JOHN DE DROKENSFORD, BISHOP OF BATH AND WELLS

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I.

The reign of Edward II has usually been regarded as a blank page between two glorious chapters, and Edward himself as the first King after the Norman Conquest who was "not a man of business well acquainted with the routine of government." But the reign of this "handsome weak-willed and frivolous King, who cared neither for battles nor tournaments, neither politics nor business," has a modest contribution to add to the story of the development of English society, politics and institutions.

Professor Tout, whose writings coupled with those of Bishop Stubbs provide our chief interpretation of the period, comes to the conclusion that the first quarter of the 14th century was no worse than the end of the 13th, and was actually a more pleasant time to live in.[1]

Dull reigns of indifferent Kings, he reminds us, are often as full of progress as more splendid periods. Great movements go on sometimes irrespective of great men, and neither the wisdom of Edward I, nor the folly of Edward II could do much to check or alter the stream of tendency.

The reign of Edward II is singularly lacking in great men, and Bishop Stubbs has written severely of the meanness and self-seeking of the younger generation of political bishops.[2]

They were reasonably efficient administrators, but were seldom men of fine personal character. In most cases they were merely successful civil servants, members of the general body of King's clerks, who obtained their promotion to bishoprics as a reward for purely secular duties. Bishop Hobhouse, in his introduction to Bishop John de Drokensford's Episcopal Register for the diocese of Wells, calls them "businesslike, forensic, keen for the exercise of coercive jurisdiction, and trusting more to that external power than to the more patient methods which sway men through the conscience and affections."[3]

"Drokensford," he continues, "shows all the tokens of his previous training, but they were balanced by a natural character which was evidenced in acts of kindly consideration and bounty,

and in the candid retraction of hasty and harsh proceedings." For all the worldliness which these bishops displayed they had sometimes a more attractive side. One of them, Stapleton, Bishop of Exeter, was responsible for the foundation of Exeter College at Oxford, and for the building of the choir at Exeter Cathedral; another, Hotham, gave us the octagon and retro-choir of Ely, and a third, John de Drokensford, was Bishop of Bath and Wells during the years in which the glorious central tower and Lady Chapel at Wells were being built.

Drokensford was associated with Hendon, Finchley and Edgware and with well-known families there, and by his work at the King's Wardrobe and in other government departments was taking a prominent part in the court and business life of the London and Westminster of his day.

Droxford Village and Church.

This John de Drokensford, or Droxford in Hampshire, is the most distinguished member of a considerable family of that name, one of whom, also called John, figures in the *Inquisitiones post mortem* as a life tenant of 90 acres of land in Hendon, held of the Abbot and Convent of Westminster, and 120 acres in Finchley, held of the Bishop of London.[4] We know little of the early history of the family, but they clearly come from the village now called Droxford near Bishop's Waltham, in the delightful Meon Valley, where Isaac Walton spent much of his later years with his son-in-law Dr. Hawkins, the Rector, engaged in his favourite pursuit of fishing, in a district which he considered "exceeds all England for swift, shallow, clear, pleasant brooks and store of trouts." In the village church to-day there is still a good deal of masonry that must have been there in John de Drokensford's time. The north and south porches are both Norman with additions of later dates, but the latter looks as if it had been moved. There is a Norman chancel arch and eight very massive square pillars which seem to date from the same period. Canon Vaughan thought that the nave was definitely Norman, the south aisle 13th century work and the north aisle 14th century. There has recently been discovered to the north-east of the Chancel Arch part of the staircase leading to the rood loft. The church has at least four exterior sundials carved on the south wall. The square western tower has a massive turret with staircase at the north-west corner and bears the date 1509. Altar, altar-rails and chancel panelling

are all of dark Jacobean oak. Not far from the church is the ford from which the village takes its name and in the same park as the church is the Georgian rectory which dates from no earlier than 1720, but is almost certainly on the same site as that occupied by John de Drokensford.

In this church John was baptised, perhaps about 1260, and, when he became rich and famous, he built at the east end of the south aisle, which may have been a mortuary chapel of Drokensford, a great altar tomb to the memory of his mother, and placed on it a Purbeck marble effigy of her. Bishop Hobhouse very reasonably suggests that he and his brothers, Philip, Michael and Richard, who were all men of some repute, were the sons of the Squire of Droxford, and the idea that he came of a substantial family is borne out by the fact that he was armigerous.[5]

In the episcopal archives of Winchester, Canon Vaughan has discovered a document dated 4th February, 1316, in which permission is given to John, Bishop of Bath and Wells, to consecrate the side altars in the parish church of Droxford. In asking this favour the Bishop lays stress on his special regard for the church as the scene of his baptism.[6]

There is a further reference to the Bishop's wish to restore a part of Droxford Church in memory of his mother in his own Episcopal Register, where there is the counterpart of the Winchester record. It is a license from the Bishop of Winton granting permission to Bishop John de Drokensford to consecrate in Drokensford church, much honoured by him, the high altar and others newly restored and also some portable altars. This is dated from the Bishop of Winchester's town house in Southwark.

Loss and Discovery of the Drokensford Effigy.

The tomb was dismantled and subsequently recovered under rather remarkable circumstances.[7] During the Commonwealth days, Dr. Preston, Rector of the parish, "for his eminent loyalty had been shamefully entreated," and the tomb seems to have been destroyed, and the figure, probably mistaken for that of an abbess, was buried in an adjoining field. Preston returned to his rectory in 1660, and restored his church, but left the effigy of John de Drokensford's mother still buried. It was not recovered until 1820, when some workmen found it while filling up an old moat by the side of the meadow adjoining the

glebe field next to the churchyard. The figure was taken to the church and placed on the floor of the north aisle, immediately behind the organ. Here it remained for nearly a century until 1902, when Canon John Vaughan became Rector, and in restoring the church discovered many valuable archaeological remains. Believing that the tomb must be that of John de Drokensford's mother, he had it removed to the south aisle where it now lies.

The figure is that of a lady of rank, with bodice and long skirt in folds, wearing round her neck a heart, which is clasped in one hand and is said to represent widowhood. As the Drokensford family was the only one of note connected with the parish in mediæval times, the present Rector, the Revd. Canon Leonard S. Etheridge, thinks that the ascription is correct.[8] He also notes that there are obvious traces of injury to stonework in the south aisle, confirming the tradition of the destruction of the de Drokensford tomb. The style of dress is very similar to that represented in the effigy of Philippa of Hainault in Westminster Abbey. Droxford suddenly sprang into prominence during the Second World War of 1939–45, when it was G.H.Q. for the Chiefs of Staff who planned the Normandy landings for "D" Day.

Hints as to His Early Training.

There are some possible hints as to Drokensford's early education, which may be given here for what they are worth. In 1305 he acted as attorney for resettling the family estates of the Bydiks and Hadestokes and possibly also of the Basings and de Waleys, all influential families in the City of London and in the manors of Hendon and Finchley.[9] The fact of his acting as attorney suggests the possibility of his having had legal training. It is also possible that he was educated at Oxford, because there are several sympathetic references to that university in his Register and not one to Cambridge. In 1309 the Rector of Pyke was granted two years at Oxford. In 1314 he licensed the Rector of Lymington to study for a year at Oxford, and in 1315 the Rector of Hatch Beauchamp, and in the same year the Rector of Exton for 7 years.[10] In March, 1317, he allowed the Rector of Shepton Beauchamp to take a year's study at Oxford. In the same year he wrote sympathetically to the preaching Friars at Oxford, two of whom had letters to him asking for his help.[11]

In March, 1323–4, in conjunction with Archbishop Reynolds and other Bishops, he ratified the charter granted to the University of Oxford in 1279 by Archbishop Peckham, and in February, 1328–9 he wrote to his Archdeacon and officials, highly praising the University of Oxford, pointing out that her privileges are much endangered by the laity, and asking that in order to save the University from dispersion and ruin all regulars and seculars should be urged to help generously with money.[12]

The King's Wardrobe.

Apart from his birth and baptism at Droxford, we know nothing about him until he is comptroller of the Wardrobe under Edward I in 1291, being promoted Keeper or treasurer of the Wardrobe in 1295.[13] Professor T. F. Tout, in his various articles dealing with certain aspects of the Wardrobe, in his amplified Ford lectures on the *Place of the Reign of Edward II in English History*, and in his volume on the *Wardrobe during the reign of Edward II*, has shown the progressive importance of this department.

He describes it as "the financial and secretarial department of the King's household, the domestic and semi-private exchequer and chancery of the King, hopelessly overlapping the national exchequer and chancery in all its functions." The Wardrobe increased in importance during the minority of Henry III. It was then that it gradually took shape as an administrative department, officered by clerks and controlled by a keeper or treasurer, with a controller to check the accounts and to keep the King's privy seal. Other clerks and officials were added to the staff, and, during the reigns of the three Edwards, many of the most notable ministers of the Crown found their early training in the Wardrobe a stepping-stone to the highest positions in Church and State.

Edward I used the Wardrobe as his favourite executive instrument, and treated it as a great spending department, dealing with naval and military affairs, and amongst other things financing his Welsh wars in 1282–84. The importance of all this to the royal power is shown by the efforts of the Barons during the latter years of Edward I to strengthen the Chancery and the Exchequer at the expense of the Wardrobe. In the *Articuli super Cartas* of 1300, a demand was made that the privy seal of the Wardrobe should not be used to deprive men of

their legal rights; and, in this action, we can see the beginnings of a constitutional revolt, which commences under Edward I, but is to come to a head in the reign of his very inefficient son.

In this very important branch of the administration of the King's affairs John de Drokensford gained invaluable experience, and he was of sufficient importance for Edward I to deliver to him as Keeper of the Wardrobe in the 20th year of his reign the great seal from 20th to 23rd August, after which he was directed to deliver it to Adam de Osgoodby, Master of the Rolls. Drokensford also accompanied the King to Scotland during Edward's dealing with the claimants, and during his conquest of southern Scotland from Balliol. He was there at intervals from 1291 to 1296, a time of great importance in Scotland, and a period when Edward was faced with the many difficulties in France and with the Barons and Clergy, which led him to call the famous Model Parliament of 1295.

We do not know what precise share Drokensford had in the conquest of Scotland and its subsequent organisation under Warenne, de Cressingham and Ormesby, but it is significant that, when Cressingham was killed in Wallace's successful fight at Cambuskenneth, Drokensford was appointed temporarily to the empty, but perhaps dangerous office of Treasurer of Scotland. It is a matter of extreme interest that two consecutive Treasurers of Scotland should have been associated with Hendon by the holding of substantial portions of land in the Manor.[14]

The Westminster Robbery.

In the Westminster Robbery of 1303, two men who had associations with Hendon were concerned, Drokensford as Treasurer, and Philip of Sutton, one of the assessors of its Black Survey, as one of the accused monks.

From 1297 to 1307 John de Drokensford was Keeper of the King's Wardrobe, and as such in charge of the King's treasure. He therefore played a not unimportant part in perhaps the most dramatic incident ever associated with Westminster Abbey—the famous robbery of 1303, which took place in one of the oldest and most venerable portions of the building.

Of the famous Norman Abbey erected by Edward the Confessor there seems to be almost nothing left above ground. But "leading out of the Great Cloisters there is a low-vaulted Norman substructure of the type known as an undercroft. This

building is altogether one hundred feet in length, one section being known as the Chapel of the Pyx. Here is one of the most historic corners in the Abbey, invested, too, with peculiar sanctity in the mind of the Confessor; for we learn, if tradition be correct, that no other resting-place than this was considered suitable for the King's trusty Steward and Chamberlain, Hugolin. At one time the Monastic Treasury, it subsequently became the Treasury of the Royal Wardrobe, the storehouse of the Regalia, and still later the receptacle of the Pyx—the standard coins of the realm. It stands unique."[15]

This was the scene of the robbery by Richard Podelicote which created such a scandal in the Abbey, and was not excelled in daring until it was rivalled by Colonel Blood's attempt to steal the Crown jewels from the Tower nearly four hundred years later. What care the Keeper of the Wardrobe was supposed to take of the Royal Treasure is not specified, but it must have been all too inadequate to permit of such a successful purloining of so valuable a hoard.

The King's Treasury.

The exact position of the King's Treasury has been a matter of dispute between experts, and some have thought that it was in the massive subterranean crypt beneath the chapter-house, while others feel certain that the Chapel of the Pyx is indicated as the place of the Treasury by "the tradition which attaches to the chapel; the strong iron door: the provision about the keys; the nature of the things actually stored there after the regalia was removed."[16]

Dean Stanley speaks of this "sacred building, in which were hoarded the treasures of the nation, in the days when the public robbers were literally thieves or highwaymen; that institution, which is now the Keystone of the Commonwealth, of which the Prime Minister is the 'First Lord,' the Chancellor of the Exchequer the Administrator, and which represents the wealth of the wealthiest nation in the World.

"Here it was that, probably almost immediately after the Conquest, the Kings determined to lodge their treasure, under the guardianship of the inviolable Sanctuary which St. Peter had consecrated, and the bones of the Confessor had sanctified. . . . Hither were brought the most cherished possessions of the State: the Regalia of the Saxon monarchy; the Black Rood of St. Margaret ('the Holy Cross of Holyrood') from Scotland;

(over which, in 1292, John Balliol swore to withdraw his claim of the Crown of Scotland); the 'Crocis Gneyth' (or Cross of St. Neot) from Wales, deposited here by Edward I; the Sceptre or Rod of Moses; the sword with which King Athelstane cut through the rock at Dunbar; the sword of Wayland Smith, by which Henry II was knighted; the sword of Tristan, presented to King John by the Emperor; the dagger which wounded Edward I at Acre."

Besant writes "In considering the method of the robbery it makes a very great difference whether the Treasury was in one or the other place. Consider the plan of the Abbey. If the Treasury was in the Chapter House the robber might, if the postern were closed, work all day at the back of this house. No one ever came into the cemetery which is now Henry VII's Chapel. If the Treasury was in the Chapel of the Pyx, he would have to work by night only in the passage frequented every day by the monks and leading from the Chapter House to the Cloisters.

"In any case the whole world knew the position of the King's Treasury. In the reign of Edward I, just as now, there was the massive and ponderous iron door, closely locked, which could not be broken open in a single night by a dozen men. The Abbot and the Prior were the official guardians of the Treasury: they kept the key. A key was also kept by the Master of the King's Wardrobe."

The Scottish Wars.

The Keeper of the King's Wardrobe would therefore have associations with the Abbey, which may easily have been the reason for the holding of land in Hendon by the Drokensford family, as portions of Hendon were still in the possession of the Abbot and Convent.

In the summer of 1303 there was more money in the Treasury than usual. The King had been even more insistent than his wont in demanding sums for the Scottish Wars, and more than one hundred thousand pounds was ready for the campaign. He had reached Linlithgow, when he heard that the immense hoard, on which he depended for his supplies, had been carried off. It is probable that the amount would equal in modern money nearly four millions. Matthew of Westminster records, as matters of equal importance, that in 1303 "Pope Boniface VIII was stripped of all his goods, and a most audacious robber

by himself secretly entered the Treasury of the King of England." Matthew repudiates the "wicked suspicion" that any of the monks were accomplices in the crime, and his words "by himself" indicate his desire to exonerate his friends. But, as Dean Stanley points out, "the facts are too stubborn." The chief criminal was Richard Podelicote, and his confession indicates the way in which the robbery was planned. He said that "he was a travelling merchant for wool, cheese and butter, and was arrested in Flanders for the King's debts in Bruges, and there were taken from him 14L. 17s for which he sued in the King's Court at Westminster at the beginning of August in the thirty-first year."

Here it was that temptation assailed him, for he tells us that "he saw the condition of the Refectory of the Abbey, and saw the servants bringing in and out silver cups and spoons and mazers."

The Robbery.

He was a broken man, having been ruined by his financial loss in Flanders, and "so he spied about all the parts of the Abbey," and "one the day when the King left the place for Barnes, on the following night, as he had spied out, he found a ladder at a house which was near the gate of the Palace towards the Abbey." Besant makes a picturesque story of the deserted condition of the Palace, with the King on his way to Scotland. "All the grooms, armourers, blacksmiths, pages and men-at-arms were with the King. A crowd of servants followed with such gear as was wanted for the cooking, carrying provisions, wine and all kinds of things. There were left in the Palace only the Queen and her people, the canons, vicars, singing men and boys of St. Stephens, the women and the children; and some of the servants. The courts of the palace were therefore quiet and deserted; the strictness of the rules about closing and opening gates and about watching those who entered or went out was relaxed. This private way from the Palace to the Abbey was hardly ever used; perhaps it was well-nigh forgotten. The thief, therefore, would have no difficulty whatever, pretending to be a workman, sent perhaps to repair the roof, in introducing by this postern a ladder in the Abbey precinct." It seems certain, in spite of Matthew's protests, that Richard had confederates both inside and outside the Abbey, and the ladder may well have been left there for his benefit. In any

case he "put that ladder to a window of the Chapter-House which he opened and closed by a cord; and he entered by this cord, and thence he went to the door of the Refectory, and found it closed with a lock, and he opened it with his knife and entered, and there he found six silver hanaps in an aumbry behind the door, and more than thirty silver spoons in another aumbry, and the mazer hanaps under a bench near together; and he carried them all away, and closed the door after him without shutting the lock."

So far the task had been comparatively easy, but one wonders where the night watch was on duty, what the Sacristan was doing and whether he was not perhaps an accomplice.

This was in August, 1302, it would seem, and "having spent the proceeds by Christmas he thought how he could rob the King's Treasury." It seems incredible that no one had missed the cups from the Refectory, that no effort had been made to recover them, and that no steps had been taken to make fast bolts and bars and to set a securer watch than heretofore. The second robbery makes it obvious that there must have been connivance and active help from within the Abbey.[17]

Podelicote's Confession.

Podelicote continues his confession that "as he knew the ways of the Abbey and where the Treasury was, and how he could get there, he began to set about the robbery eight days before Christmas, with the tools that he provided for it, viz., two farrers, great and small knives and other small engines of iron, and so was about the breaking open during the night hours of eight days before Christmas to the quinzain of Easter, when he first had entry on a night of a Wednesday, the eve of St. Mark, April 24." Podelicote mentions no confederates, but it is surely incredible that he should have been able to cut his way through a massive stone wall, not quickly, but over a period of four months and a week, without his work being detected. It was more than a coincidence that in the Cloisters in the early Spring there was an unusual "crop of hemp springing up over the grassy graves, and the gardener who came to mow the grass and carry off the herbage was constantly refused admittance."

Thus Dean Stanley, and the records of the trial relate that one of the monks, John de Lynton, was proved to have sown the hempseed, so that the full-grown hemp might prove a

convenient and unsuspected place for the robbers to hide their plunder.

All St. Mark's day Podelicote stayed in the Treasury "and arranged what he would carry away, which he did the night after, and the night after that, and the remainder he carried away with him out of the gate behind the church of St. Margaret, and put it at the foot of the wall beyond the gate, covering it with earth, and there were there pitchers, cups with feet and covers. And also he put a great pitcher with stones and a cup in a certain tomb. Besides he put three pouches full of jewels and vessels, of which one was hanaps entire and in pieces. In another a great crucifix and jewels, a case of silver with gold spoons. In the third hanap nine dishes and saucers and an image of our Lady in silver-gilt and two little pitchers of silver. Besides he took to the ditch by the mews a pot and a cup of silver. Also he took with him spoons, saucers, spice dishes of silver, a cup, rings, brooches, stones, crowns, girdles and other jewels which were afterwards found with him. And he says that what he took out of the Treasury he took at once out of the gate near St. Margaret's Church and left nothing behind within it."

The Sowing of Hemp.

Much of the treasure was concealed "in the tangled hemp, sown and grown, it was believed, for this special purpose," and it was conveyed in two large black panniers to the river and thence from the King's Bridge, a pier on the north side of the Stream. John Albas swore that he had made weapons for the use of the robbers, and knew of the design, but had been afraid to reveal it owing to the threats of Alexander de Pershore. John saw the panniers carried to Alexander and his confederates to the King's Bridge. Thence they were apparently removed to a place of security and the party returned by boat to the Abbot's Mill, on the Mill Bank. John de Rippingall, who confessed to complicity in the robbery, accused two monks, two foresters, two knights and eight others. William the Palmer, who was Keeper of the Palace, deposed that he had seen the sub-prior, the Sacrist and other monks going backwards and forwards carrying things to and fro. John de Ramage had been in and out of the Abbey a great deal and had suddenly bought horses, arms and clothes beyond his usual capacity. The Sacrist had aroused suspicions by discovering a silver-gilt cup, outside St. Margaret's Church, where, presumably, Podelicote had

dropped it. This cup the Sacrist gave to the Abbot, Walter de Wenlock, who doubted whether he ought to retain it, and whence it had come. William de Paleys, the Keeper of the Palace gate, had allowed the robbers to pass in and out, and under his bed were discovered many things of value, including what Dean Stanley calls the "Crocis Gneyth or Cross of St. Neot," which Edward I had himself brought from Neath in Wales and deposited in the Treasury.

The robbers took whatever was marketable and left behind the royal crown and other things which could not be disposed of. Much of the stuff was melted down and the jewels sold separately, London merchants purchasing the spoil without asking any questions. Podelicote sold some of the spoil as far away as Northampton and Colchester, and when detected was in possession of valuables amounting to over two thousand pounds, a good enough compensation in itself for his original loss of 14L. 17s. taken from him in Bruges.

The robbery took place in April or May of 1303 and was the second robbery at the Abbey within ten months. Rumours began to leak out and reached the King in Linlithgow on 6th June. He at once sent orders for the whole matter to be thoroughly investigated, and on 20th June John de Drokensford, Keeper of the Wardrobe, came, with the Keeper of the Tower, the Justices, the Mayor of London and the Prior of Westminster. "The broken boxes, the jewels scattered on the floor, the ring with which Henry III was consecrated, the privy seal of the King himself, revealed the deed to the astonished eyes of the royal officers when they came to investigate the rumour."

The King's Anger.

One of the King's letters orders the Justices to make haste with the trial of those who were supposed to be implicated in the robbery. It is addressed to his trusty and well-beloved (delectis et fidelibus) Roger le Brabazon, a large holder of land in Hampstead, William Bereford, Roger de Hybam, Ralph of Sandwich and Walter de Gloucester. It gives a list of 41 monks who with the Abbot were sent to the Tower, together with 31 others who may have been concerned. First of the monks is Alexander de Pershore and on the second list is Johannes de Linton. Walter the Abbot hailed from Wenlock, as did Raymund, one of the monks, and Roger and Hans, two in

the second list, a significant group which seems to need some explanation. In the list is the name of Philip of Sutton, who was evidently reinstated after his two years in the Tower, and is found in 1321 one of the jury of assessors of the Black Survey of Hendon.

The King's letter speaks of the breaking in to the royal treasury in Westminster and the removal of the suspects to the Tower. The latter "asseruerunt se inde falso et malitiose indictatos fuisse et nobis attente supplicaverunt quod veritatem cride inquiri et eis justitiam exhiberi faciamus."[18]

The trial was a long one, but at length after two years the Abbot and most of the fraternity were released. The sub-prior and Sacrist and Podelicote, Paleys and Ramage were found guilty and presumably hanged. What comment the King had to make on the ineffective guardianship of the royal treasure by the Keeper of the Wardrobe, John de Drokensford, does not appear. It seems clear that he was in no way a confederate to the robbery, but the inefficiency of a system, which permits a robber to spend six months in undermining the walls of the Treasury without detection seems obvious. It is difficult to explain why the Keeper of the Wardrobe, the person almost most nearly concerned, should be the last to hear of the robbery nearly two months after it had been committed, and some weeks after the news had penetrated to the King in Linlithgow.

Routine Work at the Wardrobe.

Apart from this association with the famous robbery at Westminster, Drokensford's occupations between 1297 and 1307, when Edward of Carnarvon succeeded his father as King, were mainly of a routine character connected with his post as head of the King's Wardrobe. There was nothing of so exciting a character as the robbery, but years of strenuous service on the King's behalf.

A few samples of the duties which came to his hand from 1303 to 1307, extracted from the Close Rolls and Patent Rolls will show how extremely busy the officials of the Wardrobe were kept. Peter Child of Odiham complained of a fine levied by John de Drokensford,[18] when acting for the Treasurer of the Wardrobe in January, 1303, and in the same month John has to issue an order for the King from Guildford directing that trees felled in the forest of Painberge should be collected at Reading.[19] In February of the same year he made arrangements that the

wages of Ralph de Stok, one of the clerks of the Great Wardrobe, due for the three previous years at £20 per year, should be paid within one year.[20]

In March there are some interesting items relating to Edward Balliol, one of the Scottish royal house, who was King of Scotland for a short time in the reign of Edward III. On 16th March instructions were sent from Ware from the King on the information of John de Drokensford first to Walter de Aylesbury, constable of Wallingford Castle, to pay Edward de Balliole 6s. 8d. per day until further notice, while he was staying at the castle with the King's permission.[21] The second note was to Hugh le Despenser, justiciary of the forests on this side of Trent, to permit Balliol to have one or two deer from Woodstock Forest. The third was to the Keeper of Woodstock, to allow Edward to have use of the King's house there.

The whole story of the King's Wardrobe shows that money was difficult to obtain for current expenses, still more for the Scottish wars, and it is therefore not surprising that the King was always on the look-out for fresh sources of supply. On 21st April, the King, on the advice of Drokensford, wrote from Beverley with regard to the collection of tenths in Ireland ordered by the Pope. He wished to borrow temporarily some of the money thus collected.[22] In September the King wrote from Kinloss, and on 1st November the King wrote from Cambuskenneth to the Bishop of London and Bartholemew de Ferentino, Canon of London,[23] asking that £2,000 should be lent to Drokensford for him to bring to the King in Scotland. On the last day of November, called in the records Nov. 31, there was a further letter from Dunfermline on the same subject.[24] The King pointed out that, as the Pope had died in the meantime, the money collected from the clergy belonged to the royal funds. If the new Pope should object, then the King would promise to repay it. A further effort to secure money occurs in the Patent Rolls earlier in the same year, where John de Drokensford is authorised to receive 2,000 marks from the Friars Minors for the King's service.[25] The Mayor and Sheriffs are to assist in getting the money, and jewels are to be offered by way of pledge (20th January, 1303).

From Aberdeen in August, 1303, John de Drokensford was sent to secure a loan from various foreign merchants in London. The King needed money to use against the Scots and he had the opportunity of employing numbers of armed Irishmen, who had

come to his aid.[26] Drokensford was instructed to receive loans from Lombardy merchants, from merchants of Tuscany, Florence, Provence and Bayonne; and the Mayor, Sheriffs and Aldermen, as well as the Bishop of London and Bartholomew Ferentino were ordered to assist in collecting the loans.

On 4th September, 1303,[27] safe conduct was granted to two hawk-keepers, whose duty it was to catch fowl for the King and Queen. This document was issued from the Wardrobe.

From Stirling in June, 1304, receipts were sent by Drokensford for moneys received from various religious houses, from the Abbeys of Burton, Westminster, Selby, St. Mary's at York, St. Nicholas at Exeter, Chichester, Reading, Hyde at Winchester, Oxney and Carlisle.[28]

On 19th September, 1303, orders were sent from Kinloss to the Bailiffs of Yarmouth for 50 lasts of herrings to be sent by them to Berwick, where the King had his headquarters. The order was issued in the King's name by Drokensford.[29]

On 20th May, 1304, Drokensford issued instructions to the Sheriffs of York, Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby and London to buy up all bows, arrows, quivers and crossbows offered for sale. They were to be sent to the King in Scotland to help against the Scots rebels in Hoyvelyn Castle.[30]

The Basing and Bydik Families.

In 1305 John de Drokensford was attorney for resettling the family estates of the Bydik, Basing, Hadestoke and Waleys families, and this association with some prominent local families needs some explanation.[31] The Hundred Rolls for 7 Edward I refer to inquisitions relating to the various hundreds of Middlesex, and the jurors say, on their oath, that, in the hundred of Gore, Adam de Stratton holds land in "Eggeswere," Henry le Waleys in "Finchelee," and Thomas de Basing a carucate in "Hendene."

This brief notice introduces a group of London citizens, who were associated with Hendon and even more with Finchley. Thomas de Basing was son of Adam de Basing, Mayor in 1253 and one of the family that gave its name to the Ward of Basinghall. The family were hereditary tailors to Henry III and Thomas was Sheriff in 1269. He married, but left no issue, while his sister Avice married Sir William Hadestoke and his sister Joan married Henry le Waleys, Mayor in 1274. The Basing and Waleys families soon died out, but Joan Hadestoke

married Adam de Bydik, also King's Tailor, and their son Henry de Bydik is the second in list of free tenants in Hendon's Black Survey of 1321.[32] Henry held half a carucate, part probably of that held by his great uncle Thomas Basing in 1278–9. He was several times Knight of the Shire for Middlesex and was Collector of Customs of the Wool Staple for Middlesex. He married Joanna de Talworth and they had two sons, Thomas and John. In 1305 Joan Hadestoke, who had married Adam de Bydik, was a widow and married Sir Roger Savage. It was on this occasion that Drokensford acted as Attorney. He and Sir John de Pulteney, four times Mayor of London, were guardians for young Thomas de Bydik.

At the time of Drokensford's death in 1329 it had just been recorded in the Close Rolls[33] that Adam de Bidik owed John Bishop £70, to be levied in default on lands in Berkshire. This is dated 14th March, 1329. In his Episcopal Register, under date 5th April, 1329, he had granted a lease[34] "for seven years to Adam de Bydik, of the land which John Dacres lately bequeathed to the Bishop under Adam de Bidik, in Cookham, Berks." The Bishop seems to have acquired Dacre's holding under Adam Bidik and now restores the seven unexpired years to Bidik. It is confusing because the only Adam de Bydik of whom we know had died in 1301. But the Bydik family are more intimately connected with Finchley than with Hendon. In 1342, 13 years after the Bishop's death, another John de Drokensford[35] (who married Margaret and had a son Thomas), presumably his nephew, figures as the holder of "80 acres of land, 10 acres of wood and 38s. 2d. in Hendon in rent for his life of the Abbot and Convent of Westminster by service of 29s. 8d." There was also a portion of 120 acres in Finchley and the reversion of the whole was to Thomas, son of Henry Bydik,[36] aged 19 years and more. Much of the land of which the younger John de Drokensford died possessed was given him by his uncle, the Bishop, so it seems reasonable to suppose that the Hendon property came from the same source.[37]

Some interesting names occur in a document of 20th January, 1306, in which, on the information of Drokensford as Keeper of the Wardrobe, the Keeper of the Exchange is ordered to pay £20 10s. to Thomas de Howyk, an important figure in Finchley and Mymms, in return for jewels supplied to Queen Margaret, Edward I's second wife; £13 3s. 2d. to John le Wympler; £20 16s. 6d. to Nicholas le Farndon or Farringdon (one of the

eponymous proprietors of Farringdon Ward); £54 11s. 4d. to Robert le Conyers; 80 marks to Robert Burdeyn, for payment of a crown for Queen Margaret; and £19 13s. 4d. to Nicholas the Cofferer for armour supplied to Margaret, Duchess of Brabant, the King's daughter.[38]

One further excerpt may here be given for 1st April, when John Drokensford was appointed to deal with the Friscobaldi concerning their loans and losses therein incurred, and a proposal to lease them some silver mines in Devon.[39]

Edward II succeeds His Father.

When Edward II succeeded his father in 1307, he found *Drokensford and John of Benstead or Bensted respectively* Keeper and Controller of the Wardrobe, but he made drastic changes in the personnel of the administration only a few months after his accession.[40] Droxford, as Professor Tout preferred to call him, was an intimate ally of Walter Langton, Bishop of Lichfield and Treasurer, and under Edward I had been charged mainly with the financial side of the Wardrobe. Langton was deposed by Edward II, imprisoned and deprived of all his possessions, while Baldock Bishop of London ceased to be Chancellor. Droxford himself was transferred to the comparatively subordinate office of Chancellor of the Exchequer on 20th May, 1308, being styled at the time of his move King's clerk and Keeper of the Wardrobe. His new position involved the keeping of the Exchequer Seal and carried with it the stipend of a baron, 40 marks a year.

He held this office only for a year, though his successor was not appointed until 1310; and, during his year of office, he probably did not enjoy the confidence of the King to any large extent, as Gaveston undoubtedly controlled, though not officially, both the household and the King.

Bishop of Bath and Wells.

In 1309, being already a Prebendary of Wells, Droxford was elected by the Chapter to be Bishop[41]; one of many of the King's clerks of the period to reach so distinguished a position. Others include Stapelton, promoted to Exeter, Sandall to Winchester, Hotham to Ely, Melton to York and Reynolds to Canterbury. The exact date connected with his appointment are as follows:—25th December, 1308, *congé d'élire* issued to the Chapters of Bath and Wells; 23rd February, 1309, the King

gives his assent to Drokensford's election; 15th May, the temporalities of the See were restored and on 9th November, 1309, he was consecrated Bishop of Canterbury. Somewhere near St. Andrew's Day in 1310 he was enthroned at Wells. As Bishop he now had an official house in the Strand and so in December, 1309, there is a record in his Register of the sale of his private house in Ludgate to John of Brittany, Earl of Richmond.

Now begins his twenty years association with the See of Wells as its Bishop, though for the first few years he was seldom in his diocese, pleading political troubles which necessitated his remaining in London. His constant absence certainly enabled the Wells chapter to achieve very real independence of their Bishop.

Financial Chaos at the Wardrobe.

Drokensford's claim that political troubles kept him in London was not unfounded, for the early years of his bishopric were those of the Gaveston period and the difficult time of the Lords Ordainers. The problems were not entirely due to Edward II's incompetence, though his behaviour certainly aggravated the difficulties. The whole financial system had broken down, largely due to the policy of Edward I during the latter part of his reign. To quote Professor Tout again; we find that the supplies available were quite inadequate to finance even the remnants of the English army in Scotland, and it is not at all surprising that Edward II did not carry out his father's injunction for the conquest of the Scots. The situation was so bad that "one Keeper of the Wardrobe after another gave up his task in despair. Not one of them was able to put his accounts together in a shape which would pass muster with the Exchequer officials. Years after they had left office, the Keepers of the Wardrobe were still receiving moneys from the Exchequer and endeavouring to pay off their debts. . . . The accounts with the Keepers of Edward I's latter years and those of the new King's reign were still kept open. . . . We find at one and the same time Droxford receiving and paying monies for the reign of Edward I and also acting as Keeper for the second year of Edward II. . . . Actually Droxford's accounts for 2 Edward II . . . were never enrolled at all."

"This shameful account-keeping involved the breakdown of the financial system which Droxford and Walter Langton had

developed for Edward I. . . . During the first ten years of the reign of Edward II . . . the chaos was yearly becoming more complete." Professor Tout's conclusions are borne out by the fact that in Drokensford's *Register* there is a record of 1324 of an injunction from Edward II to the Bishop as late *Custos* of the Wardrobe to settle his accounts with Robert Fitzpayne.[42] It was then about fifteen years since he had vacated his office in the Wardrobe.

The Lords Ordainers.

Apart from the affairs of the Wardrobe there were other matters requiring reform, and the Barons' disgust at the King's favour shown to Gaveston coupled with the financial chaos which prevailed led to the presentation to the King of eleven articles of redress at a Parliament held by him at Westminster in 1309. This was followed up by the appointment of Ordainers to make such ordinances as should be to the honour of the Church, the King and the People. Drokensford was not among the six bishops who joined Archbishop Reynolds in the ranks of the Ordainers, but his friends, Langton of Chichester and Baldock of London, were included.

The ordinances were read aloud in St. Paul's Churchyard in the presence of the King, prelates, magnates and commoners, and Drokensford would no doubt be present. In its effect the work of the Ordainers resembled the work of the Mad Parliament in their demand to nominate the King's ministers, but an interesting development is the claim that the royal household, including the King's Wardrobe, should be purged and amended.

These proposals seem to have been made with the consent, if not at the instigation of two prelates who had experienced the difficulties of controlling the Wardrobe from the Chancery. In the 14th Ordinance it is decreed that the King was to appoint his officials "by the counsel and assent of his baronage, and that of Parliament."

The list of officials thus to be appointed included, besides the Chancellor, Treasurer, Chief Justices, Chancellor and Chief Baron of the Exchequer, both the Keeper and the Controller of the Wardrobe, two posts which Drokensford had recently held.

When the ordinances complained that the King had been misguided by bad counsellors in his household, they were surely referring to those appointed since the King's accession and not to Drokensford and his episcopal friends mentioned before.

The support which Drokensford and his friends gave to the Ordainers was perhaps due to vexation at "being outrun in the race for secular preferment." For some years the work of the Ordainers went on, and Barons and King were for a time so hostile to one another that for a few months in 1312 there were two rival governments in the country; that of the King and his Household in the North and that of the Ordainers in the South.

Events then followed one another with almost breathless rapidity. Gaveston was recalled; Archbishop Winchelsey excommunicated him; Thomas of Lancaster, the King's cousin, captured Gaveston in Scarborough, and the Earl of Warwick, breaking a promise of safe-conduct, beheaded him on Blacklow Hill, thus shedding "the first drop of the deluge which within a century and a half carried away nearly all the ancient baronage and a great proportion of the royal race of England."[43]

NOTES

1. Bishop Stubbs, *Constitutional History.*
   T. F. Tout, *The Place of Edward II in English History*, and *The King's Wardrobe.*
2. Stubbs, op. cit.
3. Bishop Hobhouse, *Calendar of the Register of John de Drokensford, Bishop of Bath and Wells* (1309–1329), edited by Bishop Hobhouse.
4. *Inquisitiones post mortem*, quoted in *Somerset Record Society Trans.*, 1881.
5. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. xvii.
6. Papers by Canon J. Vaughan in *The Treasury Magazine*, July, 1907, and February, 1915.
7. Vaughan, op. cit.
8. I have to thank the Rector of Droxford (the Revd. L. S. Etheridge) for much help and kindness in showing me the church and its monuments.
9. W. Page, *London, its origin and early development*, 1929, ch. viii, Some Governing Families of London. The Basings and Bydiks were also connected with the Fitz Alulf, de Viel and Fitz Isabel families.
10. Hobhouse, op. cit., pp. 80, 81, 85, 86.
11. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 130.
12. Hobhouse, op. cit., pp. 230, 248.
13. T. F. Tout, *Edward II, passim.*
14. N. G. Brett-James, *Hugh de Cressingham, L. and Middx. Trans.*, Vol. IX, Part III.
15. Rev. Jocelyn Perkins, *Westminster Abbey*, 1923, where there are drawings of the Norman Undercroft and the Chapel of the Pyx.
16. *Archæologia*, Vol. XLIV, paper by Henry Harrod, F.S.A.
    A. L. Stanley, *Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, 3rd edition, 1869, pp. 427–431.
    Sir Walter Besant, *Westminster*, 1895, pp. 113–124.
17. A paper by Joseph Burtt, Assistant Keeper of the Records in Sir Gilbert Scott's *Gleanings from Westminster Abbey.*
18. *Calendar of Close Rolls*, 1302–1307, p. 5.
19. *Cal. Close Rolls*, 1302–1307, p. 7.
20. Op cit., p. 11.
21. Op. cit., p. 21.
22. Op. cit., p. 22.
23. Op. cit., p. 60.
24. Op. cit., p. 113.

25. *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1301–1307, p. 108.
26. Op. cit., p. 153.
27. Op. cit., p. 155.
28. Op. cit., p. 234.
29. *Close Rolls*, 1302–1307, p. 53.
30. Op. cit., 1302–1307, p. 140.
31. W. Page, op. cit., *passim*.
32. *The Black Survey of Hendon*, N. G. Brett-James, "Some Extents and Surveys of Hendon," in *London and Middlesex Arch. Soc. Transactions*, Vol. VI, Part IV.
33. *Close Rolls*, 1327–30, p. 525.
34. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 300.
35. *Close Rolls*, 1341–43, pp. 32, 68.
36. There are many references to the family of Bidyk, spelt in several ways, in the *Calendars of Close and Patent Rolls* and in the *Parliamentary Writs*.
37. *Close Rolls*, 1341–43, p. 96.
38. *Patent Rolls*, 1301–1307, p. 361.
39. Op. cit., 513.
40. T. F. Tout, op. cit., *passim*.
41. *Patent Rolls*, 1308–
42. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 230.
43. T. F. Tout, *Edward II*.