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GOSSIP FROM THE MUNICIPAL RECORDS OF
FOLKESTONE.

BY CANON R. C. JENKINS.

Most of those whom I have the pleasure of addressing will probably imagine that Folkestone, presenting as it does so few objects having any claim to antiquity, is one of those fashionable watering places which have sprung up in our own day,—a sudden growth like Aladdin's famous palace, not however originating from the possession of the old lamp, but from that changing of the old lamp for the new which was so fatal in that early story. It is true that it did in the transfer of its harbour to the South Eastern Railway, and in its connection with the world by that great thread of iron, change its old lamp for a new one, while it has carried on the same wise exchange by creating a west-end on the Lees, which has supplanted the old fishing town, still so picturesquely nestled under its eastern cliffs. But that it had an old lamp, and that this lamp had a not uninteresting history, it shall be the object of these few lines of local gossip and tradition to establish. By the kindness of the Mayor, to whom we are so much indebted for aid and counsel, and every kind of co-operation in our present meeting, I have been permitted to examine the records and documents connected with the town, which are preserved with admirable arrangement, and under excellent supervision and care, in the chest of the Corporation, whose worthy and accomplished Town Clerk fulfils this labour of love in the most able and judicious manner. Accompanied by both, I had the pleasure of inspecting these muniments, and am happy to lay before you a few at least of the fruits of my inquiry.

The town of Folkestone, whose ecclesiastical organization preceded by so many centuries its municipal privileges, has had all the disadvantages of a younger son of an ancient family—having been merely a member of the Cinque Port of Dover, without any of those advantages of greater freedom which the younger branches of a family so often derive from their independence and enterprise. For it fell under the almost despotic government of a feudal dynasty, becoming so absolutely enslaved to the lords of the manor (or, as it was called, the Honour of Folkestone), as to become little more than a body incorporated to enforce his edicts, to imprison those who might fall under his dis-

pleasure, and to carry out all his behests without restraint, and even without protest. Up to the end of the fifteenth century we find the great Lord Clinton and Say addressing the Mayor and Jurates, and his faithful Commons of his town of Folkestone, as though they were but the lesser jewels of his feudal crown, and might even be dispensed with if they should give out any other light or colour than those which he prescribed them. Although the first Charter of incorporation goes back to the fifth of Edward II. (1313), constituting the "Mayor, Jurats, and Commonality" the municipal body of the town—while the second (granted by Edward III. in his first year, 1327) confirms and enlarges the original grant—we find no records of the Corporation of an earlier date than the reign of Henry VIII. (about 1530), from which time they are regularly kept in a series of portly volumes, containing the records of the assemblies of the municipality, the acts and recognizances of its courts of record, and various other documents, which in the earliest period are so intermixed as to render the winnowing of them a very difficult work. Gradually the twofold series become more clearly separated, and we are able to follow the history of the Corporation, and that of its ancient courts, with less interruption and confusion.

But while we were lamenting the loss of all earlier records, which would throw light on the history of the place, the Mayor fortunately discovered a few fragments of an ancient correspondence, in the last stage of dilapidation, which reflected a feeble though very suggestive ray upon the more distant past, hitherto so fatally obscured as scarcely to derive a single illustration, even from those grand side-lights of local history which the general records of our country (now so admirably restored and augmented) secure to us. We had lit upon a correspondence carried on in the year 1464, in the days of Edward IV., between Lord Clinton and Say on the one side, and the Duchess of York and the Archbishop of Canterbury (Cardinal Bourchier) on the other, with the then Mayor of Folkestone (who appears to have no posthumous life but in this correspondence, and whose name does not survive in it), and to this, which though imperfect and fragmentary, is of singular interest, I desire first to direct your attention. A few preliminary words will be enough to introduce you to this episode in the pre-Reformation history of Folkestone.

One Thomas Banys or Bains, a monk, who had been Prior of Folkestone, had, by dispensation or connivance of the ecclesiastical authorities, become secularized, and had entered upon the state of a parish priest. As such he had commended himself to

the Duchess of York (who, as a Neville, was likely to patronize men of Kent), and was appointed her chaplain. In the meantime, a brother-in-law of the great Lord Clynton and Saye, the feudal ruler of Folkestone, had been installed as Prior—a brother of the equally influential Lord Ferrers, who was high in the council of the King. But Thomas Banys, who perhaps had very soon had enough of the world, and longed for the quiet scene he had left, determined to return, and backed by the influence of the King, the King's Mother, and the Archbishop, claimed anew his priorate. Upon this, Lord Clynton, who feared not to withstand the highest authorities both in Church and State, addresses to his subjects at Folkestone a kind of imperial manifesto, which can only be fully appreciated in his own energetic words. In these it will be readily admitted that he acts up to his name, and proves that he can *say* his say; however he may have been unable to carry out his resolution, in act and deed, against kings and kings' mothers, and archbishops. At all events, the descendant of the great heiress, Idonea de Say, cannot be said, in the words of Horace, to have been "*pugnæ non sat idoneus*." Unfortunately we have not the replies of the Mayor to the furious epistles of their liege Lord, or to the gentler effusions of the King's Mother and the Archbishop. The distant power proved evidently more influential than the nearer one, and he would appear to have so welcomed and assisted the "*fals man*," as Lord Clynton terms him, as to have incurred the unmitigated wrath of that great potentate.

MAY & JUNE, 1464.—THIRD OF EDWARD IV.

CORRESPONDENCE OF THE DUCHESS OF YORK, THE ARCHBISHOP OF
CANTERBURY (BOURCHIER), AND LORD CLINTON AND SAY,

Addressed to the Mayor and Jurates of Folkestone.

20th of May, 1464.

John Lord Clynton and Say, to our trusty and welbeloved the mayor jurates and communes of oure towne of ffolkestone send greeting. And forsomuch as we understand the malicious disposicion, wille and intent of Dan Thomas Banys late pretended priour of oure Priory of ffolkestone aforesaid to distourbe our trusty and faithful brother Henry Ferrers of his possession title and interesse of and in the said priory and all that been apperteyning thereto late yeven to my said brother in your presence, We therefore wol and charge you and also hertily pray you that if the abovesaid Thomas Banys or any other for hym come to our said towne to make any such distourbance or

challenge that ye and ev'ych of you with all your might resiste thaire malice and disposicion, and theym to arrest intreat and justifie after the lawe and custome of our said towne at such time as ye shall by our said brother his servants and ministers be . . . and moved (?) yeving in commandment to all our servants officers and menyall men to these (?) to be obedient assisting and attendant and that ye . . . as we shal be your good lord—Yeven under our seal of our armes the 20th day of May, the year of the reign of our Liege lord King Edward the IV. the third.

24th of May.

Right worshipfull sirs y pray yow as ye love my worship profit and welfare that for any letters sende to yow by the King or by my ladi of Yorke for Dan Thomas Banys ayenst the welfare of my brother ffrerrers that ye suffre not the said Banis in no wise to enter into the priorie of ffolkestone but hym utterlye resiste and defende in my title as my verrai right and patronage as full and hole as Y were there myself. And I uppon the peyne of all my landis and godis that save yow all harmless ayenst the king and my saide lady bi the help of my lord ffrerrers my lord Herbarde and other lordis of the kinges counsell that knoweth my right and title. And it shall not be longe to but that the King and my lady shall write the contrarie that is wretten for the saide Banis, for I have spoke with my lerned counsell of all this and thei sey me gif ye obey this writing that is brought to you from the king and my ladye ye shall breke for ever the libertie and franchis of the portis for ever, whiche were youre undoing and my shaam forever And that y wolde not for all my lande And therefore charge you that ye well understand and taketh heed of my writing for any talis or writing for your welfare and my worship and all myn hereafter. And over that y charge All my servants that thei be helping towards you to defende and resiste the saide Banis. And also y charge yow as ye will answere to me therefore that ye arreste the said Banis, and all them that come with him except the kings servants and my lady of Yorkes, And them sauflly kepe in prison un to tyme that thei answere to certaine contempts and trespasses doone to me and my lordship of ffolkestone ayenst the privilege and franchis and liberty of the portis, and not to deliver them withoute my special commandemente—Yeven at Westminster under my signe manual for youre suretie the 28th day of May.

Your hertly and faithfull lorde John
Lord Clynton and Say,

CLYNTON.

And that my bailly there be
 attendaunt to this com'andement
 And also the deputie
 of my said bailly for any
 excuse.

(Endorsed—to the Maire Jurates and
 all my good Communes and ser-
 vants of my towne of folkestone.)

27th May, 1464.

The Kynges moder
 Duchesse of yorke.

Trusty and welbeloved we grete you well. And where as we
 understande that it hath pleased my lord and son the Kyng and also
 our Cousin Tharchbisshop of Canterbury entendeant the right of our
 welbeloved Chapellaine Thomas Banys to wryte for hym unto you and
 therefore to see hym receive (?) such lyuelode as he ought of right to
 have. ^{demyoe} We desire and pray you that according unto the tenure of the
^{livelihood} letters of our said lord and son and cousin aforesaid ye put you in
 devoyr to the performyng of the same and with the more diligence at
 our special contemplacion as we trust you. And that no person'e vexe
 unquiet or trouble hym as we may for his sake thanke you in time to
 come. Yeven under our signet at our place at Baynardys Castell in
 london the xxvij day of Maye.

The seal in red wax.

(Endorsed) To our trusty and welbeloved The
 Mayre of folkeston' and to ever'ch of
 theyme.

5th June, 3rd Edward IV.

Johannes Dominus de Clynton et Say, miles, Dominus de folke-
 stone quae est membrum portus Dovoriae in Com' Canciae et unus
 custodum pacis Dni N'ri regis in Com. Canciae conservandi, Majore
 villae de folkeston praediet et Baillivo.

Johannis villae praedictae necnon in hac parte suo sufficienti
 deputato vobis et cuilibet vestrum ex parte d'ni n'ri regis et
 ex parte magni Guardiane quinque portuum praecipimus et mandamus
 quod capiatis seu aliquis vestrum capiat dominum Thomam Banis
 monachum si in ballivâ vestrâ et eum salvo custodiatis seu
 aliquis vestrum custodiat absque aliquâ traditione aut in manuario (?)
 Ad respondendum tam dicto d'no nostro regi quam praefato magno
 Guardiano de certis feloniis transgressionibus rottiis et
 routis contra formam inde editis (?) et infra mem-
 brum praedictum factis. Et hoc nullatenus omittatis seu aliquis

vestrūm omittat sub pœnâ incumbente. Et qualiter hoc praeceptum nostrum in execucionem posuistis seu aliquis vestrum posuit, nobis se constari faciatis indilate. Datum sub sigillo nostro quinto die Junii anno regni regis Edwardi IV. tercio.

(Endorsed) To oure trusti and welbeloved The
Maire Jurats and Communes of the town of
folkeston' in the Countie of Kent.

T. Archbissopp of Canterbury (Cardinal Bourchier).

Written 6th of June.

Trusti and welbeloved we grete you well. And forasmuche as we understand by your letters late directed unto us that ye have been helping and assisting unto our right welbeloved dan (?) Thomas Banys prior of folkeston according to the kings honorabil letters and our writing sent unto you in that behalve, whereof we thanke you alle right heartly that ye have soo doon, desiring specially that ye woul continue the same unto him hereafter as all right and good conscience axeth. Acertaynynge you that the Lord Clynton as the caas requireth ought not to have to doo in the matter on any wise. Notwithstanding the said Lorde Clynton bath desired and promised faithfully unto us by mouth to doo and be demeanyd in the matter as we wul have hym. Wherefore we desire and wul that ye feer not to doo that right requireth in the matter and our truste is in you and like as your neighbor bringeth proof can more largely informe you and according to our conceipt in this partie to whom will ye yeve evidence in that behalve. God have you in keping. Written in our manor of Lamehithe the vi daie of June.

29th of June, 1464.

(have we mache of youre disposicion towards us
and our brother fferrers with that monk) thinke not the contrarie
but as law willeth thou wilt right soon repent thi dedis for thei been
neither vertuous nor lawful, for thou settest my commandement at
nought and git thou shalt right wel thinke y am thi lorde and so will
be and that thou shalt right well know or els the law shal faile me we
sende a lettre late to the and the Jurates. As for my said brother and
for special favour that thou haddest to the saide monke thou kepest
the (?) lettre from them nor woldest suffre them to know thentent
thereof and therefore in all thy governance (?) and rewle as to this
matter hit is and shal be right wel understand, and suche charge as y
have yeven myn officers caas I charge the have not a doo therewith for

thogh thou v hit shall right well availe saf to thyne owne hurt. Wreten at London in hast the xxix daie of June mccccxiiij.

JOHN LORD CLYNTON DE SAY.

Also sirs y will and charge yow that ye aunswere the messages that bringeth the king here and my ladi of York here, that ye dare nat take uppon yow to meddle of these matters withouten the advice of me and of my counsell bi cause hit concerneth myne inheritaunce and also my worship and also the keping of the liberte and fraunchys of my towne of folkestone whereynne ye be dwellers, and with this aunswere y doute me not ye shal plesse the king and my lady and therefore uppon my perill douteth not of my lord of Canterbury nor of noone other for this matter. And y charge yow that this lettre be read openly afore the communes of my said town except the matter conteyned in this bill. (What follows, and is here referred to, is written on a separate piece of paper. Lord Clynton died in Sept., 1464.)

Also sirs I declare to yow all that the saide Banis is a fals Sodomyte
immorality *a profligate person*
and for open and proved Sodomitee stands accursed and may not be assoyled of no Bisshop in England but of the pope and yet the saide Banis by the law of the chirche most in his owne persone at Rome doo his greet penaunce therefore, and els to be brent as a false Sysmatik and an herytik to God, And also (?) holy church and all that eet and drynk with hym be a cursed or help (?) and that in resonable hast shall be declared afore yow, of recorde under sufficient auctoritie, selis and witesse, and therefore y charge yow to have not a doo with him otherwise then to kepe hym in prison but the king and the lordis is not informed hereof but thei shall be in haste for all the writing that the said Banis can shewe for his absolucion of the saam ben of noon effecte nor of auctoritie.

On the other side (*plus in tergo.*)

And sirs though the king's letter and my ladi of Yorke's lettres come to yow by a fals informacion of the saide Banis, yit hit is not the king's interest noor wil to hurt me nor my brother for soche a fals man.

The close of this history appears to be this: the "fals man" triumphed, but in the end he was discovered to be as false as Lord Clynton proclaimed him to be. In the archbishopric of Cardinal Morton, as late as 1491 he was charged with various excesses and dishonest appropriations of the goods of the Priory, and in 1493 was deprived. As this was nearly thirty years after the correspondence I

have laid before you, he must have lived to a good old age, and long survived his honour and integrity, regardless of the charge of the poet,

“*Summum crede nefas vitam praeferre pudori.*”

It may be well imagined that the subordinate position of the “Mayor and Jurates and all my good communes and servants of my town of Folkestone,” to their lords paramount, would render the history of the corporation very much what the history of a people is under an absolute and crushing despotism. Lord Clynton’s diary (if he ever kept one) would perhaps convey much more intelligence regarding the history of the place than the records of the municipal body itself. Indeed the Assembly and recognizance books of the period of Henry VIII. are limited to the simplest matters of markets, fines, accounts of fees and payments in regard to the fisheries, then the chief source of the income of the town, and actions of a trifling character between litigants within its jurisdiction. The Corporation appears (unlike the principal Cinque Ports) to have had scarcely any real property at this time, and to have been as straitened in means as it was limited to the narrow area of Folkestone proper, so that it might have said with the poet—

“I, and such as I,
Spread little wings, and rather skip than fly—
Perched on the meagre produce of the land,
An ell or two of prospect we command,
But never peep beyond the thorny bound,
Or oaken fence, that hems the paddock round.”

The Elizabethan period opens, however, on a somewhat more extended view. The “Mayor and Jurates and good Communes” began to see that while Dover on the one side possessed a haven which formed the chief port of ingress and egress to the continent—a position which Sandwich had once held, and by the desertion of the sea had so irretrievably lost—and while Hythe on the other side was making the most vigorous efforts to create a new harbour on its eastern side, to replace its exhausted haven, something must be done to give it a chance of even holding its humbler place on the great southern seaboard. Accordingly, as Queen Elizabeth was making a progress into Kent, in 1573, they tried to prevail upon her to visit their ancient town, in the hope of securing the aid of the crown for their failing haven. The memory of the Queen’s passing by survives in a mythical story which represents her rhyming welcome by the mayor, and the very unqueenly rejoinder which it provoked—a story which the records of this period render not only most improbable but almost impossible.

For the proceedings of the corporation are described throughout as being very regularly and sensibly carried on, and we do not find the mayor on any occasion to have forgotten the dignity of his office, or to have failed in expressing himself on public occasions with a becoming gravity and propriety. The Mayor who waited on the Queen was Robert Holiday—an appropriate name, as it is connected with one of the most memorable holidays in the annals of Folkestone. I find no direct mention of a petition, in the Assembly-book during this period, but I do find a significant allusion to it, after its occurrence, and while the Queen was staying at Canterbury; for the Mayor and two of the Jurates rode thither “to wait upon the Queen’s Majesty for an answer to the supplication that was put in to her here”—a journey which cost the corporation 1*l.* 6*s.* 7*d.*—and the Mayor and Town Clerk (failing it would appear to carry their point at Canterbury) made a fresh expedition to Cobham, “to speak to our Lord Warden (Lord Cobham) about the ‘suit of the haven.’” It seems, therefore, that the visit of the Queen was not a neglected opportunity to the Corporation, though it was apparently a fruitless one. In 1569 we find that the “Queen’s Players” visited Folkestone, and received the liberal remuneration of 3*s.* 4*d.*—just half a solicitor’s fee—for their performance, while my Lord Worcester’s received half that sum, being sufficiently remunerated with one shilling and eightpence. The compliments and hospitalities of the corporation at this period stood in singular contrast with those which recent years have witnessed, and which are associated with the memories of the Pavilion and of this hall. Thus, a “dish of fish” was an occasional present to Mr. Lovelace, “our counsel,” and to other eminent persons whom the municipality delighted to honour. The Queen’s Commissioners were treated to “a pottle of wine,” procured from Goodman Brown, at a period when a meeting was held to consider “the scarcity and dearth of corn grain and vittels and other necessaries for the sustentation of the body which is at this instant present time in this towne dere and of great prices.” It is to be hoped that either prices fell, or trade recovered, between 1573 and 1596, for in the latter year a cess is ordered “towards the setting forth of shipping in that great viage to Cales (?) in Spain under the conduct of the most valiant chieftain the Earl of Essex his honour, and the Lord High Admiral of England. The cess (it is added) was made by the special commandement of the Lords of Her Majesty’s most hon. Privy Council, and not to be drawn into a president for times to come to bind and charge the ports and members thereby.” Here we see an early glimpse of the fatal ship-money, and find how hard it is to escape

turning an error into a precedent, however carefully we may provide against such a contingency. What was a light matter under Elizabeth became a very formidable one in the days of Charles I. At this time the police and criminal jurisdiction of Folkestone partook of the rudeness and severity which marks the Tudor period throughout. In 1599, one "Stephen Smith and his family being lewd people and refraining from church," were "banished from the town, and sent back with a passport to Petham. If they return, they are to be whipped and sent back accordingly." A year or two before, Henry Ludgate, charged with felony, is tried before the Mayor and Jurates, with a jury of twelve. "Whereupon," continues our record, "the said Henry Ludgate being called to the bar, and being asked what he would say for himself, why he should not receive judgment to die, answered that he desired to have the benefit of the law, which was granted him. And the ordinary being by the Mayor demanded, *Instrumentum legit ut* (?) The ordinary answered, *legit*. And then he was brent in the brawne of the left hand, with a T, and so discharged, his fees being paid." The administration of law by the Mayor and Jurates seems, by this and other notices, to have been not a little curious and capricious, and their severity on their own officers is one of the most prominent features of it. The unfortunate Town Clerk was one of the most constant victims of their wrath. Endowed with the ample salary of four pounds a year, a tenth of the sum on which the poor clergyman was said by the poet to be "passing rich," he has his quarter's salary constantly sequestered for some trifling offence, and in 1616, Philip Vincent, the then Clerk, was, "for divers causes to them known," dismissed from his office by the Corporation. The Council of Ten at Venice, or the officers of the Inquisition at Goa, could hardly have been more autocratic or summary in the judgment of their unhappy victims. No wonder that in 1652 the Town Clerk betook himself to Hythe, where he lived at a sufficient distance from his persecutors. The Corporation, however, found that "whereas the Town Clerk of the town liveth at Hythe, and sometimes men have occasion for ponies, and other original expenses to arrest men, which upon the sudden they cannot have, which is very inconvenient, it is desired that Mr. Jenkins shall make those expenses which he hath promised to do accordingly." We may remark here, with pleasure, that ponies are now put to a much better use in Folkestone. To fall back for a moment on the Elizabethan age, we find some extracts of a suggestive character in the Assembly-books of that period. There is a mention of Elham fair, in 1597, whose scene is that deserted and somewhat melancholy square

adjoining the church, which some of you may see to-morrow. A Cinque Port, deserted by the sea, and its haven choked up with shingle, cannot present a more desolate aspect than a country town forsaken by its market people, with its market-place covered with straggling tufts of grass. And such is the town over which, as one of her great manors, the Infanta of Kent once reigned. In the following year Thomas Harvey, the father of the great discoverer of the circulation of the blood, who was then a Jurate, and in 1600 was elected Mayor, was among others appointed to collect the ship money, the estimates for which were so doubtful that its collection was put off till they could be clearly seen. At this time an insight is given us to the then neglected poor of Folkestone, in an inventory of the goods of William Wilson, deceased, in 1596, whose effects are thus given in a true auctioneering form :—

“The goods of William Wilson late deceased—a badde fetherbed—a badde fether pillow—3 sheetes—a badde coverlet—2 pewter dishes—1 old kettle—priced by Tho^s Kennett, fisherman, at 14s. 6d.”

Though money was scarce in these days, and the disbursements of the Corporation are almost always reckoned in shillings and pence, we find that when the Lord Grace of Canterbury preached here, in 1598, five pounds eleven shillings were spent—whether in eating and drinking, or in charitable objects, the record fails to say. In 1600, the Queen’s Players again visit Folkestone. Was Shakespeare among them? Did he gain his knowledge of the great cliff, that bears his name, during this or any previous visit? These are questions which our fancy may well revel in, even if our judgment is unable to decide them. At the same time the good Mr. Harvey was engaged in riding several times to Canterbury, to speak with Mr. Boys, the counsel for the town, to whom the municipality (which always gave its presents in kind) sent a dish of lobsters, value 6s. Presently the glorious reign of Elizabeth fades on our sight, and the failing light appears somewhat grotesquely in the pages of the Assembly-book, having this brief and touching mention :—

“Paid for beer when the late Queen (Elizabeth’s) funeral was solemnized, 2s.”

I must now, in order to give better effect to my very fragmentary materials, endeavour to put them into a kind of conventional setting, and ask you to accompany me to the middle of the following century (about the year 1650), and to accept my invitation to spend a long day with me in the Folkestone of that primitive period. I propose to bring together, into one day, in order to preserve the unities of my

drama, a number of scattered facts which are grouped around the year 1650, and a few subsequent years, in the annals of the town. The day I shall select will be the anniversary of the Annunciation, on which the Mayors have from time immemorial been elected. I must premise that the history of a town so quietly situated as this realizes the title which a recent popular memoir has assumed, "The Memorials of a Quiet Life." Folkestone had, indeed, at this time a peculiarly quiet life. The political and religious turmoils which raged in its mother-town of Dover had here only a faint and distant echo. Folkestone received its laws from Dover, from the invitation to the guestling banquets to the strangely contrasted prohibitions against eating flesh during Lent, all which the "Boder," as he is called, brought to the Corporation from the Castle. It appears during the Cromwellian period to have retained its loyalty, for though the Recognizance Books made mention of the Lord Protector from stern necessity, the Assembly-books mention only the actual year during this period, and I find in these no allusion to his usurpation. Only two Jurates and one or two commoners were displaced in 1660, as "eminently active against his Majesty, or of dangerous principles," on the order being issued for "replacing in the magistracy such as were loyal to his Majesty during the late differences in this nation." And these were removed only for "going away and evading," and the other for "openly refusing to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy." Among the traces of the Civil War in the Assembly-books I find the following notices:—in 1639, I find a letter addressed to the Corporation for the "repressing and punishing the rebellious and traitorous assemblie in Lambeth and Southwark, and for the apprehension of John Orchar, George Seares, William Seltram, and other rebellious persons." It was not till 1641 that Lambeth Palace was actually attacked, at the instigation of Lilbourne, by the London Apprentices, so that some preliminary tumults seem here referred to. In 1640, a letter comes for the apprehending of certain mutinous of the County of Dorset, who, amongst other outrages, did cruelly murder Lieutenant Mohun, of Faringdon, in the County of Berks. The same year introduces us to a general muster and view of arms, which foreshadows the coming strife, while two proclamations for the payment of ship-money, which was in arrear, give ominous warning of the terrible events which were ripening. Amid all these troubles, the great beverage of Kent was not neglected, and fines were exacted for "uttering and selling of beere in stone jugges or cruses, and small pots, unsealed contrary to the law." Perhaps it was the Mayor's duty to see that what with us is still called

the "Lowance," should not be shortened by the numerous victuallers who were flourishing in the town, whose houses were reckoned in 1730 at nearly thirty in number. And now that we have tidied over the period of the Civil War itself, and fallen under the parliamentary rule, and that of the "Keeper of the Liberties of England," as he is called at this period, I will renew my invitation to my hearers to spend the long day in Folkestone, which these preliminary remarks have, from a chronological necessity, delayed. I assume the Annunciation Day, in 1650, to be a bright cheerful morning, inviting us to go out to see the night-watch relieved and the day-watch set on. They meet at what is called the place of "Randeovowe," in the town, where, at the sound of the drum, the inhabitants assemble, and receive an account of their various watches, which have been carried on along the coasts and in the town. They appear to have hunted in pairs, and to have kept on their watch for two hours, being relieved at these intervals by other townsmen. I may note that 1650 was the last year of their service, for in 1651 it is announced that the "slight watch, used in this town, shall be forthwith laid down and discontinued, until there be found further cause for taking it up again." This marks the close of the Civil War, and the settlement of the new government. Doubtless the return of these watchmen to their homes must have made their last "Randeovowe" a very pleasant one, and has probably led to the designation of the street which goes by that name. We pass, now, to the haven in the eastern extremity of the town, in order to watch the boats and crews as they are starting for their fishing expeditions to the south and eastern coasts, extending from Yarmouth to Scarborough. Every head of this little fleet appears to have been furnished with pecuniary aid by the Corporation, to start him and his "companie" on their journey. First come the Yarmouth fishermen, preparing for the summer season; then those for Scarborough; then the more venturesome, who are bound to foreign ports, Havre and the North Sea; then, though last not least, the home-fleet, which takes to the hook and the net in less distant waters. The contributions to these are called, in the Assembly-books, "Hook-fare" and "Shot-fare"—the nets being shot out into the sea in order to this harvest.

From the harbour we will proceed to the churchyard, or rather the churchyard-cross, now turned into a modern sun-dial—then probably retaining its ancient Christian form. A great concourse is gathering round it, and presently the procession of the Mayor, and the Jurates and freemen are summoned by the "brazen horne" (which you see before you) and which appears to me to have its name inscribed upon

it, in honest confession that it has no claim to represent a more costly metal. The procession forms itself around the cross, somewhat impeded (as we may imagine) by the tombstones already gathering round it, the melancholy records of mayors and jurates who had heard the "brazen horne" in other days. Several sturdy men bring up the chest of the Corporation, for which they receive the munificent gift of fourpence. The common chest is opened, and the records therein (from which I am quoting) are then openly shewed, and the customs of the town distinctly read. Hereupon the commons and freemen depart unto the church to proceed to the election of the Mayor. The office was certainly not a lucrative one, the salary being apparently about £3 10s. But the honour was great; for I find that the plainest commoner is immediately mentioned as an esquire. But let us pass on amid the joyful sounds of bell-ringing, and a happy concourse of all the commons—"my good communes and servants," as Lord Clynton termed them—to the Guildhall, then a very plain edifice, very little resembling the costly building in which we are assembled. Here the more serious business begins, and the office of the Mayor is proved to need all the meekness of Moses, with much of the wisdom of Solomon. First, a knotty question arises regarding the payment of the members of the Corporation, who each receive sixpence for their attendance and trouble in electing the Mayor. This is given them to spend upon meat and drink, in one of the numerous victualling houses of the town; but some, in thrifty mood, determine to fast, and take home the sixpence to their wives and families. It was therefore "put to the question whether for the future a freeman, who shall be at the election of Mayor, and doth his service there, shall have his usual allowance of sixpence absolutely, though he do not go to dinner at some of the inns or victualling places of the town, and spend it the same day (unless it be upon the Lord's day), and, in case it be the Lord's day, then to be spent the next day. And by the majority of the voices in the Assembly it was voted in the negative." The victuallers, therefore, carried the day, and the forfeited sixpences contributed, no doubt, to increase their profits. But now a much more serious case presents itself. John Medgett is called upon to take the oath of a Jurate, and openly refuses to do so. The Assembly inflict a fine of £5 upon him. He positively refuses to pay, and, adding insult to this great outrage, addresses the Mayor and Council,—“Godfathers, I thank ye,” and further said, “Before I come in to be a Jurate of this town you shall first put my head in the stocks,” adding these words, as a special compliment to Mr. Mayor, “If you cannot use me well, pray use me as well as you can.”

Then, with great *naïveté*, he continued, "If you have set down all that I have spoken, I think I shall not be allowed to be a fitting man." Whereupon, Mr. Mayor, telling him of his trifling and jeering, the said John Medgett further proceeded, saying, "Over shoes, over boots." What was to be done with a man who proved himself so very hard to gain, and yet so much too good to lose? At first the Assembly was extremely irate, and proposed to imprison him in the town-hall, in the custody of the Sergeant, but as this is cancelled with the pen, it may be supposed that some more prudent members had warned them of the very doubtful legality of the proposal. Finally, it is decided that the fine shall be levied out of his goods and chattels. Hereupon, a sudden work of conversion ensues. John Medgett returns to a better mind—he takes the oath—the fine is remitted, and the history ends by the Assembly ordering that "all former passages concerning this business shall be forgotten and buried in oblivion," which they most characteristically accomplish, by inserting the entire narrative in all its passages in their public records. Does any one desire to know the future of the recalcitrant Jurate? His proverb, "Over shoes, over boots," was true to the last; for after serving faithfully as a Jurate, he went in for the mayoralty, and, as we should translate it, his "in for a penny, in for a pound" was verified. Is it not written in these very chronicles that he became "John Medgett, Esq", Mayor of Folkestone."

The defence of the town next claims their attention. Three pieces of ordnance are got from Dover Castle, "for the safeguard and defence of the town in this great time of need." Then the matter of the haven again comes up. It was actually choked with shingle, and needs the nerve and sinew of all Folkestone to clear it out. It is ordered accordingly (I am rather postdating this order, which was given some years before, though probably renewed afterwards), that "towards cleaning and expulsing of the beach from the haven or harbour, from henceforth upon the call or beat of the drum, or any sufficient warning, all and every householder within the said town and liberty, either by themselves, or by some other fit and able person, shall repair to the said harbour, furnished with shovels or other fitting and meet tools or instruments, for the cleaning, scouring, and expulsing of the said beach out of the said haven, and to bestow their best endeavours, labours, and pains to that end, and to abide and continue their said labour, as the Mayor or his deputy shall conceive to be fitting and meet." In default, every one is to pay a forfeit of sixpence. Imagine fashionable Folkestone turning out with spades and shovels on such a work as this! The harbour would certainly have presented a singular

spectacle, whether the householders or their deputies undertook this work of "expulsing" the offending beach. Nor was this inanimate foe all that Folkestone had to legislate against. Contrary to what are termed the "ancient decrees of the town," hogs and swine, without any overlookers or owners, are permitted "to go up and down the streets, and forasmuch as the Mayor and Jurates do hold it to be an abuse if hogs and swine go about the town without some owner, or his assigns, to follow them," they attach a penalty of fourpence to every offending hog—a penny to go to the crier, and threepence to the town.

But now it is time to accompany the Mayor and his officials to the market-place, where he has certain duties to perform, in conjunction with the town Sergeant. Here an exciting scene occurs. The town Sergeant, one Thomas Spicer, had (as our record tells us) "carried himself, both to the Mayor and Jurates, very saucily, impudently, and coarsely, and had been often told by them that he must not keep his place if he mended not his manners." Mindless of this, the misguided man beards the Mayor in the market-place, who (as he was a very meek man) at first mildly and gently told him of his disorderly carriage, willing him to amend his manners both for his own good and for the credit of the town. Mistaken kindness. He now carries himself as bad as formerly, or worse. A vehement altercation ensues. Spicer becomes (as we read) "more violent and virulent than before. Whereupon the Mayor, seeing himself slighted, and the magistrates of the said town so much by their servant disgraced and undervalued, dismisses him from his office; on which the said Spicer, in the said market, in a clamorous manner, affirmed that he cared not, and that he would and should come into his said place again." It is needless to add that he did not, and that we find no further notices of Sergeants rebelling against the Mayor, or fined for swearing, as was the case with this reprehensible official. By this time our day is nearly drawing to an end, and after a turn upon the Lees, then a wild common, with no lodgings to be had, except on the cold ground, and, indeed, lodging-house keeping at this time (probably from the fear of the plague) was a very losing game, and, without the consent of the Mayor, could not be entered upon at all, we will end our long day, in old Folkestone, by returning to the Rendezvous, and seeing the night-watch set on its arduous duties at the sound of the town-drum, retiring to rest in the full persuasion that the three pieces of ordnance from Dover Castle, and the "slight watch," as it was called in the day when "it was laid down and discontinued," may well protect us in so

well-ordered a town, and among so well-disposed a people as Folkestone and the Folkestoners of that or any later day.

But a day of much greater danger than that which brought these pieces of ordnance from Dover dawned upon the town, within the memory, probably, of many whom I am addressing—the year of the threatened invasion from France, the traditions of which in this neighbourhood are still most vivid, and will hardly be effaced from the minds of the generations to come. We are still told by the more aged among us, of the plans for blocking up the roads with felled timber, and many other last resources of energetic and never-despairing patriotism. But we have among the papers of the town-chest a more definite record of this season of peril, in the form of returns from every ward into which the borough was divided, of all males of sufficient age to bring anything into the field, and of every weapon they possessed, from a spade or a shovel to a sword or a gun—for rifles in that primitive age were out of the question. I remember, when I first came to Lyminge, I found a sermon of my predecessor, preached at the moment when the invasion was supposed to be imminent, beginning with the gloomy vaticination that perhaps before the next Sunday dawned upon us we might cease to be an independent nation, and of course drawing a moral from our great emergency which was scarcely more salutary then than it would be now, in our day of imagined security, and amid the perils of luxury and prosperity. Possibly the spades and the shovels, upon which the worthy Mayor of an earlier day relied for “expulsing the beach from the haven,” would have been quite as effective as the miscellaneous weapons, named in the returns, would have been for the “expulsing” of the foreign invader.