of divers and manifold Thefts, Murthers, Rebellions, Wilful Burnings of Houses and other scelerous Deeds and abominable Malefacts,..... which be so rooted and fixed in the same people, that they be not like to cease, unless some sharp Correction and Punishment for Redress and Amputation of the Premises² be provided, according to the demerits of the Offenders."

1. "Sir Thomas Gery Cullum's Tour in Wales 1775", -
"Y Cymmrodor", Vol. 38, P.59.

2. Ivor Bowen, "The Statutes of Wales", P.54.

This was as true of Merionethshire as of the rest of Wales. As late as 1616 the defendants in a case at the Exchequer could claim that the ancient crown mill of Llanegryn was destroyed either in the rebellion of Owain Glyndŵr or in the wars between the houses of Lancaster and York.¹ Merionethshire seems to have been among the worst of the many trouble-spots in Wales in the sixteenth century. According to Robert Vaughan, the antiquary, William ap Jenkyn ap Iorwerth of Dolgelley was accused^{in 1521/2} "for that he (without regard had to the statute of Combartha) had desired of about an hundred and twenty of his friends and kindred in Talybont, a benevolence, who all (as in the said is mentioned) gave him a bullock or two apeece."²

The situation in Merionethshire is graphically described in two letters written by John Puleston, deputy sheriff of Merionethshire, to William Brereton, the high sheriff, in 1527.

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1. T.I. Jeffreys Jones, "Exchequer Proceedings Concerning Wales In Tempore James 1.", P. 236.
 2. Robert Vaughan, "Notes on the House of Nannau", Arch. Camb. 1863, P.132; T.P. Ellis, "Dolgelley and Llanelltyd", P. 81-2.
According to Robert Vaughan, he was "a younger brother of the house of Ynys y maen Gwyn."

In the first, dated the 21st. October, Puleston reported that during the three weeks in which he held the Sheriff's Courts in Merionethshire, he had "brought in toward 64 persons, some to the castle of Harlech and some to Caernarvon, of them that were of evil demeanour, and to make rest and peace within the county." In the second letter, dated the 12th. November, he reported that "the gentlemen of the said county were the maintainers and comforters of the same misdoers." He had been able to bring in six or seven of "the most heinous thieves which were supported by divers gentlemen", and had put four of them "to execution of hanging". He hoped eventually "to order the said county as well as any place in Wales."¹.

The same situation was referred to by Bishop Rowland Lee in a letter to Cranmer in March 1536.² He objected to the creation of Welsh Justices of the Peace since very few Welshmen had more than £10. in land,

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1. Edward Owen, "A Catalogue of the MSS. Relating to Wales in the British Museum", PP.819-20.
 2. W. Rees, "The Union of England and Wales", Cymmr. Trans. 1937, P.52; "History of Carmarthen" (ed. J.E. Lloyd), Vol.1. P.264.

"and their discretion is less than their land." He complained that "there is yet some bearing of thieves by gentlemen", and that if the statute was passed, this practice would increase - "as you may judge by the demeanour of Merionethshire and Cardiganshire, for, though they are shire ground, they are as ill as the worst parts of Wales."

Nothing provides a more striking illustration of the lawlessness in Merionethshire than the activities of the infamous Red Bandits of Mawddwy, who terrorized the district in the early and middle years of the sixteenth century. These "felons and outlaws" from the civile warres betweene Yorke and Lancaster abounded in ye countrey, and never left robbing, burning of houses, and murthering of people, in soe much that being very numerous they did often drive great droves of cattel sometymes to ye number of a hundred and more from one countrey to another at middle day, as in the tyme of warre without feare, shame pittie or punishment, to the utter undoin of the poorer sorte."¹.

1. Robert Vaughan, "A Pedigree of Baron Owen", Vide: Thomas Nicholas, "Annals and Antiquities of the Counties and County Families of Wales", Vd.11, P.656; "Powys Fadog", Vol. VI. P.409.

Local tradition asserts they were so feared that "the inhabitants placed scythes in the chimneys to prevent these marauders from coming down to surprise them in the night."¹ In 1554 Baron Lewis Owen of Ilwyn, near Dolgelley, in his capacity as Sheriff of Merionethshire, set out to suppress them. He is reputed to have hanged between eighty and a hundred of them without trial. In revenge the survivors of the gang murdered him on the way to Welshpool, in a place which still bears the name "Llidiart y Barwn", in 1555.²

Commenting on the lawless state of Merionethshire at this period, the eighteenth century antiquary and Great Sessions judge, Daines Barrington, wrote that "It was scarcely ever invaded even by the English, and the county continued in such a state of barbarity that all actions arising there might be tried in Caernarvonshire or Anglesey (where there were English garrisons) till a statute of Queen Elizabeth."³

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1. Richard Llwyd, "Topographical Notices to Wynne's edition of Powell's History of Wales", P.223.
 2. "Bywgraffiadur", P.673; T.P.Ellis, "Dolgelley and Llanelltyd", P.82.
 3. Edward Owen, "A Catalogue of the MSS. Relating to Wales in the British Museum", P.845. The Act was 8 Elizabeth c.20, 1566.

The "state of barbarity" continued well into Elizabeth's reign. The Register of the Council of the Marches from 1569 - 1591 shows that during Sir Henry Sidney's years of office, from 1559-1586, the violence and chronic disorder, which marked Bishop Lee's term of office, had lessened.¹ And yet the peace of the country continued to be broken, and the Register contains several indictments of the condition of the country. Merionethshire had a far from savoury reputation . In 1571 the Council was informed that "there is great labour and suit in Merionethshire concerning the next election of Knights of the shire for Parliament, and danger that by outward signs and tokens of brag a proper election will be prevented."² On the 17th. January 1570, moreover, the Council had been informed that "the counties of Cardigan and Montgomery bordering upon parts of the county of Merioneth, do sometimes give occasion to offenders in the county of Merioneth to fly into the said counties, whereby, the Sheriff

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1. R. Flenley, "A Calendar of the Register of the Queen's Majesty's Council in the Marches 1569-1591", P.11.
 2. *High over Cae's border - with J. J. Lewis Over*
 ibid. P. 94. ~~Ellis~~, Prince of Rhyl was elected M.P. for Merioneth for the Parliament of April 1571 - W.R. Williams, "The Parliamentary History of the Principality of Wales, 1548 - 1895", P.114.

of Merionethshire not having authority to apprehend the offenders therein, they have escaped punishment."¹.

In 1575 the Council empowered five Commissioners and the sheriffs of Merioneth and Montgomery to search Montgomeryshire for these offenders, and to punish them.².

The Council had heard that "felonies, thefts and spoils" had been committed in the two counties and the culprits allowed to escape. They had been informed, moreover, that "certain of these offenders wander in secret places in those counties."

The problem of lawlessness was aggravated by the social evil of the alehouse. A Tudor Jest Book - "The Merie Tales of Skelton" (1567) - tells of the Welshman who desired from the King a patent to sell "dryncke, more drynke, and a great deale of dryncke and . . lytle crome of breade", or preferably, "all dryncke and no breade."³. An eighteenth century traveller referred to "the damn'd bewitching custom of drunkenness!" which was particularly prevalent in Merionethshire.⁴.

1. Flenley, op.cit. P. 62-3.

2. Flenley, op.cit. P.146.

3. W.J. Hughes, "Wales and the Welsh in English Literature", P.30.

4. "The Torrington Diaries", Vol. 1. ed. C.B. Andrews, P.148.

The Council of the Marches in 1573 complained of "an excessive number of alehouses" in Wales as a whole, "many being in desert and secret places, as woods, commons, waste grounds and mountains out of any high way: and the number is still increasing by the obtaining of licenses from Justices of the Peace who are far away from the affected places and ignorant of the needs of the locality."¹ Does this stricture, one wonders, apply to the Nanneys? They certainly licensed an amazing number of alehouses - twenty six in Dolgelley alone, a further six in Nannau, and one at Gwanas - on the 12th. December, 1605.² Dolgelley, indeed, had a reputation for the remarkable number of alehouses it contained. According to Thomas Fuller, "There are more alehouses than houses. Tenements are divided into two or more tippling houses and chimneyless barns used to that purpose."³

The harmful effects of this super-abundance of drinking dens were set forth in the Council's report:

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1. Flenley, op.cit. P.102.
 2. N.L.W. Additional Peniarth 332A. P.73. (Nanney Account Book).
 3. Thomas Fuller, "The History of the Worthies of England", ed. Nuttall, Vol.111. P.546.

"by this felonies are increased, thieves, murderers and women of light conversation are harboured, rogues and vagabonds maintained, whoredom, filthy and detestable life much frequented, unlawful games as Tables, Dice, Cards, Bowls, Kayles, Quoits, and such like commonly exercised, Bows and Arrows left aside to the great decay of artillery, and emboldening and encouragement of the foreign army."¹.

The Recognizance Book kept by the Nanneys from 1599 to 1608 contains several bonds from people "to keep an al-house according to the orders layed downe"; and on the 29th. March, 1606, a certain Hugh ap Humffrey of Mawddwy entered into a recognizance to appear at the next Sessions to answer a charge "for sellinge of ale wthout lycense."² In an undated letter from a certain David Lewis, who claimed to be Gruffydd Nanney's brother-in-law, the writer protested against an order prohibiting him from selling wine he had brought from "Coestry" and threatening to close his house if he disobeyed the injunction.³.

1. Flenley, op.cit. P.102-3.

2. N.L.W. Peniarth 332A, PP.74,76; c.f. T.Jones Pierce, "Clenennan Letters and Papers", P.143, no.40.

3. N.L.W. Peniarth 327, Pt.1. No.10. I can find no record of him in the pedigrees. He is not a brother of Elin (Gruffydd Nanney's wife), daughter of John Wyn of Rhilwias.

The Justices of the Peace in Merionethshire were found, in April 1601, to issue two injunctions, one to the effect that "Non must sell ale without license upon payne of imprisonment and twentie shillings fyne except at fayrs onlie and then quart, for a peny", and another that "Non sellinge ale by lycence must suffer unlawfull games within his howse upon payne of forfeytinge his Recognisance."¹.

Any account of the situation in Merionethshire at this period must take into consideration its topography. Its "spired hills clustered together so near and so high"². made it an isolated region.

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1. T.C. Mendenhall, "A Merioneth Wage Assessment for 1601", Journal Mer. Hist. Rec. Soc., 1955, P.207. The same edict also includes the provision that "Non may play at any unlawfull game except..... gentlemen of very good sorte." The gentry themselves sold wine. Sir John Wynn, writing of the fifteenth century, tells us "there was no gent of worthe in the countrey but had a wine seller of his owne, where wine was sould to his profitt." ("History of the Gwydir Family", PP.37-8).
 2. John Speed, "A Prospect of the Most Famous Parts of the World", (1668) Ch. X. (Unpaginated.)

The roads were few and treacherous. The earliest of the old Merionethshire maps contained in the Nannau - Hengwrt archives - dated 1578 - does not show a single road in the county. The next map, made in 1610, shows only one road.¹ Thomas Dinely, in his account of the official Progress of the Duke of Beaufort through Wales in 1684, reported that on the journey from Bala to Llwydiarth, "you are directed by guides by reason of dangerous boggs in the passage after the precipitous ascents and descents near Bala."² Such conditions must have contributed greatly to the continued prevalence of lawlessness in the county.

The state of affairs improved, however, with the passing of the years. The implication of Sir John Wynne's "History of the Gwydir Family"³ was that the disorder and lawlessness depicted in it, took place in his grandfather's time - in Henry VII's reign. And yet the same spirit was there in Sir John's time, and

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1. T.P. Ellis, "Merioneth Notes", - "Y Cymmrodor", Vol.38. P.42.
 2. "The Account of the Official Progress of His Grace Henry the First Duke of Beaufort through Wales in 1684", from the Original MS. of Thomas Dinely, 1888, P.107.
 3. Probably written before 1592 - Glyn Roberts, "Biographical Notes", B.B.C.S., 1956, P.49.

is evident in the litigation in which men like Sir John himself and his contemporary, Hugh Nanney Hên, were involved. The only difference was that there was a more civilized way of fighting - in the various courts of law. As Sir William Gerard, a Judge of the Great Sessions, writing towards the end of the reign of Henry VIII, explained: "the Country growinge to more Civilitie, Sutes increased."¹.

This litigation was "hard to avoid at a time when the complex task of fitting the classes of Welsh tribal society into the procrustean bed of English law was still under way, and when the Welsh squires were flocking to the Inns of Court for a sufficient smattering of the law to equip them as landowners and magistrates."². It was also a time when the younger sons of these gentry families were seeking a career at the Bar, and many were successful in their search.

1. William Gerard, "Discourse on the State of Wales", "Y Cymmrodor", Vol. 13. P. 149. Appendix to D. Lleufer Thomas "Further Notes on the Court of the Marches."

2. A.H. Dodd, "Studies in Stuart Wales", P.4.

It is in this setting that we must consider the Nanneys' extensive litigation at this period. The disputes in which they were involved may be divided into five groups - those which were settled by private arbitration¹, those taken to the Court of Great Sessions², those which went to the Court of the Council in the Marches,³ those tried at the Exchequer⁴, and, finally, those which found their way to the Court of Star Chamber.⁵

1. Vide Nannau MSS. 48, 53, 86, 87, 88, 170.
2. Vide P.R.O. St. Ch. 5/N/12/21, f 1; Nannau MSS. 57, 184.
3. Vide Nannau MSS. 146, 220; N.L.W. Peniarth 410D, No.3.
4. Vide Emyr Gwynne Jones, "Exchequer Proceedings Concerning Wales, Henry VIII - Elizabeth", PP.231, 235; P.R.O. E124/4 (f. 76, -4 Jac. 1.).
5. Infra, PP. 238-239; the Nanneys were also involved in cases at the Court of Augmentations - Vide Supra, Ch. 5, P.158, n.1.

It was to the Court of Star Chamber that most of the cases in the feud between the Nanneys and the Owens of Llwyn were eventually taken. More than one thousand Welsh suits were taken to this court in the reign of Elizabeth¹, many of them the result of "the pernicious sixteenth-century habit of bringing cross-actions."² Of these, less than half contain the evidence of witnesses, and as the verdicts of the court are mostly missing it is only by a judicious reading of these witnesses' depositions that we can arrive at the approximate truth. Not much reliance can be placed on the partisan, sensational, repetitive Bills of Complaint, Replications, Rejoinders, Rebuttals and Surrejoinders, with their attorney's jargon and their stereotyped accusations and counter-accusations.³ Fortunately most of the Star Chamber cases in which the Nanneys were involved contain the depositions of witnesses, which enable us to judge in some measure the veracity of the Bill of Complaint.

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1. Ifan ap Owen Edwards, "Star Chamber Proceedings Relating to Wales", Introduction, P.V. Only fifty cases came from Merionethshire. (P.H. Williams, "The Star Chamber and the Council in the Marches of Wales 1558 - 1603", B.B.C.S. 1956, P.297), presumably because of the great distances involved (c.f. the comparative dearth of cases from the extreme North of England - *ibid.*, P.294)
 2. P.H. Williams, *op.cit.* P.292.
 3. *ibid.*, P.289.

Between 1594 and 1615 the Nanneys were engaged in a long and bitter feud with an opposing faction of Merionethshire gentlemen led by the sons and grandsons of the murdered Baron Lewis Owen.¹ The leading members of the Owen faction included, at various times, John Lewis Owen of Llwyn and his sons (Lewis Owen, John Owen and Henry Owen), Edward Owen of Hengwrt and his son Robert, their brother-in-law, John ap Humphrey and his two sons (Robert and Edward), Robert Simon Owen and his brother Lewis Simon Owen. They were joined at times by Rowland ap Elisise of Rhiwaedog, Richard Nanney, son of David Nanney (the second son of Richard Nanney of Cefndeuiddwr), and Henry ap Ieuan Lloyd of Hafodunos.²

Most of these had some experience, as defendants, of Star Chamber proceedings. John Lewis Owen was accused in 1597/8 of several misdemeanours in office, as Deputy Lieutenant and Justice of the Peace, including the embezzlement of £1,000 worth of armour at Harlech castle.³ We know that Rowland ap Elisise

1. Vide Pedigree Chart, P.371.

2. Vide Pedigree Chart, PP.370,371.

3. Edwards, "Star Chamber Proceedings", P.90.

was arrested on a writ of debt from the Court of Common Pleas. He was, it appears, Mayor of Bala, and was accused in 1592/3 of forcing the burgesses of the town to return him to his office annually, thereby gaining great wealth. In 1600/1 he was accused of several crimes, including one of forcible entry into lands in "Gwernevell" and stealing evidence relating to it from the office of the Pronotary for North Wales at Caernarvon.¹ In the early years of James I's reign both Rowland ap Elissee and Richard Nanney (who also had a writ of outlawry directed against him) were accused of murdering a certain David ap John Llewelyn ap Rees at Mawddwy.²

Hugh Nanney Hên himself had some experience of Star Chamber practice before the feud "officially" opened. In 1590 he and Robert Lloyd of Rhiwgoch were accused of forcibly preventing the execution of a Commission of Survey awarded out of the Exchequer

1. Edwards, "Star Chamber Proceedings", PP. 88, 89, 90, 92, 93.

2. *ibid.*, P. 186.

to inquire into the rights of various parties upon Ffridd Prysor¹.

The origins of the feud are obscure. Robert Owen of Dolserau² claimed it was the outcome of a dispute over lands between Edward Owen of Hengwrt and Hugh Nanney Hên.³ It has been suggested that the feud began with the election in 1593 of Gruffydd Nanney as M.P. for Merioneth in place of John Lewis Owen of Llwyn.⁴ It is probable, too, that each faction "thought the other was presuming too much in claiming to be the exclusive arbiter of Dolgelley life."⁵ John Lewis Owen, indeed, claimed in 1606/7 to have obtained a demise from the Crown of the town of Dolgelley and the surrounding wastes and commons during the three annual fairs and the weekly markets.⁶ T.P. Ellis states that the feud "was the

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1. P.R.O. St.Ch.5/W/79/14. Robert Lloyd of Rhiwgoch was M.P. for Merioneth in 1586 and 1614 (W.R. Williams, "Parliamentary History", PP.114-5), and Sheriff in 1595/6, 1601/2 and 1614/5. (P.R.O. List of Sheriffs, P.260).
 2. Vide Pedigree Chart, P.371.
 3. P.R.O. St.Ch. 5/N/12/21, f.9.
 4. Dr. Thomas Richards, "Eywgraffiadur", P.640.
 5. T.P. Ellis, "Dolgelley and Llanelltyd", P.82.
 6. Jeffreys Jones, "Exchequer Proceedings" (James 1) P.224.

direct cause of a long and bitterly waged feud between the inhabitants of Dolgelley and Llanfachreth, which continued well into the XVIIIth. century."¹.

The first of the major lawsuits in the Nanney-Owen feud concerned a tenement called Tyddyn Bach in the township of Garthmaelan, containing forty acres.². On the 1st. May, 1594, Gruffydd Nanney complained that on the previous 4th. March, John Lewis Owen of Llwyn with an unruly band of followers went at ten o'clock at night to the complainant's tenement called Tyddyn Bach. Once there, at John Lewis Owen's instigation, they "not onely expelled diseised and put out yo^r sayd subiect from the quiet possession thereof But also brake and threwe downe the inclosure of yo^r subjects sayd tenement beinge a stone wall of two yardes heigh." In addition, the defendant "gave strayght charge..... to the sayd unruly companye..... to quarrell sett uppon and fight wth any person or persons whiche should resiste or gaynsaye them in theire pretended

1. T.P. Ellis, op.cit. P.83, "Dreams and Memories", P.20; Llwyn lies within the parish of Dolgelley and Nannau is situated in Llanfachreth.

2. P.R.O. St.Ch. 5/N/10/34, 5/M/6/34, 5/N/13/24.

misdemeanours." Consequently, Gruffydd Nanney maintained, they "have comitted most notorious heynous and unlawfull routs, Riots and misdemeanours."

The "unruly companye" included, among others, John Lewis Owen, his three^{presented} sons - Lewis Owen, John Owen and Henry Owen-and his nephew Robert Owen of Hengwrt.

To this Bill of Complaint, John Lewis Owen replied that it had been^{presented} simply out of malice and "of purpose to putt this deff. to Needles chardge and expence in Lawe", and that it contained insufficient evidence. In any case, he adds, he is not guilty of the charges. He claimed, moreover, that the case should have been taken to the Court of the Marches, as indeed it was later in 1602, especially since the Star Chamber "never useth to hold plea for wrongfull disseisins or forcible entryes without some hurte or riot comitted uppon some person or persons", and the complainant has failed to show any such hurt or riot. In addition to these technicalities, they claim as an extenuating circumstance, that Tyddyn Bach "is a comen and wast ground belonging to the freeholders and inhabitants of dolgelley and Garthmaelan." When Gruffydd Nanney enclosed this supposed common, Lewis Owen and John Owen, two of John Lewis Owen's sons,

"foresawe what future providence would happen to them to suffer the said waste to be inclosed", and therefore went without weapons, at the time specified in the Bill of Complaint, and "in quiet maner without hurte or harme offered to any person livinge cast downe the sayd inclosures as they thinke they might lawfully and Rightefully doe."

We do not know the verdict in this case, but it seems that the matter did not rest here. In 1602 a case concerning Tyddyn Bach was opened at the Court of the Council of the Marches by Gruffydd Nanney against John Lewis Owen and Lewis Owen. The ^{only} extant documents relating to this case are the depositions of eleven witnesses produced ^{and} presumably by Gruffydd Nanney and taken at the Parish Church of Dolgelley on the 26th. August, 1602.¹ The case seems to have been concerned with the question of the ownership of Tyddyn Bach.

The eleven witnesses all agree as to the ownership of the tenement - that a certain Catherine merch

1. Nannau MS.220.

William Jenkin once owned the land but that she had leased it to John Lewis Owen and his father, for which they paid a yearly rent. On Catherine's death the tenement went, with other lands, to her son Thomas Goch ap Richard who continued to receive an annual rent from the Owens. This is supported by the evidence of all the witnesses, including the actual "rent-collector", Gruffydd ap Meurig of Llanfachreth, to whom John Owen "abouts sixteene yeares last past, did pay eight groates to the hands of this deponent, to be by him delivered to the said Thomas ap Richard as rent of the said Lands invarrience..... And saith that he was purposlie sent by the said John Owen for the said rent." This is supported also by the evidence of Tudur Vaughan, "the Queenes Baylief within the Comott of Talpont."

Thomas Goch ap Richard's son, William, was associated with him in the ownership of the tenement. This William Thomas ap Richard sold the tenement to Thomas Fletcher of Bangor. He in turn sold the land to Gruffydd Nanney in 1592. John Vaughan of Caergai "was present as a witness" when Fletcher sold the

tenement, and, as Fletcher's attorney, delivered livery and seisin to Gruffydd Nanney.¹

The facts seem to be well proven, and the Owens must have realized that they would be. Their defence seems to have rested, therefore, on the argument that Tyddyn Bach was common ground and could not have been the property of Catherine and her heirs, or, indeed, of any single individual. If anyone did in fact possess any particular rights to the land, it must have been John Lewis Owen, in whose occupation it was - invoking the old adage that possession is nine tenths of the law.

No title-deed is produced to prove Catherine's right to the ownership of the lands, although several of the witnesses refer to a lease which John Owen received of the tenement.² All the witnesses claim that the land was never common ground, but that John Lewis Owen, who "held the same by lease..... did

1. Nannau MS.220. This is supported by the actual deed of sale (Nannau MS.181), which also states that the tenement was lately in the occupation of John Lewis Owen. John Vaughan of Caergai was Hugh Nanney Hên's son-in-law. (Griffith, P.3.)

2. A note, dated 1601, kept by Gruffydd Nanney includes a reference to a lease to Lewis ap Owen on Tyddyn Bach - Nannau MS.215.

for want of enclosing same, suffer yt to lie open, that the neighbours Cattell might depasture and goe at pleasure to the same."¹.

The feud between the families was carried a stage further when Hugh Nanney Hên presented a Bill of Complaint in the Star Chamber, on the 9th. June, 1602, against Henry ap Ieuan Lloyd, J.P., of Hafodunos, and Ellis David ap Thomas, gent., of Llandderfel.² It was alleged that they had committed perjury by acquitting those responsible for the murder of a certain Edward ap David, a "servant in lyvery" to Hugh Nanney Hên.³ The murder took the form of a combined assault by Robert Owen (or Robert Edward Owen) of Hengwrt, Robert Simon Owen and Lewis Simon Owen, John ap

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1. Nannau MS.220, Evidence of Jenkin ap John.
 2. P.R.O.St.Ch.5/N/12/21,f.1. Henry ap Ieuan Lloyd was one of the Commissioners sent from the Exchequer in 1590 to inquire into the rights of parties on Ffridd Prysor (Vide Supra P.232). He was also a witness for Hugh Nanney Hên in the Penrhos Common case (Vide infra P.241ff.), and was a member of the Commission sent from the Exchequer in 1603 to inquire into the spoil of the Penrhos woods (vide infra, P.283). In 1597/8 he had been accused in the Star Chamber of certain misdemeanours in a trial for murder, in which he returned a partial jury, for a bribe of £20. (Edwards, "Star Chamber Proceedings", P.64).
 3. Nannau, MS.1169.

Humphrey¹. and his two sons (Robert and Edward), and a certain David ap Robert. It appears they bore "intestine malice and mortall hatred" to Edward ap David because he "had begotten wth Child one Ursula the Cossen germaine of him the said Robert Owen and for diverse yeare lived wth her incontinentlie."² This Ursula was, it seems, a daughter of John ap Humphrey,³ and the outraged relatives and friends took their revenge on the 24th. June 1601 at Dolgelley.

The story of what happened in Dolgelley on that fateful Midsummer Day was told by several eye-witnesses when the case was tried at the Great Sessions later that year.

One of these witnesses, John ap Howel ap Owen of Llanfachreth,⁴ was standing with a certain John Lewis by Dolgelley Churchyard. This John Lewis pointed to a group of men coming towards them from the upper end of

1. Elsewhere described as John ap Humphrey ap Evan ap Gyto (P.R.O. St.Ch. 5/P/29/18). In his evidence, Gruffydd Nanney stated that Hugh Owen of Cae'r berllan was an uncle to Robert and Edward, the two sons of John ap Humphrey, i.e. their mother's brother. (P.R.O. St.Ch.5/N/12/21, f.18; Vide Pedigree Chart P.371.).

2. P.R.O. St.Ch. 5/N/12/21, f.1.

3. *ibid*, f.8.

4. *ibid*, f.6.

the town. These were Lewis Simon Owen and his brother Robert, Robert Owen of Hengwrt, and Edward and Robert ap John ap Humphrey. John Lewis then turned to John ap Howel ap Owen and said, "looke yonder is an intemcon wch he in the Welch tounge termed Burt (Bwriad?) to Edward ap david", and told him to go and warn him. He did not have the opportunity to warn him, however, but sent another - Robert ap Edward - in his place.

This Robert ap Edward himself gave evidence later at the Great Sessions.¹ He was charged by John ap Howel ap Owen to go and warn Edward ap David "for that he was like to be sett upon by John ap humffreys sonnes". When he conveyed his message, Edward ap David "made light account" of it, and went to a house kept by a certain Rhys Wyn, called "y plac". Here, however, "one M^{res} Elyn Bodvell wief to lewes owen esquier was".² She "tould the said Edward that he was a vylen because he cam ther, knowinge what evill will and malice was borne towards him." So Edward turned away and went with Edward Nanney, one of Hugh

1.P.R.O. St.Ch. 5/N/12/21, ff 5,7.

2.Lewis Owen, first son of John Lewis Owen, married Elin, d. of Hugh Gwyn of Bodfel - Griffith, P.363.

Nanney's sons, "to a greene neere the said towne, wher certene gentlemen did playe at boules." The witness then saw Robert ap John ap Humphrey "goeing towards the said greene and sawe him throwe downe his clocke and takinge hold in the handle of his sword, whereupon (this deponent knowinge his intention) did call as loude as he could to the said Edward to bidd him looke to himself." Then he went to "seeke some thinge in his handes to keepe peace." When he returned to the green "he saw the said Edward sore wounded all bespread wth bloud,..... of w^{ch} wounds the said Edward wth in feive daies after dyed."

The story of what happened while Robert ap Edward was away from the green was given by the other eye-witnesses.¹ William ap Edward of Llanfachreth was standing by the green called "Y Marian" with Edward ap David, and "Edward ap John ap humffrey did likewise stand at the ende of a boullinge allay ther". This Edward ap John ap Humphrey "was purposelie sent to the said greene by the rest of the company to begin to quarrell wth the said Edward ap David."

1. P.R.O. St.Ch.5/N/12/21, ff. 8,16.

This he did, and

"drew out a dagger and havinge a Cudgell in the other hand saied unto the saied Edward ap David, Vylaine what doest thou here and therupon the said Robt. Edward Owen did drawe his sword and did stricke at the said Edward ap David ii or iii blowes, Who wonded the same, And the said Robt ap John ap humffrey havinge a two edged sword in his hand did stricke the said Edward ap David upon the heade and the said Edward ap David then turninge towardes the said Robt ap John ap humffrey was againe stricken upon the head with a sword either by the said Robt. Edward Owen or Robt. Symon Owen because they both stroke at him at once, therfore he knowes not whither of theime gave him that blowe.... And.... David ap Robt. did stricke the said Edward ap David with a staffe upon the head presentlie after the other blowes."

When he heard of the murder, Hugh Nanney, as a Justice of the Peace, issued warrants for the arrest of those responsible "to abide the iust triall of the lawe."¹

1. P.R.O. St.Ch. 5/N/12/21, f.1.

He ordered Owen ap Richard, one of the Coroners of Merionethshire, "to proceade wthout delaie to the impanellinge of a substantiall inquest of free holders.... to enquire of the death of him the said Edward ap David upon the viewe of the bodie."¹.

The case followed the due legal processes. Owen ap Richard impanelled his jury, and the murderers were indicted in August 1601 "that they did of there fore thought and perported malice.....Cruellie and wilfullie murder him the said Edward ap David." Then, on this indictment, two of them - Robert Owen of Hengwrt and David ap Robert - were arraigned at the Great Sessions at Bala in 1601.

For their trial a jury was impanelled, which included Henry ap Ieuan Lloyd and Ellis David ap Thomas. Hugh Nanney claimed, in his Bill of Complaint to the Star Chamber in June 1602, that the evidence presented to the jury at this Great Sessions trial of the previous year

1. On the 7th. July 1601 a certain Sir Thomas Jones of Abermorlais addressed an appeal to Hugh Nanney Hên on behalf of "my friends and kinsmen Edward Owen (of Hengwrt) and his sonne". (N.L.W. Peniarth 327, no.5.) - Vide Appendix P.321 ; and P.322 for Hugh Nanney's reply. (Nannau MS.1166). c.f. *Infra*, Appendix III, P.344, when Edward Owen and a certain William Owen went surety for David ap Robert in 1601 before Gruffydd Nanney, J.P..