

CITY OF BRISTOL

Simon, the first Baron; succeeding Montacutes continued to augment the friary. They were Somerset gentry, already influential, due to attain still greater positions and to see one of their number a close confidant of Edward III, with his brother Bishop of Worcester, and later of Ely.

Bristol got another Charter in 1300; the next few years were full of local strife, and Bristol became involved in a spell of national turmoil recalling Stephen's time.

First there were severe quarrels, including riots and woundings, with the Berkeleys, feudal lords of Bedminster-cum-Redcliffe and loth to see the legal position keep pace with civic and economic realities. When a townsman of the Gloucestershire part of Bristol was arrested in Redcliffe by Lord Berkeley's officers in 1303 there was a spate of trouble only put to rest in 1373 when the Somerset parts of Bristol were formally annexed to the rest of the town. What followed immediately has been well described by William Hunt;³⁰ the trouble with the Berkeleys was soon merged in greater upheavals.

The events in Bristol between 1307 and 1316 are a partial foretaste of what happened there in the Civil War, with 'personal rule' by the King opposed by large sections of the community, with Bristol's citizens sharply divided, with a King whose policy was weak, shifting, and hard to understand. The main upshot of the trouble, coming when Edward II was almost openly at war with many of the aristocracy, and furious at their execution of his inordinately loved favourite Piers Gaveston, was that for some three years Bristol was virtually an independent City State, with its local Rienzi a certain John Taverner, already twice Mayor and one of Bristol's M.P.s. The Castle now last appeared as a strong Royal fortress separate from the city, a dominating island of Royal authority and aggressive power.

Trouble was foreshadowed with the appointment of a new Royal Constable in August 1307. He was Bartholomew de Badlesmere, a Kentish lord, later a bitter opponent of Edward, but in 1307 his staunch adherent. Barton manor and Bristol were soon added to his sphere; his office included the collection of Royal dues. The Mayor and citizens were bidden to obey him 'in all things pertaining to his office'. Then

when in 1312 the national conflict between Edward and the Lords Ordainer, broke out, open trouble started at Bristol as the townsmen were again ordered to back Badlesmere. The Constable was not without his allies among the citizens, notably in 'The Fourteen', a group of commercial magnates, dealers for the most part in wine and general goods rather than the smaller men whose trade was in wool. The King's own policy was hesitant. The Sheriffs made vain attempts to compel obedience. Taverner was imprisoned and then released. Castle and town became so estranged that the townsmen built a wall to shut the Castle off from the town. The device cut both ways. It might act as a protection against assaults from the Royal garrison; it was also a means whereby the townsmen could deny supplies to the Castle and even cast missiles into the fabric itself.

Wise statemanship or real ruthlessness might have ended the dispute in a few weeks. But Edward II was like neither Edward I nor William the Conqueror. At times he would act with a tactlessness which only served as the traditional red rag, then he would do what he could to urge the parties of Taverner and 'The Fourteen' to reconciliation. In 1314 he appointed a Royal Commission of Enquiry, whose 'chairman' was to be Lord Berkeley, from whom nothing but partiality could be expected; insult was added to injury by calling 'foreigners' (i.e. non-Bristolians) to ensure a rigged verdict. The result was a riot round the Guildhall, the beleaguered Commissioners were with difficulty rescued by the Mayor, limbs were broken, twenty were killed. Bristol was in almost open rebellion which Edward, now in serious trouble with the barons, did not dare suppress with any but reliable Royal forces, not readily to hand in this year of Bannockburn. Next year, 1315, England was distracted by one of the worst mediaeval famines; Government preoccupations were elsewhere. There were detentions and imprisonments of Royal officials; riots again prevented the King's officers from doing their duty. But down to the summer of 1316 it would seem that Edward was more ready to use persuasion than force. Taverner and his immediate adherents had indeed been outlawed, but nothing serious was done to bring them to book.

Not till midsummer, 1316, was their bluff called. A royal

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army and fleet besieged Bristol. Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke and the King's relative, was in command. Lord Berkeley, anticipating a naval tradition in his family, led a blockading fleet. Heavy offensive operations were started from the Castle, well placed to overwhelm the eastern area of the town with a shower of heavy missiles and other paraphernalia of mediaeval siege conflict. The Castle as an offensive base was soon decisive; the conflict was decided by constant, close-range artillery attack and the battering of walls. On 26th July 1316 came unconditional surrender; Taverner himself seems by then to have got away.

Financial penalties were severe—2,000 marks outright and 2,000 more as surety for good behaviour. But in other ways the King dealt surprisingly mildly with Bristol, for he needed support wherever he could get it against an unreconciled aristocracy. He restored the liberty of the town; most of those involved were pardoned. Even Taverner got his pardon in 1321. As early as 1318 two members of the party midway between 'The Fourteen' and that of revolt sat in Parliament for Bristol; Taverner himself was a Member in 1322.

One cannot tell how far Bristol's economy was hit by the Great Insurrection. Only at the end was the town closely beset, but enterprises such as building may have been put back. In 1317 a grant of toll and customs was made in aid of paving and repairing the town; the list of goods is far longer than sixty years before, so that variety of trade, if not its volume, would seem to have grown. The pells and furs certainly offered a wider choice, for they included those of cats and squirrels as well as more usual varieties. Cloths of Ireland, Galway, and Worsted are all specified, also a wider range of textiles. Minerals now include coal, as well as 'thousands of nails' and steel goods; these last were presumably from the infant industries of the Black Country.

But wine, wool, and cloth are the chief items. Now at last we have Customs Accounts, and can tell who dealt in what commodity. Imports feature 'luxury' goods from the Mediterranean—figs and raisins for instance—also the long-established Bordeaux wines. Men prominent in the Insurrection and its aftermath appear as traders; Roger Turtle and John Romsey exported wool in the 1320s, John de Horncastle dealt in hides.³¹

(1934)

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Turtle and Romsey had both been among the twelve who negotiated for the final settlement late in 1316. Another of that party, Gilbert Pokerel, was an M.P. in 1318. These were moderates, some of them uncompromised either way in the disturbances, the men most likely to carry on Bristol's economic and political life.

In the 1320s Bristol and its neighbourhood played a grimly dramatic part in the next political crisis. Two of the baronial party were executed at Bristol in 1322. One was a Gloucestershire knight, the other a de Montfort, kinsman of Earl Simon; inconveniently for Edward II (as for his grandfather after Evesham) miracles were reported at the gibbet where the bodies were exposed. Edward's latest adherents, the Despensers, were installed in high places in Bristol; to Hugh Despenser the younger were given the Castle Constablership and the profits of the town. Then the elder Hugh Despenser was caught in Bristol during the collapse of Edward's fortunes in the West. In October 1326 Queen Isabella and Mortimer her lover-condederate came to Bristol. Despenser was ninety, but age was no bar to the barbarity, peculiar even by contemporary notions, of Isabella's adherents, and he was butchered with every trapping of sadistic horror.

England's first abdication followed; for a short time in 1327 Bristol Castle was Edward's prison. There was apparently a plot to rescue him, and the Dominicans, nearest neighbours to the Castle, and special favourites of Edward (Gaveston being buried in their church at King's Langley) were involved. So Edward was moved, in a march compounded of brutality and blasphemy, to Berkeley. There, on 21st September 1327 he met his death; the scene is depicted, in a later sculpture and with the merest hint of its hideous obscenity, in a boss in the N. transept of Bristol Cathedral. St Augustine's is said to have been one of the Abbeys to which Edward's body was offered for burial. An Abbot whose patrons were Edward's enemies the Berkeleys might feel it wiser to refuse. But politics apart, Abbot Knowle may then have had an excuse in the unfinished state of his new choir.

The town remained of strategic importance and a vital political prize for a would-be-master of England. But hereafter its local history is that of a trading community; the

Bristol at that date was occasionally termed a city). Three years later the hangman, Wen, grants the said 10s. per annum to Richard de Welles. In 1357 Joanna, widow of the son of Richard de Welles, grants for her life a shop and cellar on this property to Simon Halway, on condition of his bringing her yearly one red rose. In the next deed she is referred to as the wife of Thomas, son of Richard Richeman, of Wells, who had by thrift evidently left her considerable property. She granted 20s. a year out of a shop, cellar and tenement in Worschep street to Simon Halway, and on the next Sunday after signature she executed a lease to him of all that her shop with its appurts, situate in Worshype street, in the parish of St. Peter, all those four halls, five shops and two cellars situated in the same street, also on the Monday she leased to John Whyte, Butcher, and to Maud his wife, one hall, with one shop adjoining, in the same street, for 15s. yearly, the rent to begin in 1360, or three years after date. In the subsequent deeds Richman has become the fixed family name, and the descendants bear it honourably in Somerset to this day.

21. The wealthy, both in town and country, during the 12th century had indulged in profuse hospitality. The Earl of Leicester expended in one year money equivalent to £150,000 of present value, one item alone, that of wine, is enormous, 371 pipes being consumed. The produce of the domain, and the revenues from the land were principally spent in the castle, the doors of which were open to all strangers of condition. At Martinmas the supply of fresh meat ceased, except on rare occasions. Oxen, sheep, swine, and deer, were killed in prodigious numbers for each baron's household and salted down in immense tubs for the winter's provision. The hides were made into rude leather, the fat was melted for candles. Wines were laid in from Bristol, hugh stacks of brushwood for the ovens, and logs of wood for the hearth surrounded the dwelling. The household servants were many, they and the farm inmates fared not amiss, but the serf-born thralls,

bondsmen of one manor, all whose goods belonged to their master, and who could be sold ("in this year we sold one slave by birth, William Pike and all his family, and received one mark from the buyer"¹) at the will of their lord, were left in a pitiable condition both for food and raiment.

The rise of the craftsmen and their struggle for a share in the power hitherto monopolised by the older burghers in the towns, and especially in Bristol, is a characteristic feature of this age. Every man permanently resident within the walls of the burgh was either by birth or by service a freeman, his rights were

as rigidly defined as were those of the Lord of the Honour, he could demand a fair trial on any charge, and that justice should be administered only by his fellow-burgesses, or in their presence by the King's justiciaries. When the town's bell rang out, the burgesses gathered in the Common Hall for deliberation and free speech. All townsmen stood on one common footing, but there were as great differences, as now, in condition, degree, and wealth.

The Frith guild, now grown into the Merchants' guild, regulated trade, assessed the sums payable by each burgess for dues and taxes, and were continually on the *qui vive* to get privileges for the town, as well as to keep the unruly, headstrong members of the community in

order. The King's treasury was often filled as the price of a charter. These, by repeated additions and confirmations, publicly recited to the burgesses, infused a spirit of independence and of progress that was unknown to their less favoured countrymen employed in agriculture; their commercial privileges were most extensive and valuable, exemption from tolls was an immense boon to a town that imported foreign produce, and whose burgesses attended most of the established fairs (at these fairs, which often lasted for a week, or even two, all the shops of the town in which they were held were obliged by law to be closed, and nothing was bought or sold but in the fair itself). The burgesses

¹ Annals Dunstab., 1283.



Lecture on Anatomy.

From an ancient MS. on Surgery preserved in the City Library, Bristol. Circa 1380-1400.

also framed their own laws, had control of their markets, and established courts for the recovery of debts.

As the necessities of trade, and the growing increase of commerce demanded, strangers, escaped serfs, artisans, and traders without landed holdings, were tolerated within the walls; the increase of an industrious population meant an increase of wealth and of power. The wealthier burgesses purchased land, grew select, and undertook the larger commercial operations only. Hitherto the term merchant had been applied indiscriminately to shopkeepers and tradesmen, but thenceforth it was gradually withdrawn from the craftsmen and traders.

These latter now formed themselves into trade or craft guilds, the admittance to which was an absolute apprenticeship of seven years to the trade chosen, and no man who had not served his apprenticeship was allowed to carry on any trade in the borough.

The guild master and his court inspected all work done, fixed prices, confiscated unlawful tools, or bad work, and punished disobedience by fines or expulsion, which was absolute ruin (wholesome despotism in some respects, certainly not an unmixed evil).

A common fund was raised by the weekly payments of the members, and in order to proceed legally a royal charter was obtained as soon as practicable. Then began the struggle between the merchants' guild (the greater folk) and the trades' guilds (the lesser folk), the weight of numbers finally prevailed, and the control of trade finally passed into the hands of the trades, or as they are more commonly termed, the crafts' guilds. Under the barons' war, the contest of the guilds raged in London with this result, that every trade won its charter, was properly enrolled, and had its livery appointed, forming what are now known as the "Livery Companies of the City." In Bristol the struggle came later. Ricart says¹ "Forasmuch as at all times this worshipful town of Bristol hath take a precedent of the noble city of London in

¹ Ricart's Calendar.

exercising their laudable customs," &c., &c., so now the contest that culminated in what is called the Great Insurrection in Bristol, arose it seems to us, originally from a difference between the older wealthy burgesses' or merchants' guild, and the crafts' guilds, with whom, ambitious to become leaders, some of the wealthy merchants of standing had allied themselves.

As there will come before us prominently the name of one man whose business is not held in such repute at the present time as to make it reasonably likely that one of his calling would be chosen as Mayor on three separate occasions, and also to represent the burgesses in three, if not four, different Parliaments, viz., 1295, 1298, 1306, and according to some returns, also in 1322, we will briefly explain the position that was held in the beginning of the 14th century by a taverner, hosteller, or innkeeper.

We have mentioned the profuse hospitality shown by the noble and wealthy to those of the like condition when travelling.

The burden in the country had become onerous, but in the towns it had, of course, ceased. When, for instance, earls, barons, bishops, rich abbots and priors were summoned to a Parliament and brought with them necessarily, according to the custom of the time, a large retinue of followers, it became impossible to find free quarters for such an assemblage. Hence arose a new trade, that of the taverner, or hosteller, who

found accommodation for the strangers for recognised rates of payment. They would, therefore, be men of good standing among the merchants of the town. To these houses also the burgesses would resort to drink their evening cup of wine. The homes of the burgesses for the most part were neither clean nor comfortable, and few of them kept wine in stock, cheap though it was.

22. Such would be the condition of the great mass of the townfolk, and especially of the crafts' guilds. In London, as early as 1261, the craftsmen had forced their way into the town mote, had thrust aside the



Capitulum primum est
sermo vniuersalis de
Restauracione fractu-
rarum

Bandaging a Fractured Limb.

*From an ancient MS. on Surgery preserved in the City Library,
Bristol. Circa 1380-1400.*

aldermen, and had chosen their own mayor. The craftsmen of Bristol herein followed the example set them by the London citizens, as we find repeated instances about this period of craftsmen being chosen both for mayors and seneschals. Taverner, Spycer, Hose, Seller, Wineman and Mariner are examples.

A most interesting account of this struggle, derived from the *Rolls of Parliament*, I., 309, and from Thomas Hearne's *Annales de Trockelowe*, with copies of the original documents in Latin, may be seen in Seyer, II., 89, 90-1-2-3-4-5, to which we refer the curious reader. They narrate somewhat at length the following facts. *Fourteen of the principal burgesses had assumed the direction, collection and management of the revenues of the town, and arrogated a prerogative and superiority over their fellow-burgesses, who were possessed of, or rather entitled to, equal rights and privileges.* The names given are William Randolph, who was four times mayor, John Snow, twice mayor, John de Celer, mayor in 1311, Peter le Frauncis (several of this family had been mayors and senestors), Laurence de Cary, senestor in 1313, Robert de Ottery, senestor in 1293, 1305, 1309, Raymund Fermbaud, constable of the castle in 1304, John de London, Martin de Horncastle, William de Kerdiff, William de Hanyngfield, bailiff in 1320, Richard de Camera, Stephen de Salisbury, the baker, John le Parker, William Gylemyn, clerk, John, servant to Laurence de Cary, John Wodelok, Adam du Temple, Roger de Stanes, clerk, John Russel, Henry Fraunceys and John de Chen. These names given are twenty-two in number, and it is probable they were all of them on the side of "the greater folk." Three of them were certainly servants of the Crown, viz., Temple, Laurence de Cary and his man; they were undoubtedly persons of consequence in the town, are distinctly said to have been all of them burgesses, and were men who had a considerable and influential following, although not so numerous a one as their opponents. They were moreover supported by the castle influence, and were protected by the constable. There can be little doubt that they were the principal men in the Merchants' Company or Guild, which we have seen existed in 1218 and 1235 (see pages 90 and 119). *The malcontents were not led by mere demagogues, the leaders are termed "majores communitates," principal men of the commonalty—men who, if not wardens of the crafts' guilds, had evidently cast in their lot with them.*

The chief leader was John le Taverner, who, having been mayor in 1308 and 1309, was re-elected in 1313, and was supported by John de Horncastle and Richard Legat as bailiffs, and John Hasard as coroner; these men, it is said, all exercised their offices independently

of the royal authority. This list is taken from the accusation of these men, and differs from the one given in the Mayor's Calendar, from which we gather that there were conflicting appointments of magistrates by both parties.

The immediate cause of the tumult which led to a violent outbreak in February, 1312, was the attempt to impose *certain tolls in the market* and to levy the cocket imposed contrary to the charter given by Earl John just 100 years previously, and which cocket Edward I. had arbitrarily confirmed in 1284. The town being in a state of tumult, Edward II., who had ordered a new tallage of one-fifteenth of movables and one-tenth of rents, and who was at issue with his barons on account of their having put his favourite, Gaveston, to death, sent letters to the constable of the castle and to the mayor of Bristol, enjoining them to be upon their guard against certain persons who were collecting companies of men without his authority. He soon afterwards, by an exercise of his prerogative, took the government and revenues of the town into his own hands, and appointed a custos, whose authority was to control or, if necessary, supersede the regular administration. William Randolph, who had been four times mayor, assumed the collection of the revenues of the town, in which he was assisted by Bartholomew de Baddlesmere, a baron of great power and property in Kent and elsewhere, constable of the castle of Bristol, who was appointed custos on September 30th; the farm of the town at an annual rent was granted to him, he was authorised to collect all the rents, customs and profits, to hold pleas, to keep the prison, &c., &c., and a writ directed to the mayor and bailiffs of Bristol, informing them of his appointment and requiring their obedience and assistance, was delivered on October 6th. John de Celer, who was just out of office, William Hore, the new mayor, with John Beauflower and Thomas le Spycer, the new bailiffs, would not obey, declaring that they would keep the town safe as they had been ordered for the king's use, so that neither the Custos nor his officers could enter the town or exercise any jurisdiction therein. Thereupon the king, in May, 1313, sent a mandate to the sheriff of Gloucestershire ordering him no longer to make a return of writs to the mayor and bailiffs of Bristol. That year John le Taverner was chosen as mayor, and John de Horncastle and Richard Legat as bailiffs by the malcontents, but Laurence de Cary and Richard White were appointed by the other side. The king then, in answer to petitions sent to him by both parties, appointed four persons to act as judges in the matter, who were authorised to settle all disputes and put an end to the disturbances. The constitution of

this commission was, it is evident, very unfair. Thomas de Berkeley, he who had been at feud with the Bristol men and had lost his estates and been so heavily fined for his *laches*, was at its head; associated with him were John de Wyllyngton, lord of another Gloucestershire manor, John de Button and Richard de Abington, a priest.

They met the burgesses in the Guildhall, but their jurisdiction was objected to on the ground "that the fourteen had procured foreigners to be associated with them in the inquisition, and that it was not right that questions relating to their local rights, customs and privileges should be submitted to such persons as judges." No notice being taken of their objections some of them went outside and told the people *that the judges were in the interest of their adversaries, that the dispute would be settled by party prejudice and not by reason, and that in all probability their liberties and privileges would be utterly lost.* Then arose a terrible tumult, the common town bell swung out its summons, all the burgesses and commonalty gathered, the rabble burst into the Guildhall and with fists and sticks attacked the opposite party. Nearly twenty men were killed on the spot, and so great was the terror that many, rich and poor, got out of the windows, and leaping or falling from the penthouse, or the leads, some broke their legs and others were grievously wounded. The judges were in great danger, but at length the mayor so far restrained the madness of the populace that they were suffered to depart unhurt. The commonalty were accused of imprisoning them, possibly the authorities shut them up awhile to save their lives. *About eighty persons were indicted for this riot before the king's justices at Gloucester, and refusing to appear they were outlawed.* This gave them little trouble, the main body of the burgesses sided with the men who had defended the liberties of Bristol, and who now had the uninterrupted management of its affairs in their own hands, and they immediately took measures to defend the town from an attack from the castle.

William Randolph and his party escaped into the fortress with their wives, children, vassals and tenants. In vain did Edward send his mandate ordering the commonalty to re-admit them and to use them favourably as their fellow-burgesses, the order was treated with contempt, and wine, salt, goods and chattels belonging to them were wasted or stolen to the value of £2,000. The king's officers and bailiffs who ventured into the town were imprisoned (Geoffrey Justice and Laurence de Cary for upwards of seven weeks, and then driven ignominiously out of the town); Alexander de Overton, Henry de Caerwent and Walter de Beyfield, king's servants, were expelled; but three others,

Adam de Temple, Richard de Langeton and John Swyft, they kept in prison for a long time, suffering no collection of rents or customs in the town or port for the king, but applying the same to the use of the town.

Whether or no there may, at that time, have existed an outer wall to the castle in advance of the barbican and of Newgate, cutting the hill-top by Chequer lane, certain it is that the burgesses now built one in the line of Dolphin street to guard against sallies from the stronghold, and from this spot they kept up an irregular warfare against the castle with the bolts from their crossbows and cloth-yard-shafts from their long bows, so that no one could come into the town from thence but by permission. They of the castle were by no means slow in returning the compliment. For two years and more the Bristol insurgents maintained this position of revolt against authority. The pusillanimous weakness of Edward for his favourites having involved him again in war with the barons, gave the burgesses a favourable opportunity to defy the king, when he sought to make this contention between two factions of the town a means of asserting a prerogative which in stronger hands than his had been at times successful.

William I., Henry II. and Edward I. never struck such a blow without the warrant of a strong arm, backed by a determined will. Edward II., naturally impulsive, weak and passionate, a prey from his youth to the insidious wiles of flatterers, and personally given to excess in wine, could threaten, but was powerless to enforce.

From that riotous day in 1313 until the early autumn of 1316 Bristol was practically an independent State, an *imperium in imperio*, making and executing its own laws and collecting and expending its own revenues.

23. There is no record of the men of Bristol assisting in the strife of the barons with the king, and when peace was made between the belligerents in October, 1313, the monarch was too busy with the Scottish war to enforce his demands on Bristol. The fatal day of Bannockburn (June 24th, 1314), when the Scotch, with a sacrifice of 4,000 men, slew 10,000 English, was followed by a deficient harvest. The tillers of the soil had, during the previous three years, been drawn off into the armed ranks of king or barons, and now in 1314-15 famine stalked openly through the land, followed by her twin sister, pestilence. Wheat reached a price equivalent to 20s. per bushel; and the Parliament, with an ignorance of political economy that was not confined to that age, fixed a maximum price on provisions. An ox was not to be sold for more than 16s.; a cow, 12s.; a sheep in the wool, 20d.; a shorn sheep, 14d.; a goose, 2½d.; capons, 2d.; a hen, 1d.; 24 eggs,

1*d.*; and a quarter of wheat, peas or beans, 20*s.* This enactment simply closed the barn door and the stall-gate and increased the distress of the starving poor.

The next season was even worse. A murrain amongst the cattle followed the general pestilence; the brewing of beer from grain was suspended; the nobles cleared their castles of the swarms of hungry retainers, for whom they could find no food; and the land was filled with the dead, the dying, and those who sought by plunder to maintain their existence. The prisoners in Bristol "did pluck and tear those who were newly brought in, and devoured them half alive; and men and women were fain to eat their own children towards the borders of Scotland by reason of the Scots."¹

In such a crisis no wonder "horseflesh and dogs' flesh was counted good meat." Another of our MS. Calendars states that both the summer and autumn were very wet, and that the dearth of corn was such that wheat fetched 40*s.* per quarter. Knighton says it reached "44*s.* in Leicester, and many who were rich and abounding in all goods were reduced to irrecoverable poverty and subject to beggary." If we take Hallam's standard for the relative value, we shall find that the maximum price of wheat was equivalent to £5 10*s.* or £6 per bushel.

This fearful state of the whole land and the raids into England of the victorious Scots, are sufficient to account for the fact that, beyond sending to Bristol repeated mandates commanding the burgesses to return to their obedience, Edward could do nothing effective. These commands the townsmen refused to obey, asserting that "every so-called legal process against them was unjust and null, as being contrary to their charter privileges and rights." About the end of the year 1313 writs were ordered to the sheriffs of the counties of Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire to raise the *posse comitatus* of each county to march against Bristol and to reduce it to obedience.

24. A force of 20,000 men under the Earl of Gloucester, appeared before the town; but so undisciplined a mob of men could effect nothing save to beleaguer its gates, which John le Taverner, backed by his armed co-burgesses, had shut against them. He knew right well that the king wanted all the men he could raise for his war in Scotland, and many of the poor fellows who in the spring of 1314 camped in the meadows around Bristol fell on the bloody field of Bannockburn on Midsummer's Day. In fact, we learn from the *Close Rolls of Edw. II.*, 7 m. 26, that the earl had received private orders not to proceed to extremities

¹ Seyer II., 109.

against the town. This first siege was, it is evident, merely a device to raise men for the king's army.

In 1316 another name appears in the story, that of one whose cruel treatment and death have left an indelible, but we hope to prove an undeserved, stain upon Bristol's escutcheon. Hugh Despencer, the elder, in conjunction with Baddlesmere, who, as warden of the castle, had made himself most unpopular, summoned once more the mayor and burgesses to appear at Gloucester, there to answer for their misconduct, to which they replied, "It is contrary to our privileges," and again the empty sentence of outlawry was fulminated against them. On the 30th of March, 1316, the king issued another writ to the commonalty of Bristol, ordering them to send at Easter next six discreet persons, such as had not been outlawed by any preceding judgment, to give information concerning what had passed and to receive the king's orders thereupon. On the appointed day the commonalty returned their writ before the king's council at Westminster, and sent (we presume under a safe conduct) six such persons, with a letter patent under the common seal, viz., Nicholas Roughborow (senecor 1302, 1305, both years of the mayoralty of Simon de Burton), John le Hunt, John Veys, Roger Thornhill, Robert Hampton and Vincent Gower. Three prosecutors on the king's part accused the commonalty of acts of rebellion, which the six deputies denied or justified. Whereupon a writ was issued to the sheriff of Gloucestershire ordering him to bring to Westminster a jury of twenty-four persons a fortnight after Trinity, by whom the truth of the accusation might be inquired into. This jury (as might have been, and doubtless was on both sides expected, seeing how and whence it had been impannelled) found the commonalty guilty of rebellion in protecting those eighty men, who were the original authors of the mischief, and guilty of all the enormities recited; that it had been disobedient to the king and rebellious, and was still disobedient and rebellious; and that the six deputies were guilty as associates and abettors.

Plain sailing this at Westminster, and equally plain was that at Bristol, where Aylmer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, came as a last messenger from the king and told the principal persons who attended his summons "that the king was satisfied of their guilt, and advised and commanded them to submit to law. 'Give up these murderers,' said he, 'and you and your town abide in peace. If you will do so I undertake that you shall find our lord the king well inclined to mercy.'" We may differ in opinion as to the conduct of these men, but cannot but respect the sturdy independence that denied being the authors of any breach of the law, stood by

their champions and refused a mercy which would imply their guilt. They replied, "We are not the authors of this injury, nor have we committed any offence against our lord the king. Certain persons endeavoured to deprive us of our rights, which we defended as it was our duty to do. Therefore, if our lord the king will remit those imposts that were laid upon us, if he will grant us life and limb, rents and lands, we will obey him as our lord and do whatever he shall require. Otherwise we will go on as we began, and will defend our liberties and privileges even to death."

25. Upon receiving this answer, Edward resolved to subdue the town by force of arms. Maurice de Berkeley was ordered to cut off the communication by sea; John de Cherlton, the king's chamberlain, Roger de Mortimer, John de Wyllngton, who had been illtreated in the *mêlée* at the guildhall, Bartholomew Baddlesmere, and many other barons and knights besieged the town by land. They raised bulwarks against the walls (the *chatte* most probably is meant here, it was a machine constructed of timber by which, when it was thrust against a wall, the assailants could undermine the same, being themselves protected, or could use the machine as a bridge to surmount the defence), battering-rams were also brought into play from the castle. For some days the townsmen resisted, hoping to tire out the assailants, as they had previously succeeded in doing; but when they found that the walls as well as their houses were being shaken, and that there was no hope of a successful defence, they surrendered to the king's mercy. Taverner made his escape or he doubtless would have

been hanged, the principal burgesses were thrown into Newgate and many of them were committed to the Tower of London. The king took the town into his own hands and held it until December, 1316, making Maurice de Berkeley custos, who put in as his deputy Sir Simon Warde. In the above-named month Edward signified in council his pleasure to grant the commonalty, with the exception of John le Taverner, Thomas his son, and Robert Martyn, a pardon for all their offences upon

payment of a fine. Whereupon twelve deputies were ordered by the commonalty to attend the king, viz., William Randolph (who had returned to the town and been appointed mayor), Thomas de la Grave, Roger Turtle (this name occurs nine times in the list of mayors between 1289 and 1341), Henry le Mariner, Robert Hornhurst (senestor with Simon Burton, 1304), Robert de Ottery (senestor 1294, 1296 and 1305 with Burton, again 1309 with Taverner, apparently a man of the same kidney as the Vicar of Bray), John Wellshott (bailiff that year), Richard le Wythe, John de Axebrugg, Richard de Woodhull and Gilbert Pickerill

(senestor with Taverner in 1308 and bailiff in 1320), went to plead with Edward. Some of these men had been unquestionably loyal to their principles, others of them had been among the malcontents. Now united in their efforts to restore peace and good order in Bristol, "they carried with them a letter patent under the common seal, dated December 20th, 1316, expressed in reverential terms, imploring the king's favour, and professing themselves ready to submit to any conditions to which the said twelve persons as their attorneys



Newgate at the close of the 18th Century, showing the Alms-house for Poor Prisoners.

should agree." Hereupon a fine of 4,000 marks was imposed on the town, one half of which was to be paid at certain times then agreed on, and the other half was to remain on good behaviour, which fine is expressed to be for a pardon to the town and to all individuals (with the before-mentioned exceptions) concerned in the disturbances from the 2nd of February, 1311-2, to that date, and for the king's pardon of the outlaws and those who had protected them, and for the burgesses having their liberties and franchises restored. Nevertheless the king held firm to the obnoxious cocket or fish tax. Taverner and Martyn had their property confiscated. Maurice de Berkeley, although he must have had a grudge against the Bristol men, appears to have acted with great moderation. Smyth speaks of the matter as an "*intestine uproar, wherein one half of the townsmen were for some years rebelliously in arms against the other,*" and gives a large number of references to the rolls. That Maurice de Berkeley did not always at this time comport himself with moderation towards those who could not resist him is shown by the following:—

Somewhere about 1316-7 Lord Maurice Berkeley fancied a bit of land and divers houses in the suburbs of Bristol that "lay fit to his manor of Bedminster." They belonged to Richard Bolour, in right of his wife, Joan. Lord Maurice carried these good people to his castle of Berkeley, and there, to use the language of Smyth "entered into covenants, that they should prosecute a writ '*quod ei deforciat*' against Roger Apleby and others who held the said lands, &c., until they should recover; and this suit be at the charges of the said Lord Maurice and his counsell; and that they should use no other counsell but his and such as he appoints; and that after recovery they should within 15 days grant the same to him, the said Maurice, and his heirs, reserving to the said Joan her life in one of the said houses, and to have £10 in money from this lord: for performance of which covenants this lord took of them a statute of £100." The honest historian continues: "I leave the censure of this to the divine rule *quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*. To prevent all presentments against him in the commission of *Trailbaston* against intruders into other men's lands, extortioners, oppressors, champners, and the like offenders, this lord bribed the jury for Portbury Hundred with the gift of 20s.; and such as would have given evidence against him with 49s., *pro favore habendo coram justitiariis de Trailbaston in negotiis suis ibidem.*"¹

26. Long consideration and study of this sad outbreak only confirms our opinion that it was a fight for

¹ Smyth, 211. Comp de Portbury. 2 Edw. II. in Castro de Berkeley.

the mastery between the merchants' guild and the craftsmen (certain lines that we have italicised bear only this interpretation) to which quarrel the king was made a party by the refusal of the burgesses to pay a fish tax that was imposed contrary to their charters, but which the merchants, being of the king's party, were willing to pay. The king persistently in his pardon demands that this payment shall be continued; but all local matters, such as collection, direction and management of the revenues, arrogated superiority and prerogatives over their fellow-burgesses, and certain tolls in the market, his majesty does not mention, they being evidently local exactions. Had it been a rebellion in the ordinary acceptation of the word, the burgesses would have called in the aid of the barons, who were not reconciled to the king until after this outbreak. This, no doubt, Edward remembered, and it won for them more favourable consideration. The names of the men are significant. Most of the fourteen have place names indicating a higher rank by the *de* or *le*, whereas the few names given of their opponents, or associated with the leaders in office, are names derived from occupations, such as Taverner, Legat (lawyer), Martyn, Hunte, Beauflower (fine flour), Spycer (grocer), &c.

Above all, the easy terms on which the king received them to grace, without a single execution, and making one half of the fine imposed conditional upon their maintaining the peace, corroborate, we think, our view that the monarch did not look upon this primarily as an insurrection against the royal authority. Nor must we forget the notable fact that Ricart himself, one of the Guild of Calendars, who lived in the middle of the following century, and whose business it was to record all events connected with the history of Bristol, is significantly silent about transactions which in the temper of his age would be considered a disgrace to his class and to the city. The fact that Taverner, twenty-one years afterwards, took the first opportunity of petitioning a new king, Edward III., for a restitution of his property, that he does not in his petition admit any breach of the law, but respectfully, yet firmly, defends his acts, and that Edward III. ordered the Justices of the King's Bench to inquire into the matter, is, we think, strongly corroborative of our opinion. The petition is as follows:—from "John Taverner and other citizens of Bristoll, showing to the king and his council, that whereas the earle of Glouc' came before Bristoll with twenty thousand men and more, and demanded the same city to be delivered to him, which hee (being then Mayor) and the other citizens denyed, and defended the city: whereunto the said Earle by the Counsell of Hugh Spencer, the father, and Bartholomew Baddlesmere

purchased of the king oyer and terminer against them to be enquired of, at Gloucester, contrary to the liberties of their city: and for that they appeared not, and the sheriffs returned falsely '*Non sunt inventi*,' they were outlawed and their lands and goods seized for the king; they pray that it would please the King and his Council to cause the record and process to come before them, or to command the Justices of the King's Bench to reverse the said utlawry, and to restore them to the common law, that they may recover their lands and goods."¹

It is answered thus:—"Let them have a writ in Chancery to the Justices of the King's Bench, that they proceed in the process laid before the said justices upon the premises; and if there be error found in the record and process of the foresaid utlawry, then that they should cause that error to be amended."

Not a word of confession of fault, or a suing for pardon in the above petition, but a manly defence of acting within the rights of the city and its citizens (five times they are thus termed) and a simple prayer for a restoration of their privileges and property, which had been seized illegally. Edward III.'s answer is in accordance with his noble character, but we have sought in vain for the result of the proceedings. As we have before stated, some returns give Taverner's name as one of the members of Parliament in 1322, from which it would appear that he had returned to Bristol, and was still in high repute in the burgh.

27. The weak, irresolute king, Edward II., was in 1318 again at issue with his Parliament. Unable to exist without a favourite, he had fixed his affections upon the Despencers, father and son, both bearing the same Christian name—Hugh. Men of good family, already rich, Edward soon largely increased their possessions. He made the younger his chamberlain, and married him to the daughter of the Earl of Gloucester, who had been slain at Bannockburn, and thus conferred upon him the greater portion of the county of Glamorgan.

Despencer was soon embroiled with his neighbours, the Earls of Hereford and Lancaster; these joined the lords of the Welsh borders and marched with an army to St. Albans, where Edward then was, plundering as they went the manors of the elder Despencer. They demanded of the king the banishment of this man, the ablest and most faithful of Edward's friends, whom they looked upon as a deserter from their cause, and of his son Hugh, the younger, a man of parts, who had attempted to form a league by which the despotic will of the king should be limited, and who held that it was to the Crown, rather than to the person of the king, that the subject is bound to pay honour and allegiance—

¹ Roll. Par. II., 434.

that if the king did wrong it was the bounden duty of the subject to put him right, &c.

On Edward's refusal to grant the barons' demand they continued their march to London, where the Parliament was then sitting, and procured from it a sentence of exile against both Despencers, who were accused of arrogating to themselves royal power, of leading the king to act with violence, of preventing his showing himself to his people or giving audience except at their pleasure, of removing good men from office and appointing evil counsellors and unlearned justices for bribes, of exciting to civil war and inducing the king to exact unreasonable fines, and of extorting moneys from newly-created bishops and abbots before they were allowed to see the king. This was in March, 1321, at which time Despencer, the younger, was in possession by grant from the king, of the castle and town of Bristol, drawing from the latter a rent of £210. On his banishment the grant was it appears transferred to Matthew de Clendon and John his brother. Having, in 1321, failed to gain the support of London, Edward came to Bristol, whence he issued orders to Thomas de Berkeley for preservation of the peace of the town.¹

In May the king issued another mandate from Westminster, directed to the mayor, bailiffs and commonalty, to the same effect, and ordering them not to suffer any suspicious persons to enter the town.² The Earl of Hereford had sent a mendicant friar to persuade the burgesses to give their adhesion to the barons; but in this case, as in the previous war, they declined the alliance.³

Edward having been successful and overcome the barons, the Parliament at York annulled the sentence of exile against the Despencers on the ground of coercion by force of arms, and carrying their acquiescence with the king's wishes to the extreme of servility, they "repealed all ordinances and provisions that had curtailed the royal power of the ancestors of our lord the king." The Despencers returned to England and reigned supreme in the palace, the escheats of the attainted barons were assigned to them, and Hugh Despencer, the younger, had a re-grant of the castle and town of Bristol for his life.

On the 22nd April, 1320, the king granted two charters by which the burgesses had the customs on imports for five years for repairing the walls and the quay. These seem to have been renewals of former charters granted by him for three years on February 19th, 1316, for the same purposes.

28. On February 17th, 1321-2, a month before the decisive battle at Boroughbridge, Edward, for a grant

¹ Claus. Rot., 14 Edwd. II., m. 2. ² *Ibid.* ³ *Ibid.*

THE BRISTOL ^{Insurrection} REBELLION.

√ 30

1312 - 1316.

The Historian

Dear Sir or Madam

Over a period of time I have pieced together an interesting story concerning the town of Bristol and its rebellion between 1312 and 1316 led it seems by a namesake John-le-Taverner the appointed Mayor.

I would like to expand the facts I have and wonder if ~~the~~ there is a definitive history of Bristol that deals with this period in a wider context, and if, like Kinston upon Hull there is a town plan and list of land owners with their properties described.

In the meantime I attach the information I have gathered.

Yours Sincerely
J. P. Taverner.

John P. Taverner
238 Hesketth Lane
Tarlton
PR4 6RH
Lancashire
27.1.98

21st July 1312

The King Edward II granted protection for 1 year to 21 burgesses of Bristol, including John le Taverner.

17th October 1312

John was elected Mayor by his fellow Burgesses. The Constable of Bristol Castle did not live in Bristol Castle, and so the information was passed to the King via the earl of Pembroke.

8th November 1313

Protection by the King that no injury was to be done to John and a list of others

10th November 1313

By this date it seems that Bristol, and in particular the Burgesses are accused of open rebellion against the Constable of the Castle and his representatives.

They (it seems) exploited the citizens for their own advantage, built stone walls & shot arrows at the Castle.

On 20th November 1313

Further Complaints were issued on behalf of Bartholomew de Badlesmere Constable of the Castle at Bristol. At this time William de Axe was Mayor

On December 25th 1313

John & others listed were accused of broken into the house of W^m Randolph carried away his goods, assaulted his men and servants and imprisoned him.

Summary of the attached documents

April 1st 1314

Another 3 Burgesses complained about their treatment by John & his pals

20th June 1316

A deputation including the Earl of Pembroke was sent to Bristol to inform themselves of the disturbances and to stop the rebellion. Sometime between 1314 and 1316 John and some others named were accused of murdering Alexander de Vilers. However at the Guildhall, the Comonality of the town would not permit John & his pals to be arrested.

P The Sherriff, taking the great Possee of the county with him approached the town only to find the gates shut against him. The townsfolk had fortified the town thus causing open rebellion against the King. 6th August 1316.

John & Robert Martyn had been convicted in absentia & had fled to the church for protection.

28 December 1316

Pardon upon fine made by the Comonality of Bristol with the exception of John le Taverner, Thomas his son and Robert Martyn who skipped to France or Elsewhere.

8th Jan 1318

to John de Weston all land, rents
etc. of John le Taverner and Robert Martyn

10th June 1319

to John de Weston with the assent
of Parliament all tenements & rents of
Robert & John in the Town of Bristol and
its subwb.

19th October 1321

John, Thomas and Robert were
pardoned

28th November 1321

John Thomas & Robert are
pardoned of the Death of Alexander de Villers
and his lands and tenements are restored.

~~December 10~~ Pardon to John, Thomas & Robert
for their contempts between 2nd February 1312
and 28th December 1316.

1324 John, showing the King's
charters returned to Bristol & maliciously
vexed many good and lawful men of the
town by divers grievances and extortions

1327

A petition from John and other
Citizens of Bristol asking for the
injustices of the Kings Bench to be
reversed

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Pre-1600

No of references ordered: 50

Item no 22

Source: Public Record Office

Title: *Patent Roll 6 Edward II* i m.23

21 July 1312

Westminster

Protection, for one year, for John Fraunceys the younger, a burgess of the king's town of Bristol.

By the king, on the information of E. de Malo Lacu.

The like for the under-mentioned persons, to wit:-

John Hasard

Adam Wysman

Edmund Lydiard

Richard Wodehulle

Thomas Uppediche

Thomas de la Grave

Nicholas de Farleye

Richard Sampson

Robert Martyn

John Sire

Philip le Spicer

John de Kerdyf

Thomas de Salop

Robert Holhurst

William de Clyf

Henry le Marinere

John le Taverner

William de Axe

Richard le White

Richard Colpek

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Pre-1600

No of references ordered: 50

Item no 21

Source: Public Record Office

Title: *Patent Roll 6 Edward II i m.15*

17 October 1312

Windsor

Notification of the acceptance of the oath of John le Taverner, a burgess of Bristol, whom his fellow burgesses have elected mayor and have presented to the king, as in their petition they have set forth that the constable of the castle of Bristol, to whom, by virtue of their charter from the late king, they ought to have presented the mayor, does not stay in the castle.

By the king, on the information of the earl of Pembroke.

Writ de intendendo directed to the bailiffs, good men and commonalty of the town of Bristol for him as mayor.

By the king, on the information of the earl of Pembroke.

FONS

Pre-1600

No of references ordered: 50

Item no 46

Source: Public Record Office

Title: *Patent Roll 7 Edward II* i m.8

8 November 1313

Westminster

Protection, under pain of forfeiture of life and limb, and of all else that can be forfeited to the king, directed to John le Taverner, Thomas de la Grave, William de Axem John de Kerdif, John Hazard, Richard Colpek, Robert de Holhurst, Robert Martyn, William de Clyf, Richard de Wodehulle, Thomas Uppediche, Richard le Wyte personer, Thomas de Salop, Adam Wysman, Richard de Chedre, John Fraunces the elder, Henry le Maryner, John de Keynesham, William Russel peliter, Philip de Swenesie, Nicholas de Portebury, Roger Turtle, Roger Blanket and John le Longe mariner, and others of the town of Bristol, for William Randolf, John Snow, John del Celer, Peter le Fraunceis, Laurence de Cary, Robert Otery, Reymund Frembaud, John de London peliter, Martin Horncastel, William de Kerdif, Adam Welishote, William de Hanyngfeld, Richard de Calne, Stephen de Sarum pestour, John le Parler, William Gylemyn clerk, John the servant of Laurence de Cary, John Wodecok, Adam du Temple, Henry de Fromton, Robert Randolf, Roger de Stanes clerk, John Russel and Henry son of Peter le Fraunceis, burgesses of the same town of Bristol, and for their households and servants. No injury is to be done to them, and they are to be allowed to remain in the town, and to practise their trades and to enjoy the liberties of the town without let or hindrance.

By the king.

The like to the same persons for John de Chyeu or Chieu clerek, Robert Flemyng clerk, Geoffrey Justise, Robert atte Stone, Richard Watier, William de Bruton, Reginald de Radinore, Richard de la Marche, Robert Beaugrant, Roger de Combe and David Paraventue, with their households and servants.

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Pre-1600
No of references ordered: 50
Item no 44

Source: Public Record Office
Title: *Patent Roll 7 Edward II i m.5d*

10 November 1313
Westminster

Commission of oyer and terminer to William Inge, Henry Spigurnel, Robert son of Payn, Edmund de Malo Lacu, John de Foxle and John de Button.
Although the king had lately committed to Bartholomew de Badelesmere the custody of his castle of Bristol and of the town and barton of Bristol, to hold during pleasure, for a certain farm to be rendered yearly at the Exchequer, and frequently enjoined on the men of the town to answer to him as constable of the castle and keeper of the town and barton, or to his attorney in that behalf, in all matters which appertain to the custody of the castle, town and barton, William de Axe then mayor of the town, and John le Taverner, Thomas de la Grave, John de Kerdyf, John Hasard, Richard Colpek, Robert de Holhurst, Robert Martin, William de Clyf, Richard de Wodehulle, Thomas Uppediche, Walter Fraunceys clerk, Richard le White pesshoner, Thomas de Salop, Adam Wysman, John Fraunceys the elder, Richard de Cheddre, John de Keynesham, Philip de Sweyneseye, John le Lang maryner, Roger Blanket, John Legat, Nicholas le Taillur, Philip le Spicer, Nicholas de Farleye, Gilbert de Derby, William Flemmynge, William Burgeys, Thomas Butiller and Richard Legat, with others of the town, ignoring the king's commands, refused to obey him or his attorney. Subsequently the king, having for divers causes taken the liberty of the town into his hands, and having committed it during his pleasure to the said Bartholomew de Badelesmere, who was to answer at the Exchequer for the issues thereof, the same John le Taverner, William de Clyf and Gilbert Pokerel, exercised the offices of mayor and bailiffs in the town, as if the liberty of the town had not been taken into the king's hands, and they with the other persons above named, by their own authority, usurped and converted to their own uses the profits accruing in the town, which Bartholomew de Badelesmere, as constable of the castle and keeper of the town and barton and of the liberty thereof by virtue of the king's commissions to him and to his attorney, ought to have received. They also forcibly impeded him and his attorney and the other ministers appointed by him for collecting, exercising, and doing those things which appertain to such custody, in the collection and execution of the same, and beat, wounded, and imprisoned his deputies; and also in divers places in the town they made barricades and other impediments, not permitting victuals or other things to be borne or even carried from the town, or through it, to the castle for the strengthening and custody thereof. Furthermore they forcibly broke the king's mills by the castle and made frequent attacks, as against enemies, on the men who were in the castle for its custody, by shooting arrows

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and quarrels into the castle, and finally they erected and crenellated a wall of stone and lime in the street called Wynchestrete and made barricades in divers places opposite the castle, discharging arrows and quarrels through the battlements against the castle. They also with armed force hindered Thomas de Berkele, John de Welyngton, master Richard de Abyndon, and the same John de Button, sent by the king to Bristol to assess a tallage in that town for his use and to make divers inquisitions there, from doing those things which appertained to their office, and imprisoned them. Further they conspired together and entered into a confederacy among themselves to commit trespasses against the king, his constable and keeper, and the attorney of the latter. They assessed many tallages on the commonalty of the town, by reason whereof they oppressed the people there, converted the greater part of the money accruing from such tallages to their own uses, and having no consideration to the caption of the liberty of the town into the king's hands, but rather treating with contempt his action in that matter, held an election among themselves of a mayor and bailiffs for the town, who cease not to execute such offices there in contempt of the king's mandates, to the manifest derogation of the king's right and to the impoverishment of the town and against the peace. The justices, of whom William Inge is to be one, are to enquire into these matters by oath of good men of the county of Gloucester.

By the king.

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Pre-1600

No of references ordered: 50

Item no 43

Source: Public Record Office

Title: *Patent Roll 7 Edward II i m.4d*

20 November 1313

Westminster

Commission of oyer and terminer to William Inge, Henry Spigurnel, Robert son of Payn, Edmund de Malo Lacu, John de Foxle and John de Button, by oath of good men of the county of Gloucester, on complaint by Bartholomew de Badelesmere, to whom the king lately committed, during pleasure, the custody of the castle, town and barton of Bristol for a farm to be rendered yearly at the Exchequer, and in favour of whom the king has issued many mandates and injunctions to the men of the town to answer to him in all matters which appertain to such custody, that William de Axe then mayor of the town of Bristol, John le Taverner, Thomas de la Grave, Richard Colpek, William de Clyf, Robert Martyn, John de Kerdif, Walter Fraunceys, Thomas Upediche, Thomas de Salop, John Hazard, Richard le White personer, Robert de Holhurst, Richard de Wodehulle, Roger Blanket, John Regat, Adam Wysman, Nicholas le Taillur, John Horncastel and John Fraunceys the elder, with others of the town, forcibly hindered him and his attorney and the ministers appointed by him to do those things which pertain to such custody, from collecting the profits accruing in the town, which he as constable of the castle and keeper of the town and barton ought by virtue of the king's commission to have received, and of their own authority have usurped possession and converted such profits to their own uses. That they took and carried away wine and other victuals purchased and purveyed in the town for the use of the said Bartholomew de Badelesmere and of his men who were in the castle for the custody thereof, and assaulted and wounded his men and servants who were there as his deputies.

By the king.

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Pre-1600

No of references ordered: 50

Item no 42

Source: Public Record Office

Title: *Patent Roll 7 Edward II ii m.25d*

25 December 1313

Westminster

Commission of oyer and terminer to William Inge, Henry Spigurnel, Robert son of Payn, Edmund de Malo Lacu, John de Foxle and John de Button, on complaint by William Randolf, burgess of Bristol, whereas dissensions had lately arisen between Bartholomew de Badelesmere constable of the king's castle of Bristol and keeper of the town and barton of the same, and John le Taverner then mayor of Bristol, and the bailiffs and men of the same town, and because the complainant had adhered in this matter to Bartholomew de Badelesmere, the mayor, bailiffs and men of the town maliciously and without cause adjudged him to be deprived of the liberty of the town, which judgment was afterwards annulled in the court of King's Bench; and thereupon the king took him, his men, lands, rents, goods and all his possessions into his protection, inhibiting all persons from inflicting on the complainant and his household or servants any injury, molestation and loss, and issued several mandates to the mayor, bailiffs and men of the town, under pain of forfeiture, that they should permit the said William Randolf and his household to stay in the town of Bristol and to trade there with his wares, and to use and enjoy the liberties granted by the king's progenitors to him as to other burgesses of the town, that the said John le Taverner, William de Clif, Gilbert Pokerel, Richard de Cheddre, Walter de Chiltenham, Richard le Chaundeler, Thomas de la Grave, Richard Colpek, John de Kerdyf, John Hazard, Thomas de Salop', Robert de Holherst, Thomas son of John le Taverner, John Fraunceis the elder, John Fraunceis the younger, Robert Martyn, Richard Sampson, Adam Wisman, Roger Blanket, Philip Wodeward, William Hail cordewaber, Thomas Tebaud and William Burgeis, with others of the town, have forcibly interfered with him and his household so that they cannot remain in the town or trade therein, or use and enjoy the liberties thereof, have broken his houses, carried away his goods, assaulted his men and servants, and imprisoned them. The justices are to hear and determine the matter by oath of good men of the county of Gloucester.

By the king.

The like to William Inge, Henry Spigurnel, Robert son of Payn, Edmund de Malo Lacy, John de Foxle and John de Button, on like complaint by William de Kerdyf burgess of Bristol, that John le Taverner, William de Clyf, Robert Martyn, William de Axe, Thomas de la Grave, Richard Colpek, Thomas Uppediche, Philip de Swayneseye. Thomas de Whitteleye, Robert de Holherst, Richard le White pessoner, Thomas de Salop', John de

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Horncastel, William Flemyng, Henry de Huntyngdon, Adam Wisman and Richard Legat, with others of the town of Bristol, have interfered with him in like manner, entered his houses at Bristol, broken his chests and coffers, and carried away his goods.

The like to William Inge, Henry Spigurnel, Robert son of Payn, Edmund de Malo Lacu, John de Foxle and John de Button, on like complaint by John du Celer, burgess of Bristol, that John le Taverner, Thomas atte Grove, John de Kerdyf, William de Clyf, Robert Martyn, Robert de Holherst, Thomas de Salop', Thomas atte Maryne, Richard de Weston and John atte Maryne, with others of the town of Bristol, have interfered with him, carried off in the port of Bristol a ship of his freighted with wines and other goods, and assaulted his men and servants.

By the king.

The like to William Inge, Henry Spigurnel, Robert son of Payn, Edmund de Malo Lacu, John de Foxle and John de Button, on like complaint by John de London, burgess of Bristol, that John le Taverner, William de Clif, Gilbert Pokerel, Thomas de la Grave, John de Kerdyf, Robert Martyn, Thomas Uppediche, Philip de Swayneseye, Richard le White pessonner, Robert de Holherst, John Hazard, Richard de Wodehulle, John Fraunceys the elder, William Flemyng, William Rusel peleter, Richard de Weston, Thomas de Whiteleye, John Horncastel, John Legat, Nicholas le Taillur, Thomas de Salop', Nicholas de Farleye, William Curteys and Richard Legat, with others of the town of Bristol, have in like manner interfered with him, broken his houses, carried away his goods, and assaulted his men and servants.

By the king.

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Pre-1600

No of references ordered: 50

Item no 44

Source: Public Record Office

Title: *Patent Roll 7 Edward II* ii m.17d

1 April 1314

St Albans

Commission of oyer and terminer to William Inge, Henry Spigurnel, Robert son of Payn, Edmund de Malo Lacu, John de Foxle and John de Button, on complaint by John Snow, a burgess of the town of Bristol, and an adherent of Bartholomew de Badelesmere, constable of the castle of Bristol and keeper of the town and barton of the same, touching his ill-treatment on that account at the hands of John le Taverner mayor of Bristol, Richard Colpek, John de Kerdyf, Thomas de la Grave, Robert Martyn, William de Clyf, Thomas Upediche, Philip de Sweyneseye, Richard le Whyte pessoner, Robert de Holherst, Richard de Wodhulle, Richard Estmere, Richard Sampson, Adam Wysman, John Hazard, Thomas de Salop', Nicholas le Taillour, Roger Blanket, Richard Legat and Richard le Chaundeler, and others of the town, notwithstanding the king's mandate directed to the mayor and others to permit him, his household and servants, to dwell there in peace and to trade, and also to permit him to use and enjoy the liberties of the town.
By the king.

The like to William Inge, Henry Spigurnel, Robert son of Payn, Edmund de Malo Lacu, John de Foxle and John de Button, on like complaint by Laurence de Cary against the same Johnle Taverner, Thomas de la Grave, John de Kerdyf, John Hazard, Robert Martyn, William de Clyf, Richard de Wodhulle, Richard Sampson, Richard le Packere, Nicholas de Farleye, Gilbert de Derby, Robert de Holherst, Nicholas le Taillour, John Legat, John Horncastel, Adam Wysman, Richard Legat, Richard de Weston, Richard de Chedde, Wyncent Colpek, John Colpek, Thomas Upediche, William Russel peleter, John le Scriveyn and Walter de Chyltenham, and others, of the town of Bristol.
By the king.

The like to the same justices, on like complaint by Peter le Fraunceys, a burgess of the town of Bristol, against the said John le Taverner, William de Clyf, Robert Martyn, Philip de Sweyneseye, Thomas de Salop', Richard de Burton, John Legat, Richard le Packere, Adam Wysman, John Fraunceys the elder, Robert de Holherst, Nicholas le Taillur, Roger Blanket, Adam the serjeant, Thomas Turtle, John le Ropere, Thomas Upediche, John Hazard, Gilbert de Derby, Richard de Chapmanneslade, Ralph le Dyer and others of the town of Bristol.

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Pre-1600

No of references ordered: 50

Item no 33

Source: Public Record Office

Title: *Patent Roll 9 Edward II ii m.3*

20 June 1316

Westminster

Appointment of Aymer de Valencia earl of Pembroke, William Inge, John de Insula and John de Mutford, to go to Bristol, where they are to inform themselves thoroughly touching the undermentioned disturbances, and to re-call the commonalty of the town to their obedience to the king, but if the commonalty continues in rebellion, the commissioners are, under the king's authority, to punish them. By writ under the testimony of Roger le Brabanzun, then chief justice of the King's Bench, the king commanded the sjeriff of Gloucester that he should not fail, on account of the liberty of the town of Bristol, to take John le Taverner, Richard Colpek, William de Clif, Robert Martyn, William Snowe and John Simenel, outlaws at the king's suit for the death of Alexander de Vilers in the town of Bristol, wherever they should be found, whether within the liberty of the town, or without it in the said county, and keep them in prison so that he should have their bodies before the king in fifteen days of Martinmas last, to receive judgment of the court therein. On which day the sheriff returned that he had approached the town of Bristol to take the abovenamed outlaws, whom he found in the Guildhall of the town, and that they and Robert de Wyldemershe, who called himself bailiff of the town, and the commonalty of the town, did not permit him to attach them, wherefore the king commanded the sheriff that he should not omit, on account of the said liberty or any other liberty of his county, to arrest John le Taverner and the other outlaws and also the said Robert de Wildemershe and all others of the commonalty of the town who had hindered him in the execution of the king's mandates, and keep them in prison so that he should have their bodies before the king in the Octave of Holy Trinity last past to receive what the king, with the Council, should order. On which day the sheriff returned that he in his proper person had approached the town of Bristol to execute the king's mandate, and that he had caused the entire commonalty of the said town to assemble in the Guildhall, and upon his setting forth before the commonalty the tenor of the king's mandate, all of the commonalty unanimously answered that they would not permit the said John le Taverner, or Robert de Wyldemershe, or any other of the town, to be attached or led away from the town, and they forcibly hindered him in the execution of the mandate, whereupon the sheriff, by word and the laying-on of hands, attached Henry le Shipman and many others of the town who had hindered him; but the persons so arrested forcibly broke the attachment, on which account the sheriff, taking the great posse of the county with him, approached the town to execute the mandate, when he found the gates of the town shut against him, and that the entire

FONS

commonalty of the town had collected together to them a great multitude of malefactors, as well men of Bayonne as Welshmen, and that they had drained the dyke of the castle and dried it thoroughly, broken and destroyed the mill of the castle, and in the town, before the castle gate, made a dyke of the depth and width of 24 feet, and fortified the dyke with a strong peel, and there and elsewhere in the town constructed wooden forts, springalds and other engines for attacking the castle, so that no one in the castle could go forth towards the town, and for holding the town against the king and, with standards raised, had made other preparations for open rebellion against the king.
By king and council.

FONS

Pre-1600

No of references ordered: 50

Item no 32

Source: Public Record Office

Title: *Patent Roll 10 Edward II i m.29*

6 August 1316

Lincoln

Mandate to the good men and entire commonalty of the town of Bristol, as the king understands that John le Taverner and Robert Martyn, who for certain trespasses and contempts committed against the king in the said town have been convicted by judgment of the court of King's Bench, have fled to the church of the town to obtain ecclesiastical immunity, that they are to keep a diligent watch on the said John le Taverner and Robert Martyn, so that they may not through defect of such watch escape.

By the king.

Thomas son of
John le T

FONS

Pre-1600

No of references ordered: 50

Item no 30

Source: Public Record Office

Title: *Patent Roll 10 Edward II* ii m.35

28 December 1316

Nottingham

Pardon, upon fine made by the commonalty of the town of Bristol, to them, with the exception of John le Taverner and Thomas his son, and Robert Martyn, who for divers felonies have abjured the realm, of all contempts, trespasses and disobdiences committed by them against the king and his ministers in the said town and suburb thereof since 2 February 5 Edward II [1312] to the date hereof, provided that they answer the king for what they have received out of the custom which is called the Coket in the said town, or what ought to have been received out of that custom for the king's use.

Pardon to the commonalty of the town of Bristol, John le Taverner and Thomas his son and Robert Martyn excepted, for receiving outlaws and indicted persons.

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Pre-1600

No of references ordered: 50

Item no 13

Source: Public Record Office

Title: *Patent Roll 11 Edward II* i m.5

8 January 1318

Westminster

Grant to John de Weston the younger and his heirs, of all the lands, rents and tenements late of Robert Martyn le Clerk and of John le Taverner in the town and suburb of Bristol, which as an escheat are in the king's hands on account of felonies committed by the said Robert and John le Taverner, who have abjured the realm.

By privy seal.

1318

328. Writ to the sheriff of Gloucester. Windsor. 12 February 11 Edward II. [1318.]

p 82

Inquisition before the bailiffs of the liberty of Bristol. 15 April.

John le Taverner held a messuage in the suburbs of Bristol, which came into the king's hand by escheat, because the said John abjured the realm for felony.

The messuage was a year and a day and more in the king's hand, and Sir Bartholomew de Badelesmere, constable of Bristol Castle and escheator in the town, had the year, day, and waste, and ought to answer therefor.

The messuage is held in chief of William Arthur by the yearly service of 4½d. ; John de Weston, knight, now holds it by the king's gift.

C. Inq. Misc. File 79. (13.)

+ Sec 1374.

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Pre-1600

No of references ordered: 50

Item no 8

Source: Public Record Office

Title: *Patent Roll 12 Edward II* ii m.7

10 June 1319

York

Grant to John de Weston the younger and his heirs, with the assent of the Parliament at York, of all tenements and rents, late of Robert Martin, le Clerk, and John le Taverner in the town of Bristol and its suburb, which came into the king's hands as escheats by reason of felonies which they had committed and for which they had abjured the realm.
By the king.

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Pre-1600

No of references ordered: 50

Item no 24

Source: Public Record Office

Title: *Patent Roll 15 Edward II i m.11*

19 October 1321

Tower of London

Pardon to John le Taverner, Robert Martyn and Thomas son of John le Taverner of Bristol, of their outlawry in the county of Gloucester for not appearing before Henry le Spigurnel and his fellows, justices of oyer and terminer in that county, and of the abjuration of the realm which they afterwards made in the town of Bristol for the felonies which they acknowledged that they had committed in that county.

By privy seal.

The like to Robert Martyn.

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Pre-1600

No of references ordered: 50

Item no 23

Source: Public Record Office

Title: *Patent Roll 15 Edward II i m.7*

28 November 1321

Pomfret-on-Thames

Pardon to John le Taverner, burgess of Bristol, of his outlawry for not appearing before Henry Spygurnel and his fellows, lately appointed justices of oyer and terminer touching the death of Alexander de Villers, who was killed in the county of Gloucester, and of his abjuration of the realm for the same. Grant also to him of all his lands and tenements and goods which belong to the king as escheats by reason of the said outlawry and abjuration.

By privy seal.

The like to Robert Martyn, burgess of Bristol.

By the king.

Pardon to John le Taverner and Thomas his son, burgesses of Bristol, of all their contempts, trespasses and disobediences against the king and his ministers committed in the town of Bristol and the suburb thereof, from 2 February 5 Edward II [1312] to 28 December 10 Edward II [1316].

By privy seal.

The like to Robert Martyn, burgess of Bristol.

General pardon to the above John and Thomas his son.

By privy seal.

The like to the above Robert Martyn.

The like to the said John and Thomas of their outlawries in the county of Gloucester by reason of their not appearing before the above Henry Spygurnel and his fellows touching disobediences to the king and trespasses against Bartholomew de Badelesmere, William Randolf, John de London, John de Celario, Peter Fraunceys and John Snow.

By privy seal.

Fol
THOMAS

Oct. 19. Pardon to John le Taverner, Robert Martyn and Thomas son of John le
Tower of Taverner of Bristol of their outlawry in the county of Gloucester for not
London. appearing before Henry le Spigurnel and his fellows, justices of oyer and

1321

Cal. of Patent Rolls.

1321 Nov. 28.
Pomfret-on-
Thames.

Cal Pat Rolls

Pardon to John le Taverner, burgess of Bristol, of his outlawry for not appearing before Henry Spygurnel and his fellows, lately appointed justices of oyer and terminer touching the death of Alexander de Villers, who was killed in the county of Gloucester, and of his abjuration of the realm for the same. Grant also to him of all his lands and tenements and goods which belong to the king as escheats by reason of the said outlawry and abjuration.

By p.s.

The like to Robert Martyn, burgess of Bristol.

By K.

1321.

Membrane 11—cont.

terminer in that county, and of the abjuration of the realm which they afterwards made in the town of Bristol for the felonies which they acknowledged that they had committed in that county.

By p.s.

The like to Robert Martyn.

Oct. 23.
Rochester.

Safe conduct for one year for John de Wrotham, of the order of Friars Preachers, going on the king's affairs beyond the seas.

1324

691. Commission to Henry Spigurnel, Adam de Herewynton, and John de Clyvedon. Westminster. 16 March 17 Edward II. [1324.] By the king.

Writ of *venire facias* in pursuance to the sheriff of Gloucester.

Inquisition before the said Henry and John. Bristol. Monday the morrow of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist.

John le Taverner, late mayor of Bristol, and others (many named), were confederated to maintain the said John in the office of mayor, and falsely and maliciously indicted many good and lawful men, who did not consent to the conspiracy, and ejected many from the liberty of the town, and took their goods and chattels, wherefore grave dissensions and discords arose and continued until, on Thursday the feast of St. Giles the Abbot 10 Edward II, the said John le Taverner, Thomas his son, and Robert Martyn, were outlawed for the death of Alexander de Vylers, and abjured the realm. On Monday after St. Nicholas 15 Edward II the said John, Thomas, and Robert, returned to Bristol and showed the king's charters of pardon of the outlawry and abjuration, and immediately afterwards, in the time of Richard Tilly, then mayor, maliciously vexed many good and lawful men of the town by divers grievances and extortions.

C. Inq. Misc. File 92. (36.)

Bristol
John le T

1327

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Pre-1600

No of references ordered: 20

Item no 2

Source: Public Record Office: E 159/103 m.100

Title: *King's Remembrancer's Memoranda Roll: 1 Edward III*

26 June 1327

York

Writ of habere faciatis to John le Taverner, burgess of Bristol, pursuant to pardon, the goods forfeited by reason of his outlawry and delivered to the bailiffs of Bristol to keep to the king's use, or the value of the same; the bailiffs to be discharged.

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Pre-1600
No of references ordered: 20
Item no 16

Source: British Museum: Cotton Titus e i
Title: *Abstract of Parliamentary Petitions*

Epiphany to Candlemas 1327
Westminster

Tauerner

Ad petitionem Iohannis Tauerner [*at the petition of John Taverner*] and other citizens of Bristoll sheweinge to the kinge and his counsell that whereas the earle of Gloucester came before Bristoll with 20,000 men and more and demaunded the same cittie to bee delivered vnto him, which hee (being then maiour) and the other cittizens denied and defended the cittie, whereunto the said earle by the counsell of Hughe Spencer the father and Bartholomewe Badlesmere purchased of the kinge oyer and terminer againste them to bee inquired of att Gloucester contrarye to their liberties of their cittie, and for that they appeared not and the sheriffe returned falselye non sunt inuenti [*they are not found*], theye were outlawed and their lands and goodes seised for the kinge, they praye that yt would please the kinge and his counsell to cause the record and processe to come before them and to comaund the iustices of the kinges bench to reuerse the said outlawrye and to restore them to the common lawe that they maye recouer their lands and goodes.

Responsum est sic:- Habeant breue in cancellario iusticariis de banco regis quod procedant in processu coram eisdem iusticiariis super premissis habito, et si error inueniatur in recordo et processu vtlagarie predictae, tunc errorem illum corrigi faciant.

It is answered thus:- They may have a writ in chancery to the justices of the King's Bench that they may proceed in the process had before the said justices upon the premises, and if an error be found in the record and process of outlawry aforesaid, then they shall have that error corrected.