

HOGNEL MONEY AND HOGGLERS.

BY

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IN the "Blechingley Churchwardens' Accounts for 1546-52," printed in Vol. IV, page 101, of the Society's *Collections*, and again in their last volume from another, and, as Mr. Craib says, "presumably a final copy," found among the Loseley MSS., occurs the entry—

"Recevid of the Hognel money at the feast of the Nativitie."
(Christmas 1545).

The New English Dictionary quotes this entry as obscure, and says "Hogglor" is of uncertain origin and meaning; so some other entries have been collected from churchwardens' accounts elsewhere in an attempt to find out the meaning.

At Hawkhurst, Kent, 1548-9, among the receipts was—

"A bequest to the Hognell purse, 4/-." ¹

At Bolney, Sussex, 1537-8—

"Resseved of the Hognel Wardayn at the Annuncyacion of ower lady yn the XXIX yere of King Henry VIII 30/8½d.
whereof ys paid to the church wardayns for wex 4/-."

And again in 1540—

"The cherkwardens has yn ther hans 16/2d and ½ lb of wex the whych they gatheryd for the hognel tym, that ys to say fro crystemas at the lep yere yn the XXXI yere of Henry the VIII." ²

At Tintinhull (Somerset), in 1444, a receipt was—

"de incremento de les hogeler ys lyght de Johanne Waryke nuper uno procuratorum inde 2/-."

¹ *Archæologia Cantiana*, V, 59.

² *Sussex A. C.*, VI, 247-8.

So the Hoggliers were evidently associated under a steward (*procurator*) to maintain a light.¹

At Pilton (Somerset), similarly "Issabell Man for hokelyng lyghte 2*d.*" was a receipt in 1510, and the Hoggliers formed one of the two guilds which maintained a light there. They did not, however, always apparently pay up, for at the end of that same year (1510), among a list of "The dettes that remayneth" (including 30/- for "3 key" [cows] and 8*d.* for "heyr of the key" and "Rynges," which, sometimes specified as wedding rings, were among the most frequent receipts of these "general dealer" parishes) appears "John Elyn for hokelyng a yere and a half," though no sum is entered against him.²

At Croscombe (Somerset) there are fuller entries. In 1476 "Comes the Hoggliers and presents in of old and new 3/10*d.* and they received a yen [again] for a Stoke 2/-," and similar entries recur yearly.

But in 1482 "Hogliers went not this yere" and no money is entered; which Bp. Hobhouse explains, "*i.e.*, did not go in procession and revel, hence no collection."

In 1483 they atoned, for "Comes the hogelers and presente in clere 4/4*d.*" and so they continued to do with varying sums most years till 1531; while in many years occurs "delyvered to J. Phyllip for the hogglier stoke 2/8*d.*" (1512) or "J. Phyllps for the hogliers light 2/8*d.*" (1516), and so forth.³

In 1524 occurs a remarkable entry, which is headed (by the Editor apparently and not in the MS.) "Terms of sheep-lease." It is as follows:—

"John Felyppes and Jone his wife 6 yows [ewes] and 3 ryngs of sylvere. The wych you scheppes [ewe sheep] beth delyvered unto Hew Morganne for the space of 7 yere the said Hew for to pay by the yere the sum of 2/- for to pay hit at the Countt day. If so be as eny of this scheppe doth dy or mynish, the said Hew pay for them 16*d.* apesse, the scheppe to be of the age of 4 yere all of one age, the said Hew for to delyver at the 7 yere ende the scheppe or ells 8/-."

¹ Somerset Record Society, IV (1890), Churchwardens' Accounts of Croscombe, &c., ed. by Bp. Hobhouse, pp. 181 and 174.

² *Ib.*, 57, 58, 49.

³ *Ib.*, 4, 5, &c. : 11, 12, 13, 31, 33, &c.

A memorandum comes below:—

“Itm. Ther rest in the hands of Ed. Wynsor 6 sheppe, the wych thay be yows all, the sayd Edward for to pay for the same scheppe at all tymys 6/8d or ells the scheppe.”¹

So John Phyllips, obviously the same man who took money for the Hoggler's stock, was here renting the parish sheep; but, be it said in passing, that there is no indication that he did it *qua* Hoggler and not simply as Edward Windsor (*not* a royalty!) or any other parishioner might have done.

At Stogursey (Somerset) the largest income was derived from the Hoggler's, the second item of receipt in each account being headed, with slight variation, “Venditio et incrementum forinsecum de la Hogeling,” and the Hogeling was divided into Upland and Marshland.² This again looks extremely like “sheep to hire,” and the Bishop himself comments that *Vend. et incr.* indicates “common stock on hill and moor in which the Church had rights, husbanded and made productive by a band of working men.” But he declares Hoggler's to be “the lowest class of labourers, including miners,” and says the word is so used in Somerset to-day.³

At Minchinhampton (Gloucester) Hoglyng and Hoggelunge money was frequently paid in to the churchwardens between 1588 and 1592, the sums varying from as high as 13/4*d.* to 6/-⁴; while similar payments were received so late as 1612 at Cheddar (Somerset) and 1626 at Dursley (Gloucester).⁵

So Hoggler's and Hoggling, as a custom, prevailed chiefly and lingered longest in the west, but it seems hard to dissociate the Hognel money of Blechingley, the Hognel purse of Hawkhurst, and the Hognel warden of Bolney (Kent, Surrey and Sussex instances), from these west-country Hoggler's. Hognel and Hoggling seem too much alike in sound and circumstance, and if the

¹ Somerset Record Society, IV, (1890), Churchwardens' Accounts of Croscombe, &c., ed. by Bp. Hobhouse, p. 37.

² *Ib.*, 229. The Stogursey accounts are not given.

³ *Ib.*, 230, 236.

⁴ *Archæologia*, XXXV, pp. 413, 424-5, 432.

⁵ N. E. D., s.v. “Hoggling.”

connection be allowed, the Bolney entry about the money gathered for the "hognel time, viz: Christmas to Candlemas" seems specially to help.

Christmas was a prolonged feast, a sort of school holidays, in old days. It was the deadest time of year, and Plough Monday, the first Monday after Twelfth day or Epiphany (January 6th) was supposed to mark the resumption of farm work. At Bolney in 1540 the Hognel gathering was actually prolonged till Candlemas (Purification, February 2nd), but the exact manner in which the duration is stated shows that this was exceptional—perhaps from so hard a frost that farm work was at a standstill. At any rate, it was clearly customary in Sussex for certain folk to gather money for pious uses at "Hognel time" or about the New Year. And in Somersetshire Hoggler were "the lowest class of labourers, including miners," as Bishop Hobhouse puts it; while Hogglings, to this day, means in that county the idle but not unprofitable job of picking over the refuse from mining works for the sake of the ore to be found, and is also contemptuously used for any clumsy, awkward work. Further, in Pembrokeshire, Hogglings was defined so late as 1888 as the begging of alms at New Year's tide, when "lime burners go round to beg of the farmers who employ them."¹ The modern Hoggler, no doubt, begs for his own behoof; but the mediæval Hoggler, in times when religious observances were an everyday part of men's lives, begged, not wholly for himself, but partly for the maintenance of his parish church; where the Hoggler's light burning perpetually before an altar or saint's statue bore witness to their humble efforts to turn all they did to the glory of God.

With the Reformation and the disappearance of the Hoggler's light, the practice of Hogglings would die out in most places, or, being divorced from any religious use, would come to be looked down on as a cadger's occupation, to be followed only by the idlest and clumsiest of

¹ *Dialect Dictionary*, s.v. "Hoggle, Hoggler"; cf. *Antiquary*, XXV, 25.

workmen. It is interesting to find that "Hogan-store" is an obsolete west country word for a customary parish fund from which Hognor bread, Hogner food, Hoggener's money was provided;¹ and this seems to bind the west country Hoggler's guild to the home counties' Hognel purse.

As for the derivation of the word, it is difficult to avoid connecting it with the Scottish and north country Hogmanay, or New Year's Eve, and its attendant customs. N. E. D. says that Hogmanay corresponds exactly to the old French *Aguillanneuf*, of which the dialect variations are many, and include:—In Normandy, *hoguignettes*, *hoguinané*; and in Spanish (before 1600), *aguilande* (now *aguinaldo*), meaning "handsel" or "Christmas-box," or "New Year's Gift." Cotgrave, in 1611, derived this word from "*auguy l'an neuf*," or new year to the mistletoe, and Brand quotes a French song beginning with the word "*Aguilaneuf*," which is personified as the master who "*mettera le pot au feu*," the verse ending with the petition,

" *Donnez nous, ma boune Dame,
Donnez nous Aguilaneuf.*"²

Hognell has been said to be a corruption of Hogmanay, as the Rev. Joseph Dale suggested, in 1853,³ and Hogmanay has had many fine derivations suggested (including *ἅγια μήνη* or Holy month!); but as the word seems actually not to occur until late in the 17th century, it seems more likely it is itself a northern corruption of the old south country Hognel and Hoggler. Whether these words can possibly link back to Romano-British days and Druidical rites around the sacred mistletoe may well be doubted; and another parallel word is just possibly found in Agenhine or Hogenhyne. Ducanage explains this as "*famulus domesticus*," or household inmates, and quotes the laws of Edward the Confessor, "twa night gest thrid night agenhine," meaning that after so long a stay the host

¹ *Dialect Dictionary*, s.v. "Hoganstore" in Supplement.

² Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, I, 350-3 (ed. 1813).

³ *Sussex A.C.*, VI, 248, note.

became responsible for the guest as a man of his own house (*hogh*, house; and *hine*, servant). In the earliest days nearly all "hinds" lived in their master's house. Later as the community grew and separate houses became more numerous the hinds would come round to their employer's door at Christmastide or New Year, calling on him for good cheer and gifts as being "his own men"; and so the custom would be handed down the ages as a perquisite of the poorest class of labourers calling as Hoghenhynes for Hognel money. This suggestion rather breaks the links with the old French *aguillanneuf* and the Spanish *aguilando*, but Cotgrave's picturesque mistletoe derivation is now looked on as "popular etymology." The Norman form *Hoguinané*, in Guernsey *Hoginono*, does not seem so far off, but the derivation must be left for what it is worth, exposed to the "*putide conjecit*" criticism of the reader.

At least, it sounds more possible than the idea that Hogglings money was "a customary payment made by sheep farmers for hogglings or hoggets, *i.e.*, sheep of the second year,"¹ which boldly assumes that Hogling is a synonym of Hogget. Hog or Hogget is a common term for a two-year old sheep not yet shorn, widely used from Yorkshire to Sussex, and the form Hoggerel is also found, but Hogglings is apocryphal and seems to have been invented purposely to explain Hogglings money, of which Hognel looks like an older form.²

But if guesses may be admitted, and if the form Hogmanay only originated in the late-17th century in Scotland, where so many French words were then in use, is it possible that Hog, being shortened from Hognel or Hogglings, the mysterious "manay" is simply "monnaie," and the cry meant "Give us hognel small change"—hogpence? So Norfolk farm labourers still shout for "largess" in the harvest field, or ask a stranger

¹ Mr. John Bruce, in *Archæologia*, XXXV (1853), 413, adopted by Mr. Roberts in his *Social History of the Southern Counties* (1856), 225.

² But, of course, the sheep derivation may pray in aid John Phillipps and his hired ewes, and the "sale and increase" of Stogursey.

to give them "largess" to pay his footing as a trespasser; and there is no doubt that word comes down from knightly days, when lists were set and heralds cried "A largesse" for the common folk.

However that may be, Hognel and Hoggling seem to be much older forms than the far more famous Hogmanay, and deserve to have some more skilled hand set to unravel their story.

[I remain satisfied that my note on "Hognel Money," Vol. XXIX, p. 26, is substantially correct, and that the fund was originally derived from the farming out of the parish sheep. The Somersetshire entries appear to me decisive.—ED.]