

'tis to be known that every Man in this Kingdom, except Peers, the Clergy, and Knights, and their eldest Sons, were formerly associated in a Decennary (*i. e.*) in a Company of *ten* Families, who were pledged or bound for each other, to keep the Peace, and to observe the Laws; and if any Crime was done by one of them, in such case the other nine were to make Satisfaction, if the Criminal fled from Justice; but they had thirty Days allowed to apprehend him, and if he was not taken within that time, then, and not before, the other nine pledges gave Satisfaction for the Offence done. This Custom was so strictly observed both before and after the Conquest, that the Sheriffs at every County-Court did take the Oaths of those who were above fourteen Years of Age, that they were settled in some Decennary; whereupon this Branch of the Sheriff's Authority was called the View of Frank-pledge.

C H A P. XXXVI.

No Land shall be given in Mortmain.

IT shall not be lawful, from henceforth, to any one, to give his Lands to any Religious House, and to take the same Land again, to hold of the same House. Nor shall it be lawful to any House of Religion, to take Lands of any, and to lease the same to him of whom he received it: If any, from henceforth, give his Lands to any Religious House, and thereupon be convicted, the Gift shall be utterly void, and the Land shall accrue to the Lord of the Fee.

N O T E S.

Lands shall not be given in *Mortmain*, (*i. e.*) into a dead Hand; for when they were given to a Religious House, they were different from all other Hereditaments whatsoever, they were never to revert to the Donor, or his Heirs, nor were subject to any temporal Use; so that the