

IN the year 1277 ROBERT FITZ-ROGER made arrangements for the Betrothal of his eldest son, JOHN, who would then be of the tender age of about seven years. It has been found impossible to ascertain John's precise age at that time. Upon his Father's death, in the year 1310, five different Juries, in as many counties, wherein his possessions lay, returned John's age upon Oath.\* The Northumberland Jury swore that he was forty years of age and more; which vague expression has been found in other cases to mean that he had attained his fortieth birthday and was in his forty-first year. The Jury of Norfolk and of Suffolk swore to the like effect: but the Buckinghamshire Jury swore that he was thirty years of age and more; while the Essex Jury swore that he was forty-four years of age and more. As the principal family possessions were situated in the county of Northumberland, the Jurors of that County may have been the better informed upon the point; and their statement is corroborated by the Jurors of two other Counties, which, if adopted, would fix the year of JOHN DE CLAVERING'S birth at 1270; and his age at the time of his marriage in 1277 as seven years.†

The Betrothal Settlement, dated the 11th September, 1277, is enrolled upon the 'Close Roll,'‡ in which Settlement ROBERT FITZ-ROGER covenanted that his eldest son John should marry Hawise, daughter of ROBERT DE TIBETOT, on Friday, the 25th November, 1277; and that the child-groom should endow his child-bride at the church-door with one hundred librates of land. ROBERT FITZ-ROGER to receive in consideration the sum of six hundred marks from ROBERT DE TIBETOT, four hundred of which were to be refunded in the event of Hawise's decease within the age of thirteen years, which appears to have been the age for the consummation of the marriage. This mimic marriage was duly solemnized, as ROBERT FITZ-ROGER by his appearance in the King's Court upon the 26th December testified.

Such early betrothals were usual at the time; and were speculatively arranged, in view of Dower, &c., by wealthy parents. The daughter of this marriage, born about the year 1305, was betrothed at two years of age to THOMAS AUDLEY, who died in his teens, leaving her the usual Dower, as we shall see.

This juvenile 'Marriage-settlement,' being of so much curiosity, is here translated and recorded *in extenso* :—

The Betrothment of JOHN DE CLAVERING and HAWISE DE TYBETOT.

ON the Saturday next [after] the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Mary, in the fifth year of the Reign of the Illustrious Lord Edward King of England [11th September, 1277] it was Covenanted between ROBERT FITZ-ROGER, of the one part; and ROBERT DE TYBETOT, of the other, To wit :—That John son and heir of the aforesaid ROBERT FITZ-ROGER should marry Hawise, daughter of the aforesaid ROBERT DE TYBETOT within the Quindene of St. Martin, next ensuing, [Friday, 25th November, 1277] and that the aforesaid John shall Dower her Hawise, on the day of the marriage, at the Church-door of a hundred librates of land in his Manor of Aynho, in the County of Northampton, by reasonable extent. And if the said Manor is not sufficient to complete the said hundred librates of land, the same John shall make good to the aforesaid Hawise, that which thereof shall be wanting in the Manor of Blythburgh, in the County of Suffolk by reasonable extent. So that she of the lands of the aforesaid ROBERT FITZ-ROGER, more, in name of her Dowry, in the life of him Robert may not demand, if it happen the aforesaid John should die in his Father's lifetime. And if it happen that the aforesaid John survive the aforesaid Robert his father, it shall

\* 'Inquisitio post Mortem' of ROBERT FITZ-ROGER.

† The Northumberland Jurors also returned his age on the 18th June, 1308, as of forty years. See 'Inquisitio post Mortem,' Edward II., No. 3.

‡ 'Close Roll,' 6 Edward I., at back of membrane 15.