

Original Documents.

Communicated by JOSEPH BAIN, F.S.A. Scot.

“A tresnoble Roy Dengleterre Sire Edward qe Dieu le garde mustrent Johan Le peintur de Blida Et Beatrice sa ffeme qe encontre la pees nostre Seigneur le Roy vint Stefne Atteyate de Blid le iour de la Seint Marie Magdalene qe drein fut a la meseun le auaunt dit Johan et luy dona saut et luy prist par le col et luy lia de son chaperoun et a poy luy avoyt estrangie. et vileynement luy detira. Vint la femme le auauntd [it] Johan, beatrice par noun, et deliuera son baroun de les mains auauntdit esteuene. Et autre forth vint Stefne auaunt nomee le Lundy prochein apres la feste S[eint Pi]ere ad uincula et dona saut a beatrice la ffeme auauntdit Johan et malement la batyet et la nafrist perilousen plusors lues de son corps et la mayhema et la lessa com mort. Et estre cestes Esteuene auant nomee et Roger le keu son frere manacent les auant ditz de vie et de membre Dunt ly auant dit Johan et beatrice sa femme prient de grante et de dreyt le tel trespas pur Dieu et la gratiouse Virgine Marie. et de tous seynz et quil pussent viure in pees.”

(No endorsement).

The above document, supplying contractions, is No. 4685 of the MS. collection of Royal Letters, &c., preserved in the Public Record Office. It affords a curious example of the direct access which in those days the humblest had to the king. Blyth in Nottinghamshire was a well-known halting place on the road to the north, and Edward I was no doubt on one of his numerous journeys on Scots' affairs when this matter was submitted to him. John the Painter, sitting quietly in his house on S. Mary Magdalene's day (22nd July), possibly intending to go to church, was violently assaulted, half strangled, and villanously handled by Steven Atteyate his neighbour. His good wife Beatrice delivered him, and probably drove Stephen off the premises with some household implement. The latter, however, nourished his wrath for ten days or so, and on the Monday after the Feast of S. Peter ad Vincula (1st Aug.) assaulted in a most ungallant manner poor Beatrice, and, inflicting many wounds on her body, maimed and left her for dead. Moreover he and his brother Roger le Keu also threatened the luckless couple with loss of life or member. Quite a case for royal intervention and swift justice, which was doubtless administered, though no record appears on the petition, which seems in all probability to have been written by the parson of Blyth on behalf of his aggrieved parishioners. It is on a small square piece of parchment, much browned by age.

The next document, from the same collection (No. 3280), is from the Prior and Chapter of S. Malo on a different subject. Supplying contractions, it runs thus :—

“Serenissimo Principi. . . . E. . . dei gracia illustrissimo Regi Anglorum . . . Ducu Aquitanie et Gaensium principi . . . Prior et Capitulum

ac Officialis Sancti Maclonis de insula. . Salutem et paratam in omnibus voluntatem ad sua beneplacita et mandata . . Cum intelleximus quod vestri preposeti seu justiciarii de Portemue in Anglia nauem Sancti Marie de Sancto Maclonio de insula cuius nauis Guillelmus Aubant cuius Macloniensis lator presencium est magister arrestauerunt et detineant arrestatam cum vinis existentibus in eadem pro eo quod ipsi asserunt ut intelleximus quod nauis et vina predicta sunt hominum vestrorum de Vasconia seu pars aliqua eorundem Nouerit vestra serenitas veneranda quod dicta nauis est dicti magistri et quorundam aliorum ciuium macloniensium. Nec in ipsa naui habet aliquis de Vasconia partem ullam. Et de dictis vinis sunt sex dolia et due pipe dicti magistri . . decem dolia Nicholai pillart . . viginti duo dolia et due pipe Radulphi genchan . . unum dolium Stephani lestouchie . . unum dolium iohannis de Capella . . unum dolium Radulphi Dinandi . . unum dolium Guillelmi Lalwe . . unum dolium Alani Cucu . . unum dolium iohannis richardi . . unum dolium iordani burlion . . due dolia iohannis Anglici . . duo dolia iohannis Jahennis . unum dolium Perrote Ranulphi . . unum dolium robini de Paluel ciuium macloniensium Et quatuor dolia Radulphi iouuin et iohannis eueni de dolensi dyocesi nautarum dicte nauis de quibus vinis nichil debent alicui Vasconi dicti ciues ne predicti magister Nicholaus Pillart Radulphus Genchon, Stephanus lestouchie Johannes de Capella radulphus Dinandi Guillelmus Lalote Alanus Cucu Johannes Richardi et Jordanus burlion nobis asseruerunt per sua iuramenta quae super hiis recepimus ab eisdem Et ut accepimus a pluribus aliis fidedignis quibus fidem super hiis adhibemus Residuum vero dictorum sunt ut nobis datum sint intelligere quorundam burgensium de Sancto iacobo de beuron Dyocesis Abbrincensis hominum illustrissimi principis Domini Regis Francie et quorundam burgensium de Dinanno Macloniensis Dyocesis hominum nobilis viri domini Ducis britannie unde serenitatem vestram in Domino commendantes Requirimus et Rogamus quatinus de Serenitati vestro placeat dictam nauem et vina predicta saltem ciuium macloniensium predictorum facere liberari . . Datae apud Sanctum Maclonium de insula Alannie et in remotis agente Reuerendo in Christo Patre et domino Macloniensi episcopo die Veneris ante festum Purificacionis Beate Marie Virginis anno Domini M° CC° octogesimo non[o].” (No endorsement).

This is written in a fine clear hand, the ink a good deal faded towards the end. The St. Mary of St. Malo, William Aubant, master, had been captured by the Portsmouth authorities under the belief that she and her cargo of wines were the property of Edward's men of Gascony. The Prior and Chapter state the contrary, and give a minute list of the shippers, chiefly citizens of St. Malo. The master, who is the bearer of the letter to the king, and two of the sailors, are also shippers. The name of one of these men, "John the son of Evan," shows his Breton origin. Saint James de Beuvron, some of the burgesses of which are said to be part owners of the wine, is a border town of Normandy on the Breton frontier, and as a fortress played an important part in the war which saw the English expelled from that province. According to a charter cited by Mabillon, the castle was built by William the Conqueror in 1067. It stood on the edge of a steep and narrow valley, and some remains of walls and bastions still attest its strength. Dinan, an ancient seat of the dukes of Brittany, is better known.