



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

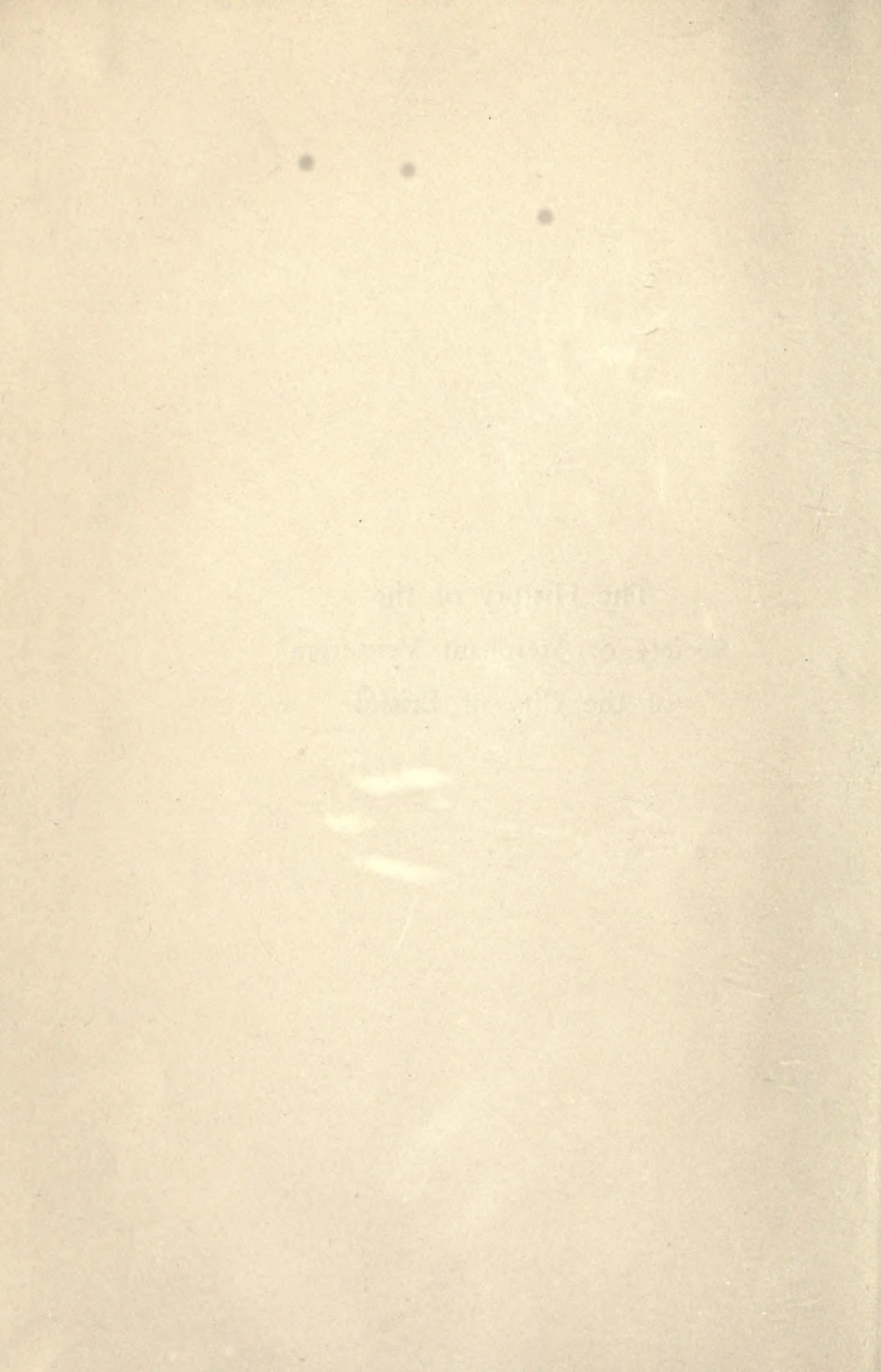


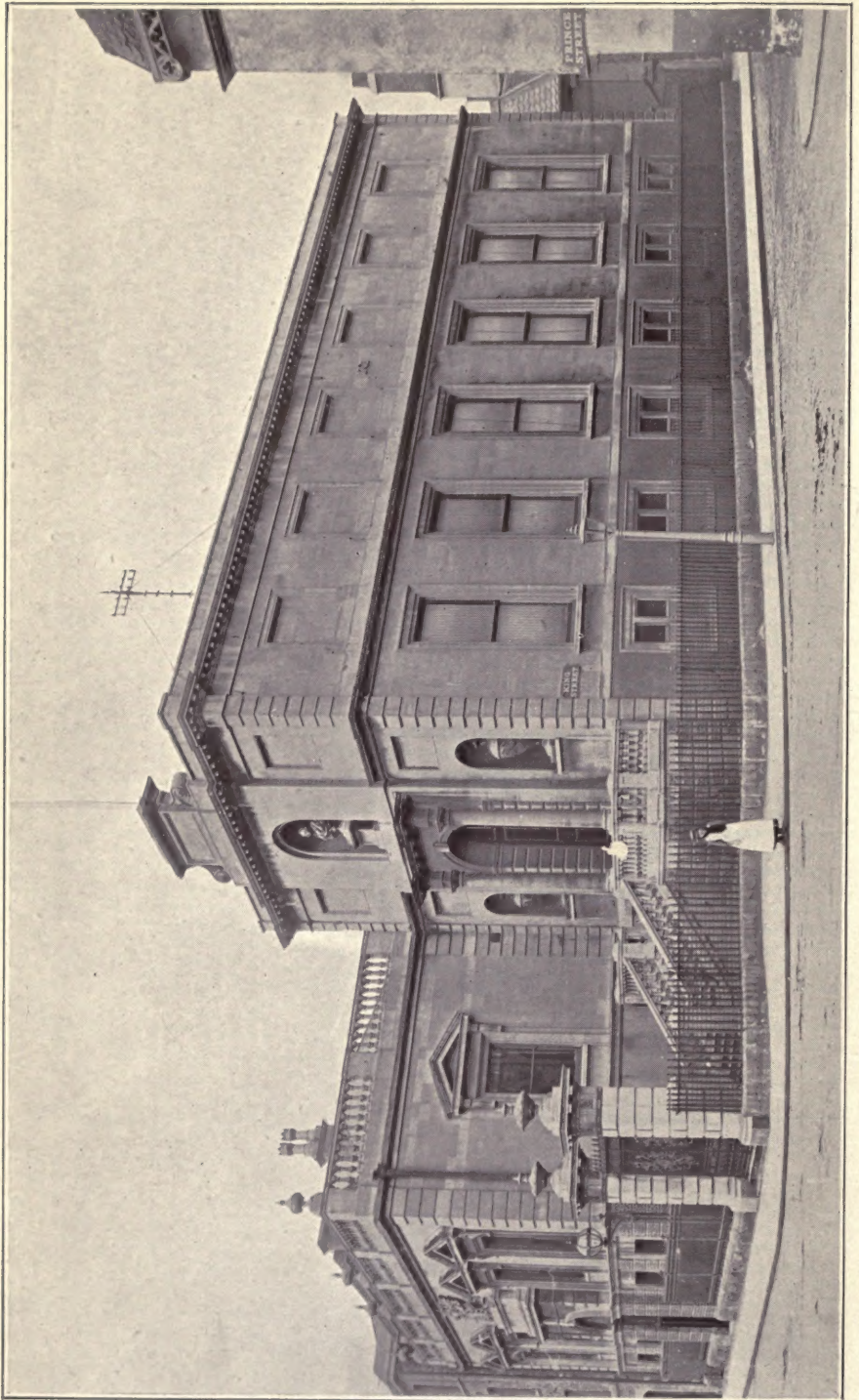


53

D

The History of the
Society of Merchant Venturers
of the City of Bristol





Ec.H
L357h

The History

of the

Society of Merchant Venturers of the City of Bristol

With some Account of the Anterior
Merchants' Guilds

By John Latimer

60194
12/9/03

1903

Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, Quay Street



PREFACE.

I HAVE endeavoured in the following pages to comply with a desire expressed by the Society of Merchant Venturers, by compiling from their own Records and other sources of information some account of this ancient incorporation.

A close study of the archives made between the years 1897 and 1901, during which period, at the request of the Hall, I drew up a Calendar of the transactions of the Society extending over three large volumes, had made me familiar with the subject. But the preparation from the voluminous documents of a formal history of a Corporation forming a connecting link between the Middle Ages and modern times was a formidable task; and I should not have ventured to undertake it but for the assistance promised (and cordially rendered) by the late and present Treasurers and other members of the Society, and but for the large measure of approval that has been bestowed upon my previous efforts to elucidate local history.

It is somewhat remarkable that although the merchants of the leading outports in England obtained royal charters of incorporation in the sixteenth century, no Merchant Venturers' Society was established in London. A corporate body, eventually styled the Merchant Adventurers of England, had indeed been founded by Henry the Fourth, and granted exclusive rights of trading with Germany and the Low Countries; but as a document delivered by its officers to the Star Chamber in 1637 bears witness, the members "were in those times dispersed, and dwelt as well in the outports

of the kingdom—viz.: at York, Hull, Exeter, and Newcastle, as at London, though the greatest number always dwelt at London.” And this statement is followed by a declaration of the same officials that “the Head Court of the Society ever was, and yet is, beyond seas, and not at London,” and that merchants at Newcastle and other towns seeking admission to the confederacy were elected “at one of the Courts beyond the seas,” and were not only required to appear there to take the oath of obedience to the Company’s ordinances, but were moreover “liable to be called over to be Assistants to the said Company beyond seas.” (*Records of the Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle*, vol. i., p. 19.) Down to the rupture with Spain in the reign of Elizabeth, the General Courts of this singular Society, whose members were exclusively Englishmen, but whose Governor, Wardens, and Assistants were elected and resided abroad, generally assembled at Antwerp, and at that time the members living in London do not appear to have had a recognised right to elect a resident Deputy Governor. At a later period, the headquarters of the fraternity were at Hamburg, whence it became commonly known in this country as the Hamburg Company; and it being then customary to hold three General Courts yearly—two at the new centre and one in London—the organisation got later on to be loosely styled the “London Company.”

By the charter granted to the Bristol Merchants by Edward the Sixth, they were forbidden to traffic in the region reserved to the Merchant Adventurers of England; but this restraint was abrogated by the second local charter granted by Charles the First. The latter instrument, resulting from the temporary capture of this city by the Royalist army, was probably regarded as invalid by the party that afterwards gained supremacy. But in 1662 Charles the Second, in response to a petition

setting forth the decay of the clothing trade in the West of England occasioned by the narrow policy of the English Adventurers, ordered that admission to that company should be granted to all merchants at the outports on payment of a small fine. No reference to this mandate occurs in the minutes of the Bristol Merchant Venturers. But from the Records of the Newcastle Society, which I had not been able to consult when narrating the local contest with the Levant Company (page 138 *post*), it appears that in 1669 the Bristolians, pleading their charters, appealed to the Privy Council against the monopoly claimed by the Hamburg Company; that the Government invited representations from other outports; and that the Bristol Society solicited the co-operation of the Newcastle confederacy "to free themselves from the bondage of the Merchant Adventurers of England." Though the northern merchants had suffered much persecution from the London members of the Hamburg Company, they were disinclined to lose their share of the monopoly, and ordered their agent at Court to support the Company, and hold aloof from "these interlopers." (*Newcastle Records*, i., 137.) The interlopers, however, succeeded in their object. The Merchant Adventurers of England still flourished for a time at Hamburg, and mention of them occurs in the State Papers so late as the early years of George the Third; but English trade with the Hanse Towns had then been entirely unrestricted for three-quarters of a century.

In an interesting paper by Mr. Cuthbert Atchley on the ancient documents relating to All Saints' Church, Bristol, published in the *Archæological Journal* in 1901, is a transcript of a deed probably executed in 1286-7, during one of the mayoralties of Richard de Mangotsfield, two of the witnesses to which are "Symon Adrian and John Clerk, seneschals of the Merchants' Gild."

As three members of the Adrian family held the office of mayor between 1249 and 1302, and two Clerks were chief magistrates in 1243 and 1268 respectively, the instrument lends further confirmation to the remarks on the close connection between the Corporation and the Guild to be found in my first chapter.

It may be worth adding, in reference to my remarks (page 7) on the original meaning of the word "merchant," that some members of the Society of Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle continued to trade as shopkeepers until about the middle of the eighteenth century. (*Newcastle Records.*)

In conclusion, I have to express my grateful acknowledgments for the assistance I have received in the preparation of this volume from the late Treasurer and present Junior Warden, Mr. George Henry Pope, who devoted much time and labour in transcribing numerous old documents, and in revising and correcting many of the proofs; to the Treasurer, Mr. Percy L. King; to Mr. Francis F. Fox, F.S.A., who kindly perused my manuscript throughout, and supplied many useful hints; to the present Father of the Society, Mr. William Proctor Baker; to a third Past Master, Mr. William W. Ward, whose valuable contribution is incorporated in the volume; to the Clerk, Mr. Jere Osborne; and to the City Treasurer, Mr. J. T. Lane, for his courtesy in allowing me to consult the civic records. I have also to thank the staff of the Privy Council and of the Record Office for most obliging services whilst pursuing my researches.

The Merchant Venturers' Society of Bristol.

CHAPTER I.

THE GUILD MERCHANT, AND ITS DEVELOPMENTS.

BEFORE entering upon the history of the Bristol Society of Merchant Venturers, it seems desirable to describe, as far as the scanty materials permit, the institutions of a mercantile character that existed and gradually developed in this and other boroughs during the five centuries extending from the Conquest to the date of the Society's first charter. The earlier and darker part of this period, which is very inadequately treated by both national and local historians, has been recently much elucidated by a painstaking and deeply-read German professor, Dr. Charles Gross, who appears to have made researches in the archives of every important English town, and whose general conclusions, published in his work on *The Gild Merchant*, are based on so wide an embodiment of facts as to place him in the highest rank of trustworthy authorities.

Dr. Gross has been unable to find any trace of the existence of an English Guild Merchant in the Anglo-Saxon period of our history, or indeed of any body forming the nucleus of borough government, although

Merchant Guilds had then been undoubtedly established in some parts of Normandy and Northern France. The history of our own guilds, therefore, begins after the advent of the Conqueror, when, says Dr. Gross, the close unity between England and Normandy led to an increase in foreign commerce, and greatly stimulated internal trade and industry. With the expansion of trade, the mercantile element naturally became a more important factor in town life, and would soon feel the need of joint action to guard the nascent prosperity against encroachment. The earliest extant references to the Guild Merchant, he adds, occur in a charter granted by Robert Fitz Hamon [Lord of the Honour of Gloucester] to the burgesses of the little town of Burford (1087-1107), and in a document drawn up whilst Anselm was Archbishop of Canterbury (1093-1109). Soon afterwards, during the reign of Henry the First (1100-1135), the Guild appears in various municipal charters, and its propagation must have been greatly stimulated by the further extension of England's Continental possessions under Henry the Second.

Several of the early charters granted to Bristol have unfortunately perished. But that important privileges had been conceded to the borough by the Conqueror himself seems probable from an entry in *Domesday Book* relating to the town of Rhuddlan, which is stated to have been granted the laws and customs of Hereford and Bristol (*Dom. B.*, i. 269). The possession of all reasonable guilds was granted to Bristol by Robert, Earl of Gloucester, and William his son (1109-1173); and these charters, which have also disappeared, may have been only confirmations of previous concessions, for the early charters of London prove that successive kings conceded rights and privileges over and over again in precisely the

same terms, ignoring the identical boons of their predecessors. Thus the existing charter of liberties granted to Bristol by John (c. 1188) before his accession, whilst Lord of the Honour of Gloucester through his marriage with Earl William's daughter, was probably merely a confirmation of rights that the townsmen already enjoyed. And this assumption seems strengthened by the fact that John's father, Henry the Second, in 1171, granted to the men of Bristol the city of Dublin, to inhabit the same, and to enjoy there the liberties and free customs which they possessed in their own town and through the whole realm (a *facsimile* of this remarkable document has been produced by the Corporation of Dublin, and may be seen at the Museum and Library). To what extent Bristolians availed themselves of the royal gift is unknown; but in November, 1200, King John made a fresh grant of liberties to the burgesses of Dublin, permitting them, *inter alia*, to have all guilds, as well as, or better than, those enjoyed by the burgesses of Bristol (*Charter Rolls*). The privileges of Bristol were in fact so extensive, and so much coveted by other boroughs, that it became the custom for less favoured communities to appeal to the Crown for the like concessions, and Dr. Gross gives a list of thirty-one Guild towns, of which he states that Bristol may be styled the "mother." They include Redcliff, Hereford, Chester, Lancaster, Lichfield, Shrewsbury, Stratford, Bideford, Sodbury, and nearly all the chief towns in Ireland from Londonderry to Cork. None of these, however, obtained the full privileges enjoyed by Bristolians. In the reign of Richard the First the import of foreign wines was exclusively confined to London and Bristol (*Madox's Exchequer*), and the western port seems to have had the largest share of the trade, for the Patent and Close Rolls of King John and his son, Henry the Third, contain a

multitude of mandates of wine for the Royal household and Court favourites. One of these writs, dated August 21st, 1216, when John was at Bristol, is addressed to Roger Cordwaner, Mayor of the town, a fact which has been overlooked by all the historians of the city, their lists of chief magistrates beginning after the King's death.

The existence of the Guild Merchant being established, the functions of that body may next be examined. The essence of the institution, says Dr. Gross, was "clearly a concession of the exclusive right of trading within the borough. The Gild was the department of town administration whose duty was to maintain and regulate the trade monopoly." In some towns the right of pre-emption was reserved to the members. One of the Southampton ordinances, quoted by Dr. Gross, runs as follows:—"No simple inhabitant or stranger shall bargain for nor buy any kind of merchandise coming to the town . . . so long as a gildsman is present and wishes to bargain for or buy it; and if any one does it, and is found guilty, that which he buys shall be forfeited to the King." The regulations in Bristol were at one period less stringent. In the Close Rolls of 2nd Henry the Third (1217), overlooked by Dr. Gross, is a royal mandate to the bailiffs of Bristol, ordering them to distrain on those who did not wish to be of the Guild Merchant according to the custom of the town, for the payment of an aid towards acquitting the tallage fixed by the King's writ. It will afterwards be seen, however, that the Bristol merchants subsequently claimed a monopoly of trade. At an early period the Guild had become an official civic body, and a constituent part of the municipal government. In 1235, Robert the Goldsmith granted a rent-charge upon two stone houses opposite to St. Nicholas's Church for the chaplain celebrating mass there—the chaplain to be chosen by the

Mayor and the Steward of the Merchants' Guild. The Seneschal of the Guild is also mentioned in another deed of 1240. In an inquisition of the liberties of the Bristol Guild Merchant taken in the 13th Edward the First (1285), one of the findings is that although it was granted to the good men of Bristol that no foreign merchant should stay there with his wares for sale beyond forty days, and no stranger sell to another stranger, yet that merchants did come in from distant places, contrary to the charter, to the damage of the town, and no small burden on the burgesses. At first, the Guild and the civic body proper are likely to have kept distinct purses—at the Guildhall and the Compter or Tolsil, but their funds appear to have been amalgamated before 1314, for in a manuscript copy of the Customs of the town of Bristol, in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, the burgesses inform Edward the Second that "out of the profits of the Gild of Merchants and of the town they support eight bridges, the pavement or pitching, five conduits of water, the Quay, and the public officers." (Barrett, vii.) This amalgamation became general in all parts of the country. Dr. Gross observes:—"When trade and industry underwent a great expansion during the period of the three Edwards, the mercantile interests must have become completely dominant in many towns, the burgher merging in the townsman, and gildship becoming an appurtenance of burgess-ship. . . . The same men swayed the counsels of the borough and gild. As the mercantile element attained greater preponderance the natural tendency would be to regard the gild officers as superfluous, and to consolidate the headship of the gild and that of the borough." That this was the result in Bristol may be assumed from the fact that, excepting on one occasion, there is no subsequent mention of an

independent Merchants' Guild. The case of the town of Gloucester is still more striking, for there the Guild actually became the Corporation. The first common seal of that borough, an impression of which is appended to a document executed between 1237 and 1245, bears the inscription in Latin:—"Seal of the Burgesses of the Merchants' Gild of Gloucester." The second civic seal, dating about 150 years later, bears the same inscription; and the third, which was cut in 1564, and continued in use until 1661, is inscribed in Latin as the "Seal of the Mayor and Burgesses of the Merchants' Gild of the City of Gloucester." (*Trans. Bristol and Glos. Arch. Soc.*, xiii. 387.) These seals are believed to be unique, but there are abundant indications in local histories that, although the fact was not so boldly proclaimed, the Guild became omnipotent in many corporations.

The exceptional reference to the Guild Merchant in the civic records of a later date, alluded to above, occurs in the year 1372, and is found in the *Great Red Book*, fo. 34. Edward the Third having claimed that the local Collector, William de Somerwell (Mayor, 1388), should account to the Crown for the fines of bakers, fines for enjoying the freedom of the town, and various other moneys levied in Bristol, the Mayor and Bailiffs put in an answer, in which they assert that "the town is an ancient borough, and a mayor, bailiffs, and a community have existed beyond the memory of man; in which borough the said mayor, bailiffs, and community, and their antecessors have had a free Gild Merchant, and all things that pertain to a Gild Merchant, namely, to buy and sell in the said town free and exempt from customs and toll, and to have various other privileges such as pertain to the Gild Merchant. By virtue of the said Gild and freedom the said Mayor and Sheriff, and

their predecessors, have been accustomed all this time to levy, for their own use, a certain payment from all who were admitted to the freedom and society of the Gild, for having the freedom of the said Gild, according to what could be reasonably agreed upon between them." They then recite the charter of John, and that of the 40th year of Henry the Third (1256), the latter conceding to Bristol all the liberties and free customs enjoyed by the citizens of London, which privileges Edward the Third had himself ratified and confirmed to Bristol by his charter of 1331. This answer appears to have put an end to the royal demands.

The fact that the royal claim included the fees paid by bakers on admission to the freedom shows that the Guild had a much wider basis than its name implies. In dealing with this subject, Dr. Gross asserts that craftsmen were freely admitted to the Merchants' Guilds from the twelfth century downwards, and adds: "The term merchant, as is well known, was not in those days confined to large dealers, but embraced all who traded. . . . Every master craftsman was regarded as a merchant, for he bought his raw material, and sold the products of his handiwork in his shop, or at his stall. . . . Craftsmen were not only admitted to the Guild Merchant, but also, in all probability, constituted the majority of its members." (It may be observed that north of the Tweed, a century ago, all retail tradesmen were styled merchants, and that the custom still lingers in many small Scottish towns, while in Paris to-day the occupiers of the lowest class of liquor shops continue to call themselves wine merchants.) Bishop Stubbs, in his *Constitutional History* (i. 474), practically comes to the same conclusion as Dr. Gross, observing:—"The right of the Merchant Guild to exclude from the

privileges of trading all who were not members of its own body seems to imply necessarily, either that the craft guilds originally stood in a filial relation to it, or that the membership of the narrower involved also the membership of the wider society." The wealthier class, however, gradually succeeded in securing an ascendancy in the municipal government, as well here as in other towns. In 1312 an attempt of fourteen influential Bristolians to withdraw the management of civic affairs from the hands of the burgesses at large led to what has been called the Great Insurrection, which lasted for upwards of three years, during which the townsmen set the royal power at defiance, fortified themselves against attacks from the Castle, and collected and spent the Customs of the port. Though the struggle apparently ended in a drawn battle, it is clear that the Corporation became more "select" and less responsible than had been the rule in previous reigns; and with irresponsibility came, here as elsewhere, abuses of power. But in later troubles there is no mention of the Guild Merchant, and rarely of the crafts, which began to be incorporated as separate confederacies, and were granted considerable powers for the regulation of their respective trades and the expulsion of "foreigners"—meaning non-burgesses—under masters and wardens chosen amongst themselves, though strictly subservient to the Mayor and Common Council. "With the rapid development and specialisation of industry, particularly under Edward the Third, guilds of craftsmen multiplied and grew in power. Many master craftsmen became wealthy employers of labour. . . . The class of dealers or merchants, as distinguished from trading artificers, also greatly increased, forming themselves into separate fraternities or mysteries. When these

various unions of dealers and of craftsmen embraced all the trades and branches of production in the town, little vitality remained in the old Gild Merchant" (Gross, i. 117). A further development of the period was the rise of the "freeman." Citizenship, originally based on burgage tenure, was gradually transformed into a personal privilege, being obtained by birth, apprenticeship, or marriage, and occasionally by purchase or gift; freemen thus becoming the successors of the ancient Guild fraternity.

The great importance of the clothing trade of Bristol in the 14th century seems to necessitate a slight digression from the main object of this chapter. It is generally assumed that this industry was of comparative unimportance in a domestic point of view until the reign of Edward the Second; and Dr. Gross, who refers to it only incidentally, adopts the assertions to that effect to be found in many histories. There is evidence, however, that the weaving trade was not wholly insignificant more than a century earlier. Madox offers proof that in or about 1140 the weavers' guilds of London, Oxford, Lincoln, and Winchester applied to the Crown for confirmations of their privileges. Foreign craftsmen from Northern France and Flanders also found their way into the West of England, and set up their looms, and foreign names, such as Walter le Fraunceis (Mayor, 1232) and William de Bellomonte (Bailiff, 1242), began to appear in the list of Bristol officials. Weavers and dyers are mentioned in the Cirencester records early in the reign of Henry the Third, and by about 1250 the clothing industry had become so extensive there in the hands of two foreigners named Beaupyne, and others, that a street originally called Cheaping Street had received the name of Dyers' Street. At the same date,

as is shown by a deed in the Museum and Library, a street on the Redcliff side of the Avon had become Tuckers' (or Fullers') Street, and a part of High Street was called The Drapery.

In the rules drawn up in 1292 for the household of the Archbishop of Canterbury was one fixing the seasons for buying "the great purchases" of the establishment, in which it is stated that "robes" were to be bought at Bristol at St. James's tide—that is, at the fair already famous throughout the kingdom as a cloth mart. The activity of the trade at this period is therefore clearly established; but it was probably seriously affected during the later wars of Edward the First. Its revival and greatly increased vigour under his successors brings us to the appearance of another importation into Bristol, the family of Blanket, whose name first occurs in 1318. The local historians (the cautious Seyer excepted) concur in asserting that these new-comers were the first to produce the well-known bed material, and that it received their name on that account. But though this myth is commonly accepted in the city, the truth of the matter is that these weavers, like some other workmen, obtained their surname from their production. White cloth is called blankete, blanquet, and blanchette by very old French writers, and one of the biographers of Thomas Becket alleges, on ocular authority, that the dress of the Archbishop was a "curtil of whit blankit," 150 years before the Blankets were heard of in Bristol.

Soon after the arrival of the Blankets, who afterwards became leading citizens, the Cirencester Beaupynes removed here and grew wealthy; and it may be fairly assumed that when Edward the Third repeatedly invited Flemish weavers to England (*Fœdara*, iv., 496, 723, 751), and when Parliament forbade the import of foreign cloth

and permitted clothworkers from the Continent to settle in this country where they chose (1337), many artisans found their way to Gloucestershire. Notwithstanding the obvious advantages opened to commerce by this policy, the intense repugnance to foreign interlopers common to all English boroughs continued to animate the civic rulers in Bristol. Soon after Thomas Blanket and other weavers had set up more extensive machinery in their houses to meet the increased demand for home-made cloth, the Corporation imposed a tax upon the plant, and "troubled and aggrieved" the owners and their workmen "in various ways." The oppressed men thereupon appealed to the Crown for relief, and the King, in November, 1339, sent down a peremptory order that the weavers should be no longer harassed or molested (*Rolls of Parliament*, ii. 449). That it was effectual seems proved by the fact that Thomas Blanket was elected one of the Bailiffs in the following year. The development of the trade soon became rapid, and before the end of the reign English merchants were competing with foreigners for a share in the continental markets. Chaucer, who witnessed the progress, writes in his *Prologue* that English shippers

Knew wel alle the havenes as they were
From Gootland to the Cape of Fynystere,
And every cryke in Bretayne and at Spayne.

And amongst these merchants none were more active and adventurous than those of Bristol in Southern France and the Peninsula.

The mercantile class became further differentiated from the crafts by the establishment—chiefly for facilitating the collection of the King's Customs—of the Merchant Staplers. Down to the reign of Edward the First, when the chief English export was wool, the

trade in which was chiefly in the hands of German Hanse merchants, the staple town to which the goods were sent for sale was generally Bruges, Calais, or Antwerp, and the staplers had the monopoly of exportation. In the 7th Edward the Second, however, a document in the Record Office shows that a "Mayor of the Merchants," commonly styled the Mayor of the Staple, had been established at London, Bristol, Newcastle, Hull, Southampton, and seven other ports, where the merchants, natives and foreigners, were allowed the exclusive privilege of exporting wool to the Continent, and the officers of Customs were ordered to assist the mayors in the execution of the powers confided to them. By a statute of 1328 it was enacted that the staples beyond the seas and at home, ordained by kings in times past, should cease, and that merchants, foreigners or natives, might freely go or come with their wares in England. Nevertheless, in 1353 staples were again established in Bristol and ten other English towns, which were further favoured by an Act of Parliament abolishing the staple at Calais. In the reign of Richard the Second the most prominent English staples were those of London, Bristol, Exeter, and Boston. Several of the others had disappeared in the reign of Henry the Sixth. It is remarkable that the corporate archives of this city contain very little information respecting this privileged institution. The most important entry in connection with it is in the *Little Red Book* (fo. 72 b), from which we learn that John Milton, Mayor of the Staple [and also Mayor of the town], whose election had been approved in 1435 by the King after having been chosen by the native and foreign merchants of the port, had died in office in the following February, whereupon the Constables of the Staple, Thomas Fische and

William Canynges, who had also been approved by the King, had convoked the merchants, who had elected Nicholas Devenyssche as Mayor for the remainder of the yearly term, and the Crown was prayed to confirm the appointment. It is evident from the tenor of this document, and from a statute of 27th Edward the Third, that the mayors and constables of the Staples were functionaries of the King, originally distinct from the municipal authorities, the Act emphatically ordaining that foreign merchants should be protected and justice done to them according to the Law Merchant exclusively, and not according to the common law of the realm, or before burghal tribunals. (A transcript of this *Lex Mercatoria*, written in a fourteenth century hand and believed to be unique, is one of the most valuable and interesting manuscripts in the *Little Red Book*; fo. 22, &c.) The staple ensured the quality of the goods exported by providing machinery for examining, weighing, and marking them, and stimulated commerce by protecting alien merchants. In course of time it became customary for the mayors of Bristol to act *ex officio* as mayors of the Staple, and the Seal of the Staple Court affixed to its decisions is still preserved at the Council House, where the weights used by the officials were also formerly kept.

The increase of home manufactures probably sapped the foundation of the Staple system, and the foreign element in its organisation gradually died out. In 1407 a charter was granted by Henry the Fourth, incorporating a Company of Merchant Adventurers, who carried on trade chiefly with Germany and the Netherlands, and were granted a monopoly in the exportation of certain manufactured articles. This was a strictly private company, and was not, like the Staplers, an organ of the

Government; and all its members were required to be subjects of the Crown. Dr. Gross states that the soul of this company, and perhaps its original nucleus, was the Mercers' Company of London, the members of which had developed from general retail dealers into wholesale traders, and that the minutes of both companies were kept in the same book down to 1526. The Adventurers' Company had, however, amongst its members in 1601, according to a description of it written by its secretary, John Wheeler, "a great number of wealthy and well-experimented merchants dwelling in divers great cities and other parts of the realm, to wit, London, York, Norwich, Exeter, Ipswich, Newcastle, and Hull," and it had the special privilege of trading to and from the "mart towns" between the river Somme, in France, and the Scawe in Denmark; the wares of non-members intermeddling in the region reserved to the Company being liable to seizure and mulcted in heavy penalties. Dr. Gross has discovered that some members of this company were resident in Bristol, Salisbury, and Devizes, but our local chronicles and archives contain no reference to the subject. As a matter of fact, although the second William Canynges carried on a large business with Denmark in the fifteenth century, and, in consideration of the debt due to him by its King, enjoyed for some years a monopoly of trade with Iceland and Finmark, the merchants of Bristol had found a more lucrative field of commerce in other directions. Hamburgh, which appears to have been the chief centre of the Adventurers' transactions, is upwards of a thousand miles from the Avon, and Bristol ships were handicapped by the distance to the advantage of the eastern ports. On the other hand, the chief marts of central and southern France were within easy reach, and the biography of a great

local benefactor, Robert Thorne, affords evidence that Bristolians had opened a large and highly profitable trade with Spain and Portugal in the fifteenth century, and probably earlier, cargoes of cloth, leather, and especially fish from the northern seas, being readily exchanged for the wines and fruit of the Peninsula. The obscure story of the Merchant Adventurers of England, as they were ultimately styled, has been elucidated after much research by another indefatigable German scholar, W. E. Lingelbach; but his essay makes no reference to the commerce of Bristol and the West of England.

It would appear that the local Staple had become of little importance in Bristol about the middle of the fifteenth century,* and that a necessity had arisen for additional regulations. In 1459 the Common Council revived certain Ordinances which were alleged "to have been in force beyond memory, but which of late years

* Like some other English institutions, however, it maintained a lingering existence, long after its chief functions had become obsolete, by dint of availing itself of a subordinate privilege. It became, in fact, an institution for the recovery of small debts and for settling actions for trespass, &c.; and in order to avail themselves of its machinery a certain number of persons, resident not merely in Bristol, but in distant parts of the kingdom, applied yearly for admission as "burgesses of the Staple." This appears from an old book in the Council House, bearing the following title (in Latin):—"Pleas in the Court of the Staple in the time of John Caple, Mayor, Nicholas Brown and Roger Dawes, Constables, in the first year of Henry VIII." (The confirmation by the Crown of the officers of the Court appears to have been continued throughout that reign.) Three courts were nominally held every week, but the average number of actions did not exceed four or five per month. Twenty-three "burgesses" were admitted during the year, some of them living at Bath, Devizes, Shepton Mallet, and various places in Somerset. The Bristol applicants were of all trades. In the following year the Abbot of Keynsham, who must have been a "burgess," entered an action against a Bristol brewer, on a debt of 53s. A London grocer, also a burgess, was defendant in another case. The celebrated merchant, Robert Thorne, was sued by four or five persons for small sums. Amongst the forty persons admitted as burgesses were an Oxford scholar and two London traders. In 1583 the Corporation ordained that no strangers should thenceforth be admitted. From another book in the Council House it appears that the Staple Court was afterwards practically amalgamated with the Mayor's Court. It bears the title, in Latin: "Book of the Regulations and Orders made and ordained for the Court of the Mayor and Aldermen, likewise for the Court of the Mayor and Constables of the Staple of Bristol," and extends from Michaelmas, 1649, to the same feast in 1654. Several hundred actions were raised within that period, but only one case is marked "Staple Court," and no admissions are recorded. The Mayor's Court was eventually absorbed by the Tolzey Court. The last known mention of the Staple is in a document dated 29th September, 1688, signed by (Sir) Thomas Day, Mayor, certifying that John Cary, whose name will recur later on, was that day admitted into the Liberties of the Staple of Bristol. (Addl. MSS. 5540; Brit. Museum.)

. . . have been negligently omitted." They enacted that when non-burgesses brought cargoes into the port, the goods were to be forthwith removed for sale to "a place upon the Back called Spycer's Hall, wherein sometime dwelled a full notable worshipful merchant called Robert Sturmy, whom God late hath taken in his mercy," for the maintenance of which hall the sellers were to pay a small fee [such as one penny for every whole cloth]. No burgess was on any pretext to suffer foreigners' goods to be shown, sold or lodged in his house, under a penalty of 40s. It seems to have been felt, however, that a more comprehensive scheme was required for the reorganisation of the mercantile interests in the borough. Availing itself of the powers conferred on the Common Council by the great charter of 1373, to frame Ordinances for remedying defects that might arise in the regulations and customs of the town, the Corporation, in 1467, drew up the following important Ordinance, which, like the Ordinance just summarised, was entered in the *Great Red Book* at the Council House. The document may be left to speak for itself.

There followen the Actys and Ordinaunce made by William Canninge Mayor of Bristowe, John Gaywood, Shereff of the same, John Shipward the elder, William Coder, Phillipp Mede, John Wickham, William Spenser, and all the Common Counsaile of Bristowe, for good, sadde, and profittable Rewle, of and uppon fower certeyne marchandize used in Bristowe, that is to saie, meat oyle, woll oyle, yren and waxe.

Anno Dni 1467 And in the seaventh yeere of the Raigne of Kinge Edward the fourth.

Fitste, that everie yere within xx daies after Michelmasse, the Mayor and Shereffe for the tyme beinge shall do sompne the grete Counsaile, and by theire advyce and assente cheese a worschupfull man of the saide Counsaile that hath ben Maior or Shereffe of this Towne to bee maister of the felaweschipp of merchaunts within the

saide Towne for the yere folowynge And to cheese alsoe other twoe merchants at large for wardeynes of the said yeere And alsoe ij Byddles which shall occupie as Byddilles and Brookers for the said yere, and to be attendaunt upon the said maister and wardeines atte such tyme as they ben called by them or anie of them And the saide Maister Wardeynes and Byddles to take thaire charge of the Maior for the time beinge.

Item the saide maister and ffellowshipp shall have and occupie atte thaire wille the Chappell and the Draughte Chameber apperteyninge thereto in the Hows callyd Spyceris Halle upon the Back of Bristowe There they to have theire Commynicacon of such matters necessarie and appteynynge to the premisses The saide maister and wardeyns paienge yeerely for the saide Halle twentie shillings.

Item that all merchaunts of Bristowe schall be redie to come and appeare before the saide maister and felaweschipp att suche tymes reasonable as they ben warned to the common plaace to them assigned and ordeyned for the good expedicon of the saide Rewle and Ordenaunce of and upon the saide fower marchandices or eny of them upon paieng of leezinge of j lib. wax to the M^r and felaweschipp atte evy defaulte that they ben callyd if that they bee in towne.

Item such Rewle and Ordenaunce as schalbe ordeigned and establyshed by the saide Maister and felaweschipp in the price of syllinge by the Burgeys to any Estraunger of eny of the seid iiij marchaundizes That hit bee kept and observed by everie merchaunte Burgeis And in noe wise to bee brooke upon the payne of xxs. for everie defaulte without mytigacon, halfe to the use of the felaweschipp and halfe to the use of the Chameber.

Item that noe merchaunte Burgeys of this Towne sille none of the saide marchaundizes to enny Estraunger withynne the price sette by the maister and wardeynes and by the advyce of the felaweschipp for the tyme beinge upon the paine aforesaide for everie defaulte.

Item yf enny merchaunte Burgeys be in eany distresse whereby hee must sylle for his necessitie eany of the saide iiij marchaundizes That then the saide marchaunt Burgeys come to the saide Wardeyns or Byddills or to oone of thayme declareing his distresse And thaune if the saide Wardeynes or Byddills or oone of thayme kan not provide a remedie for his necessitie withynne iij daies next

after his warninge That then yt shalbe leefull to the saide merchaunt Burgeis to sylle eny of his suche merchaundizes atte that tyme atte his pleasure without lett or disturbaunce of the saide Wardeins Bydills or eany other.

It will be seen that under the pretext of regulating the price, to strangers, of four articles of merchandise, the Corporation took into their own hands the election of a Master and Wardens of a Fellowship of Merchants, reserving the principal office exclusively to those who had served as Mayor or Sheriff of the town; and granted the Fellowship the use of the chapel and principal chamber in Spicer's Hall for their customary meetings. The Fellowship did not comprise all the merchants in the town, but it was ordained that non-members, when duly summoned, should attend at the Hall, on pain of forfeiting a pound of wax in default, and they were forbidden to sell the four wares specified in the Ordinance below the prices fixed by the Fellowship, under a penalty of 20s. for every infraction of the order.

As all the leading merchants were apparently members of the Corporation, the Ordinance enacted by the Common Council was doubtless instigated by those whom it chiefly concerned, who thus secured the obedience of the mercantile community generally. The records afford no information as to the manner in which admission was gained into the Fellowship. But it undoubtedly flourished, and a deed preserved in Merchants' Hall seems to show that the chapel in Spicer's Hall was soon deemed inadequate for its requirements. From the following copy of this document, which from its contractions is hardly intelligible to ordinary readers, it will be seen that the Corporation, on March 14, 1493, desirous of augmenting divine worship, and of especially honouring the most blessed Pope Clement, the guide and

patron of navigation, granted to John Dreux (Mayor, 1496) and twelve other merchants, and to John Walshe and twelve other mariners,* and their heirs and assigns, a piece of land in the Marsh, adjoining a tower on the Town Wall [site of City Library], 203 feet in length and 60 feet in breadth, together with part of a contiguous fosse commonly called the Lawe Ditch, to be held of the capital lords of the fee under the usual services. Rendering therefor twelve pence sterling yearly to the grantors, payable at Midsummer and Christmas. With the intention and effect that the said John Walshe and his brother mariners should thereon build and keep in repair, at their own expense, a chapel in honour of the blessed St. Clement. Provision is made that if the rent falls a month in arrear the grantors shall have power to distrain, and that if the default extends to a year, or if the Lawe Ditch be not kept in repair, the civic Chamberlain shall re-enter and recover possession. The estate is then warranted to all the grantees, and Thomas Hardyng, Town Clerk, is appointed to give them possession of it.

Antuerstis et singulis Xpi fidelibz ad quos pens scriptum indentatu puenit Johes Hawkes Maior Ville Bristoll ac tota Coitas eiusdem Ville saltm in dno sempiterna. Sciatis nos cupientes divini cultus augmentu ob singularem devocoem qua erga beatissimu Clementem papam cunctor nauiganciu tam in psperis qm in aduersis tutorem et patronu spialem gerimus et hemus dedisse concessisse et hoc psenti scripto nro indentato confirmasse Johi Dreux Johi Esterfeld Johi Stevyns Henrico Dale Pho Kyngston Rico Vaughan Johi Popley Rogero Dawes Johi Walshe Georgio Monoux Willmo de la Fount Johi Vaughan Johi Penke Jun mcatoribz Johi Walshe Henrico Moyle Rico Parker Thome Sutton Waltero Cooke Thome Harrys Edwardo Gibbes Johi Graunte Thome Reve Thome Griffith

* A guild or fraternity of Bristol mariners was founded in 1445-6, for the purpose of erecting a chapel apparently dedicated to St. Clement and St. George, and of maintaining a priest and twelve poor seamen, the latter to receive a small dole weekly, contributed by the members. This appears to have been the origin of the existing almshouse: See Barrett's *History of Bristol*, p. 180.

Henrico Hert Rico Bray et Phō Wymbler marinariis Unā pcellam terre jacentem in Marisco Bristoll vulgariter nuncupato Aven Mersshe in pochia sti Stephi in Warda Omn Stōr Ville pdte continentem in longitudie a via qua itur a vico vocato MerSSH Strete eiusdm Ville in Mariscum pdtm ex parte una Orientalit vsus quendam Turrim nr̄m pdtor Maioris et Coitatis edificatum in muro nro vocato le Towne Wall ibm Gardino qz nup Rici Erle armigi contigue annexu Ducentos et Tres pedes assise et in latitudie a dto muro vsus Mariscum supra dtm sexaginta pedes assise p totam longitudiem pdtam una cu quodam fossato ibm vulgarit nuncupato le Law Dyche extendente a via pdta Orientalit p totam longitudiem terre supius donate infra bundas pdtas Hend et tenend supra dtam pcellam terre una cu fossato pdto pfatis Johi Dreux (and the remaining 25 feoffees) hered et assign eor imppm de capitalibz dn̄is feod ill p svic inde debit et de iure consuet Reddend inde annuatim nobis pfatis Maiori et Coitati et succ nr̄is duodecim denar sterlingor ad duos anni termios videlit ad festa Nativitatis Sti Johis Bapte et Nat̄is dni equis porcioibz Ad intencoem et effcm qd pdti Johes Walsshe marinarius Henricus Moyle Ricus Parker Thomas Sutton Walterus Cooke Thomas Harrys Edwardus Gibbes Johes Graunte Thomas Reve Thomas Griffith Henricus Hert Ricus Bray et Phus Wymbler hered et assign sui quendam capellam in honore bti Clementis pape sup dtam pcellam terre supius eis concessam de novo edificari ac eandm capellam sic de novo constructam fossatum qz pdtm sufficient quotiens et quando necesse fuit reparari emendari renovari escurari et mundari faciant suis ppriis sumptibz et expens Et si contingat pdtm redditu aretro fore insolut in parte vel in toto p unu mensem post aliquod festu festor solucois inde pfix quo ut pfertur solui debeat extunc bene licebit nobis pfatis Maiori et Coitati et succ nr̄is in pdtam pcellam terre intrare et dstringere districcoes qz sic ibm capt licite asportare abduce fugar et penes nos retinere quousqz de reddit pdto et omnibz inde arreragiis si que fuint nobis plenar fuit satisfact et psolut Et si pdtus reddit aretro fuit in parte vel in toto p unu annu ultra aliquod festu solucois inde plimitat non solut et petatur vel si pdtm fossatu ruine minetur seu alio defect patiatu et infra quarteriu unius anni px sequen post monicoem inde p Camariu dte Ville Bristoll p tempore existen pfatis Johi Walsshe marinaro (and the 12 other sailors who, with him, were to rebuild the chapel) hered vel assign suis aut eor alicui ftam non reparet emendet et sufficient escuret qd extunc bene licebit nobis dtis Maiori et Coitati et succ nr̄is in dtam pcellam terre supius concessam reintrare et ill ut in pristino statu nro rehere retinere et repossidere dtos qz Johem Dreux (and

the remaining 25 feoffees) hered et assign suos inde totalit expeller et ammover p̄sentibz donacoē concessioē et confirmacoē inde non obstant Et nos vero p̄noīati Maior et Coītas et succ nri totam sup̄dtam p̄cella terr una cū fossato p̄d̄to p̄noīatis Johi Dreux (and the remaining 25 feoffees) hered et assign eor imppm ad intencoem sup̄dtam ac sub modo et forma p̄dtis contra oes gentes warantizabimus et defendemus p̄ p̄sentes Et ulterius sciatis nos p̄fatos Maiorem et Coītatem fecisse et p̄ p̄sentes constituisse dilecū Consiliariū nrm Thoma Hardyng Coem Clicum Ville p̄d̄te attorn nrm ad intrand et possessionē capiend p̄ nobis et noībz nris de et in p̄d̄ta p̄cella terr cū suis p̄tin p̄dtis Ac post possessionē sic inde capt et hit et plenariā seiam inde p̄fatis Johi Dreux (and the remaining 25 feoffees) aut attorn suis deliband scdm vim forma et effc̄m huius p̄sentis scripti nri indentati Rāt et grat hent et hitur totu ac quicquid dtus attorn nōst noīe nro fecit in p̄missis. In cuius rei testimoniu uni parti huius p̄sentis scripti nri indentati penes p̄fatos Johem Dreux (and the remaining 25 feoffees) remanen nos p̄fati Maior et Coītas sigillū nrm coē apposuimus Altī vero parti eiusdm scripti indentati penes nos p̄fatos Maiorem et Coītatem residen d̄ti Johes Dreux (and the remaining 25 feoffees) sigilla sua apposuerunt D̄to Johē Hawkes tunc Maiore Ville p̄d̄te Johē Dreux tunc Vic Johē Popley et Rogo Dawes tunc Balliuis eiusdm Ville Hijs testibz Willmō Spenser Roberto Straunge Thoma Spycer Waltero Grymsted Johē Jay et aliis Dāt quartodecimo die Mensis Martii anno regni regis Henrici septimi post conqm Anglie octavo.

It is scarcely necessary to state that the above plot of ground is now the site of Merchants' Hall and of the adjoining Almshouse of the Society, and it may be as well to continue its subsequent history in this place. When the chantry chapels were seized by the Crown in the reign of Edward the Sixth, it was apparently believed that the terms of the corporate conveyance would enable the grantors to resist spoliation by exerting their right of re-entry. No doubt by a concerted arrangement, the reserved quit-rent fell in arrear, and the City Chamberlain gravely appended to his accounts:—

I ask allowance for one year's rent which was wont to be paid by the proctors of St. Clement's Chapel xii*d*.

And doubtless an attempt was made to recover possession. The unscrupulous Government, however, brushed aside obstacles of this kind. By the letter of the law under which they were proceeding, the chapel ought to have been exempt from seizure, for the Act dissolving the chantries expressly provided that its powers were not to be prejudicial to the corporation of any borough or to the estates belonging to it. Nevertheless, on the 5th December, 1550, the chapel and land, and some other fragments of church property, were granted by letters patent to Sir Ralph Sadleir, one of the most voracious courtiers of the age, and to a man named Winnington. It seems probable that the Corporation soon came to an agreement with the grantees, for the following payments occur in the civic accounts for September, 1551:—

Paid 2 labourers 2 days a piece to take down the altar in the Chapel of the Marsh	iis. viii <i>d.</i>
Paid for hauling 16 draughts of rubble from there ...	xvi <i>d.</i>
Paid a carpenter for mending the forms and table there, and for a key for the chapel door... ..	xviii <i>d.</i>

Two years later, by a deed dated 10th October, 1553, Sadleir and Winnington, in consideration of £10, granted the chapel and land, together with a house in Fisher Lane formerly belonging to Tintern Abbey, and some land on St. Michael's Hill once possessed by the White Friars, to Edward Prynne, then acting as first Master of the Merchant Venturers' Society. On October 10th, 1561, Erasmus, heir of Edward Prynne, in consideration of £30, granted the estate, excepting the land at St. Michael's Hill, to Thomas Aldworth and Thomas Symonds. As the deed of conveyance, after describing the chapel, recites that the almshouse "called St. Clement's Almshouse" had then been built, the property had clearly been in the Society's possession for some time.

Finally, a few weeks afterwards, November 20th, 1561, Aldworth and Symonds conveyed the property to William Popwell and several others, trustees of the Merchants' Society, declaring it to be held "to the use of the poor and indigent persons inhabiting the said almshouse." The quit-rent was paid yearly to the Corporation until 1900, when it was redeemed.

Returning to the measures taken from time to time by the Corporation for the regulation of trade, it may be briefly stated that in 1477 on the "piteous complaining" of the merchant adventurers, dyers, and sellers of the town, who alleged that through the unnumberable great hurts arising from the entertaining of foreigners and the sinister colouring of their goods, the most chief, noblest, and ponderous merchandise of woad from Bordeaux and Bayonne,* which of old time sustained the prosperous felicity of the town, had gone to decay, the Common Council passed an ordinance rigorously forbidding dyers from buying or using any woad except that imported by burgesses. In 1481, again, it was ordained that no burgess should give more than £2 13s. 4d. per ton for iron brought to the port by strangers, and fines were set for exceeding that price. It seems to have been felt, however, that another re-organisation was needful, and the Fellowship of Merchants established in 1467 had existed only thirty-three years when its founders, in November, 1500, alleging their power to make new

* The local woad trade with Southern France is stated by the editors of the *Bayonne Archives* (a copy of which is in the Museum and Library) to have begun in the fourteenth century, and to have been conducted in a somewhat peculiar manner. The Bayonne registers show that contracts for sales were made with English agents living in that town, acting for the Bristol merchants, but that the definitive price was to be fixed, on the arrival of the cargoes here, by sworn experts, whose valuations were to be solemnly certified to the Mayors of Bayonne or Bordeaux by the Mayor of Bristol. Abundant corroboration of this statement is to be found in the *Great Red Book* at the Council House, which contains copies of several of those certificates. The cargoes varied from 14 up to 65 pipes. In 1499 the Mayor and Sheriff of Bristol sent a certificate to the authorities at Bayonne, accrediting its bearer, Thomas Badcock, a Bristol merchant about to engage in commerce with Spain, and requesting that he might have liberty to move about without molestation, as would be permitted here to any merchant of Bayonne.

ordinances granted by Henry the Seventh's charter of 1499, resolved on a total reconstruction, and drew up the following portentous document, which must have been the product of prolonged deliberations. Attention may be directed to a few of its leading features. A practice, it is alleged, had grown up by which certain burgesses "coloured" the wares of strangers and foreigners—that is, took possession of them and sold them, pretending to be the owners, but really acting as secret agents of those to whom they belonged. For the suppression of this crafty practice, tending to the "utter undoing" of the local merchants, and to the "great hurt of the commonweal," the Council ordain that a Company or Fellowship of Merchants, separate and distinct from all the craft companies, shall be established in Bristol for evermore, John Penke being appointed first Master, and David Leyson and John Stokes first Wardens, who are to hold office "under Master Mayor" until the following Michaelmas. These officers and their successors, who are to be chosen yearly by the Company, are to assemble twice a week in the Council House, with power to summon as many of the Fellowship as they see fit for the transaction of business and the settlement of disputes, the members being forbidden to resort to any temporal or spiritual court in respect of controversies between themselves. No man, except the Company's two beadles, shall act as a broker of merchandise in Bristol, on pain of forfeiting 40s. for each transaction. No member of the Fellowship shall receive the goods of any non-member, with the intent of exporting them to the profit of such non-member, neither shall he import non-members' goods into Bristol, on pain in either case of forfeiting one-sixth of the value of the wares on a first offence, and one-third the value on a second. No burgess of Bristol shall freight or lade

any ship either at home or abroad, Ireland and Iceland excepted, unless he have the license of the Company; offenders to be fined £20, without any forgiveness; but an exception is made in favour of small parcels of foreign goods, the owners of which are unable to freight independently. If a non-member presume to freight a ship no member shall put goods on board, on pain of a fine of 20s. for each ton. After some less interesting clauses, we arrive at what may be considered as the backbone of the document. It is enacted that when any ship laden with foreign merchandise, the property of a non-burgess or foreigner, shall arrive at the Quay, the Fellowship shall assemble and determine what shall be done on behalf of the entire body—in plain words, shall combine in fixing the prices to be offered. It is further provided that no other burgess of the town shall presume to purchase, handle, or take charge of such goods without the previous assent of the Company, on pain of forfeiting one-sixth of the value of all the wares that he may buy! Another striking decree follows soon afterwards, forbidding every burgess in the city from purchasing foreign goods except in Spicer's Hall, the place fixed for depositing them; and no one is permitted to sell or to offer his own foreign goods to a non-member of the Company except in his own freehold or leasehold house or cellars, the penalty for an infraction of these orders being again one-sixth of the value of the wares (a moiety of this fine was to be paid to the Corporation). Any one appealing to the Mayor to remit these impositions, or any part of them, was to be fined 6s. 8*d.* For the general support of the Company they were granted the power of levying a duty of a half-penny per ton on salt and of one penny per ton on all other goods brought by ships. The ordinances conclude with a Latin formula requiring them to be inviolably

observed, but reserving to the Common Council the right of revoking, amending, or augmenting them when any such acts might seem conducive to the honour or advantage of the citizens, or to the better government of the Merchants' Company.

These been the Actes & ordenaunces made ordeyned & established in the Counsaillous called the Inner Chambre of the Guyhald of Bristowe the Tuesday the xth day of the moneth of Novemb^r in the xvith yere of the reigne of oure sovreyne lord Kinge Henry the viith [1500] by Richard Vaughan than maire of the said Toun Robert Straunge late maire of the same John Hawkes John Eastfeld John Penke John Dreux and Henry Dale Aldermen William Towket Philip Ryngstone and Nicholas Brown late maire Hugh Elyot and John Bateyn Shirefs Hugh Johnes John Jay Philip Grene William Spicer Thomas ap Howell John Taillour Robert Forthey John Fyster David Philip John Popley William Esteby John Rowland David Leyson Thomas Vaughan John Elyot William Lane John Vaughan Richard Hoby Waltier Rys Thomas Permitter and Thomas Snyg their brethern burgeises elected of the comon counsaill of the forsaid Toun than there beyng present in a comon counsaill than there holden for reformation of dyvers colourable and crafty dealing of certyn burgeises of the said Toun that from day to day and yere unto yere coloure straungiers and Foreyns goodes and marchaundises and buy and sell the same not oonly to the use and greate p^{fi}te of the said Foreyns and straungiers contrary to the othes of the forsaid burgeises but also to their utter undoyng and to the greate hurt of the comon Wele of the said Toun, the which actes and ordenaunces hereaft folowen that is to say :

First the said Maire Aldermen Shirefs and their said brethern of the said comon counsaill have ordeyned and established in the said comon Counsaill and by Auctorite of the same that from hensfurth forevmore shalbe in and of the said Toun of Bristowe a company or felowship of marchauntes separte and distincte from evy other companyes of handcraftymen.

Also the forsaid maire Aldermen Shirefs and their said brethern have elected chosen and named the said John Penke marchaunt to be maister David Leyson and John Stokes marchauntes to be Wardeyns to rule and govne under the forsaid maister maire all the said company and felowship of mchauntes from the said xth day of the forsaid moneth of Novemb^r unto the feste of Seynt Michaell tharchaungell than next suying.

Also they have elected chosen and named George Meke and William Gifford of Bristowe m̄chaunts to be as well bidelx as Broggours [brokers] of the said occupacion of marchauntes unto the said fest of Seint Michael to do and obey in all things all the commaundments of the said Maister and Wardeyns resonable to be don and obeid for the Wele of the said Company of Marchaunts.

Also yt ys ordeyned and established that fromhensfurth forever the said maister and wardeyns shull have fre lib̄tee twyse in evy weke that is to say on tuesday and Thursday to assemble in the said Counsaill hous and by their said bidells to cause to com thider and appere before them there as many of the said company nowe beyng or that hereafter shall be as shall pleas them there to have comynicacion togeders as well of feats of marchaundises and other busengnes concernyng the same as to here complaynts and sette direccions accordyng to reason and good conscience bitwene p̄tees of the said company beyng atte variaunce or debate, or to send the said p̄ties with their causes as they have founde them certified unto the maire of Bristowe for the tyme beyng by his maistership further to be ordred or directed as the case rightfully shall requyre.

And also that no p̄sone of the said feliship atte any tyme hereafter vex trouble or sue any other of them in any Courte spirituall or temporell bfore that the matier hangyng in variaunce bitwen the p̄ties be shewed to oon of the said Maister and Wardeyns upon peyn to pay for a fyne for evy tyme he shall do contrary to this ordenaunce xxs. to be levied of his goodes to the use of the said feliship of marchauntes.

Also yt is ordeyned established and enacted by the said Maire Aldremen Shirefs and comon Counsaill for the Wele not oonly of the said marchaunts adventurers but also of all other burgeises of the said Toun that fromhensfurth no marchaunt nor other Burgeis of the same Toun shall cary or do to be caryed ne send or do to be sent or delyred to any p̄son or p̄sones dwellyng oute of the said Toun and Fraunchise of Bristowe any wyne wax woode yron or other marchaundise onlesse that all the same m̄chaundise be firste playnly and w̄oute any fraude coloure or male engyne solde by the said Burgeis to hym or them to whom they so shuld be caryed or sent or to his or theire Servauntes or Attorneys.

Also that immediatly upon evy such sale of any of the said marchaundises the seller thereof shall come or send his s̄vnt unto the Shiriefs of Bristowe for the tyme beyng and shewe unto theyme the qualite and quantitee of the same m̄chaundise so solde and to be caryed sent or delyved And the name or names of the Citie or Burgh Toun Hamelette or place where the same p̄sone or p̄sones

dwell to thentent that the said Shirefs shull thereby knowe howe and by whom to be answered of toll murage pavage Kayage Kelage and all custumes due unto theym of or for the same mchaundises.

Provided allwey that it be lefull to evy Burgeis of the said feliship of mchaunts to sende or do to be caryed to his customers dwellyng oute of the said Toun of Bristowe all such mchaundises as the same customers shall send unto hym for by their Ires or by their trusty servaunts or frendes Certifying nevthelesse evy such Burgeis unto the said Shirefs for the tyme beyng the qualitee and quantitee of all the Same mchaundises and the names of the Townes or places where the said customers dwell And also paying unto the same Shirefs toll and allman custumes and other dutees due unto theym for the same **Provided** also that it shall be lefull to evy of the said Burgeises to send and do to be caryed to london allman of mchaundises there to be solde this psent acte and ordinaunce notwithstanding.

Also yt is ordeyned established and enacted that yf eny Burgeis of the said Toun of Bristowe do in any thyng contrary to this ordinaunce than he shall pay unto the said maister and wardeyns to thuse of the said feliship of mchaunts for a fyne iijs. iiij*d.* of evy xxs. of the value of all the mchaundises caried sent or delyved contrary to this ordinaunce.

Also that the said maister wardeyns and bidelx upon reasonable warnyng to theym to be given on the behalve of the said maire Aldermen and Shirefs shull appere in their ppre psones before the said maire Aldermen and Shirefs in the said Guyhald And there be sworn upon the holy Evangelistes that is to say the said Maister to do and execute by his power all that pteyneth or shall pteyn to the office of maister of the said feliship And the forsaid Wardeyns to do that longeth or shalbe long to their offices of maisters (*sic*) And the forsaid bidelx to do all that belongeth to thoffices as well of Bidelx as of Brocours to dryve bargayns truly and indifferently bitween marchaunt and marchaunt withoute fraude or male engyne.

And that yerly fromhensfurth forevmore the maister wardeyns and company of marchauntes of Bristowe for the tyme beyng w^tin xiiij dayes next ensuyng aft the fest of Seint Michaell tharchaungell shall assemble togiders in the said Counsaill house And there electe chose and name of theym self oone maister two wardeyns and two Bidelx or broggours for the said Company, to occupye for the yere than next suyng And the said maister Wardeyns and bidelx so elected chosen and named they shull psent before the maire Aldermen and Shirefs of the said Town for the tyme beyng in the said Guyhald within iiij dayes next after the said eleccion and nominacon there to be sworn in man and fourme affore reherced upon peyn of x*li.* to be

paid unto the Chamberleyn of Bristowe for the tyme beyng to thuse of the maire and comalte of the same Town for any default to be made in that behalve to evy which penalite of x*li* so to be paid evy pson of the said company so makyng defaulte shalbe contributory of his ppre goodes after his habilite and power to be rated by the discretions of the maire and Alderman of Bristowe for the tyme beyng Also that noo pson other than the said George Meke and William Gifford or such other as the maister wardeyns and Company of marchaunts of the said Town for the tyme beyng shall assigne and name shall take upon hym to be a comon Broggour in mchaundises bitwene ptie and ptie within the said Town or suburbes of the same upon payn of xls. for evy bargayn that he so shall make To be levied of his goodes, the oone half thereof to thuse of the said Chamber And the other half thereof to the contribucion of the said feliship of marchauntes.

Also that either of the said George Meke and William Gifford and evy other Broggour that hereaft shalbe elected named and chosen in to the said company of marchauntes shall take for his labour as well in that occupacion as in the said office of Bidelx fees hereaft followyng that is to say ij*d.* for evy xxs. of the hoole value of all the marchaundises whereupon eny bargayn shalbe made or dryven by any of the said Broggours bitwene ptie and ptie that is to wete the oone peny thereof of the byer and the other peny thereof of the seller Also yf it happen any of the said Maister Wardeyns or bidells to decease or to be amoved from his saide office within a yere next ensuyng after he is or shalbe pfected or created Maister wardeyn or Bidell of the said feliship of mchauntes That then the maire and Aldermen of Bristowe for the tyme beyng within x days next then ensuyng shall chose make and create an other pson hable of the said feliship to be in the rome or place of hym so deceased or amoved the which so elected pfected and made shall make before the said maire and Aldermen his othe truly to execute his office for the residue of the same yere in the which he so shalbe elected and pfected.

Also it is ordeyned and established that evy pson of the said feliship shall appere in his ppre pson before the said maister and wardeyns in their forsaid place of assemble asoft and whan as he shall thereto be warned by the said Bidells or any of theym withoute he shew cause resonable unto the said maister and wardeyns why he may not so appere before theym upon payn of forfeiture of v*d.* atte evy time he doth contrary to this ordinaunce to be levied of his goodes to the contribucion of the said felouship.

Also that no marchaunt of the said feliship ne no son svnt or appntice of any of the said marchautes shall atte any tyme heraft receyve atte or in the porte of Bristowe afforsaid into his kepyng any cloth or other goodes or mchaundises of any psone not beyng admtytted a felowe of the said company of mchaunts to thentent to sell carry or delyv the same cloth goodes or marchaundises in to or atte any porte cryke or place beyonde see to the use or pfit of the same psone or of any other not beyng felowe of the said company of mchaunts nor bey nor receyve beyonde see for any psone not beyng felowe of the said company of marchaunts any wares or mchaundises to be conveyed fromthens to the said porte of Bristowe or to any other porte haven cryke or place within the Ryver of Severn upon payn to pay atte first tyme he shall do contrary to this ordenaunce of evy xxs. of the hoole value of marchaundise for the which he so shalbe attorney ijs. iiijd. And atte second tyme vjs. viiijd. And on that that the ffader of evy such son the son beyng in his svyce and the maister of evy servnt and appntice so beyng attorney for any psons not being of the said company of marchautes in any two viages contrary unto this ordenaunce to leese [lose] his libtie that he than hath in the said toun and to be discomoned and put therfrom forevmore.

Also that no marchaunt of the said town of Bristowe nor other burgeis of the same Town nor noo son servaunt or Appntice of any of them shall from hencefurth frette or cause to be fretted lade or do to be laden on thisside the See or beyont see any Ship balynger kervaiill barge or other vessail of Englund Wales Irlond Fraunce Briteyn Spayne Portingale or of any other countrey porte or place with any goodes or mchaundises withoute the will avise assent and license of the said maister and wardeyns or withoute thassent of the more pte of the said company of mchaunts upon payn of fforfaiture of xxli. for evy ship balynger kervaiill Barge or other vessaill frette or lade contrary to this ordenaunce to be paid to the contribucion of the said company of mchaunts withoute any pardon or forgifnesse **Provided** alwey that evy marchaunt of the same company his svnt or Appntice beyng beyonde see lakkyng company there of the said feliship of mchaunts to lade hooly togeders oon Ship with mchaundises in to Englund may lade his goodes and mchaundises in any Ship that shall pleas hym So always that noo Ship nor vessaill of the said porte of Bristowe beyng hable to serve hym sufficiently for that season be in the porte cryke or place beyond see or nygh therabout where he shall so seke frett redy to serve hym in that viage atte as good chepe frette as any straunger there shall do. **Provided** also that evy marchaunt of the said felouship and evy other burgeis of

the said Town of Bristowe shalbe atte his libtee to frette any ship or shippes Picardes and other vessailles in to Irlond and Is lond asoft and whan as it shall pleas hymn.

Also it is ordeyned and establisshed that if any psone not beyng of the said feliship of marchaunts take upon hym heraft to frette or lade on thisside the See or beyonde see any ship or other vessaill with any goodes or mchaundises that then no psone of the said feliship of marchantes shall take any frett in the same ship or vessaill wherin he so shall lade or take frett upon payn to pay xxs. for evy ton and ton lode so laden with any foreyn or straunger to be applyed to the contribucions of the said company of mchaunts asofte and whan as such cuase shall happen withoute any pardon or forgevenesse.

Also that fromhensforwarde evy Average that shalbe leyed of or for any ship or other vessaill fretted and to be fretted by any psone or psones of the said felouship shall be leyed in the said Toun of Bristowe in the psence of the maister and wardeyns of the said felouship for the tyme beyng or of oone of them yf any of them will be psent atte the leying therof under payn of xls. for evy average to be leyed contrary to this ordynaunce To be paid by the marchaunts that shall ley or cast or be psent atte leying or castyng of evy such avenge to thuse and pfitte of the forsaid maister wardeyns and feliship of mchaunts And that to the payment of evy such penaltie of xls. evy of the mchaunts that shall ley or be psent atte leying or castyng of evy such average shall be contributory in man and fourme as by the said maister and wardeyns of the forsaid felouship of mchaunts for the tyme beyng shalbe reasonably adiuged And to thentent that noon Average of or for any ship or vessaill shall heraft. be leyde within the said Toun but that the said maister or wardeyns or oon of them shalbe psent atte leying of evy such Average Therfor it is ordeyned and establisshed by the said maire Aldermen Shirefs and their brethern of the said Comon Counsaill that the Burser of evy ship and vessaill of or for the which any such Average shall be leyed shall come unto the maister and wardeyns of the said company of Marchaunts for the tyme beyng or to oon of them yf any of them may then be found within the said Toun of Bristowe or suburbes of the same and ther gyf unto hym or them notice of the tyme and place where and whan evy such Average shall be leyed And that by a day or two dayes next before the tyme of leying of the same average under payn of vjs. viij*d*. to be paid by evy Burser found in default in that behalf asofte and whan as he shall offend contrary unto this ordenaunce to the contribucions of the said company of marchaunts.

Also that at evy such Average that heraft shalbe leid upon evy

ton and ton lode of mchaundises to be comprised within the boke of the same Average except oonly salt oon peny of lafull money of Englund and of evy ton lode of salt ob. [a halfpenny] over and above all costes that here before have ben accustomed to be leyd in Average And all that money comyng of the said ob. of evy ton lode of salt and jd. of evy ton and ton lode of evy other mchaundises shulbe gadred receyved and delyvd by the Burser of the ship or vessaill for the which the same average shalbe leyd unto the said maister or wardeyns or to oon of theym to the sustentacion of the charges of the said feliship before the next departure of the same ship or vessaill from the said porte of Bristowe towards any other porte or place upon payn of vjs. viijd. for evy default in that behalf to be paid by the said Burser unto the same maister and wardeyns to the sustentacion of their said costes and charges.

Also that asoft and whan as any Ship Balynger barge or other vessaill shall come to the said porte of Bristowe from any pte beyond the South See laden mwith wyne wax Iron woode [woad] mader grayn oyle or any other mchaundises beyng the goodes of any Alyen or straunger the said maister and wardeyns shall than and asoft cause all the said feliship or the more pte of theym to assemble togeders atte their said place of assemble And thon and there shall shewe unto theym the coming of the said ship Balynger Barge or Vessaill and marchandises desiryng of the said company of marchaunts their Advises what is to be don in that behalve for the wele of the said feliship And therupon their advises had to do as by the more pte of theym shalbe condescended and appoynted And that noo pson Burgeis of the said Toun of Bristowe shall atte any tyme hereafter take upon hym to bye or receyve in to his keypyng charge or governaunce any such newe come wares or mchaundises of any Alyen or straunger w^oute thadvise assent or licence of the said maister wardeyns and mchauntes upon peyn to forfait to the forsaid felouship of marchaunts asoft and whan as he so shall do iijs. iiijd. of evy xxs. of the value of all the wares or marchaundises bought contrary to this ordenaunce.

Also it is ordeyned and establisshed that frohensfurth evy Son or Appntice of evy mchaunt of the said feliship shall atte request instance or desire to be made by his fader or Maister unto the said maister and wardeyns be admytted to be oon of the same feliship withoute any fyne therfor to be paid **Provided** alwey that evy such Son or Appntice be Burgeis of the said Toun of Bristowe sworn and admytted by the maire and Chamberleyn of Bristowe for the tyme beyng before that he in any wise be admytted into the said feliship of marchaunts by the said maister and wardeyns **Also** it is ordeyned

and established by Auctorite aforsaid that evy other p̄sone Burgeis of the said Toun that hath obteyned or shall obteyn his lib̄tie of the same Toun by redempcion or by mariage of any Widowe or Doughter late of any Burgeis of Bristowe afforsaid and will be oon of the said feliship of marchaunts shall make fyne therfor with the said maister and wardeyns as they shall reasonably agree bitwen theym.

Also that no Burser souldour nor other maryn that fromhensfurth shall sayle in any ship or vessaill of Bristowe or within any other ship or vessaill fretted or herafter to be fretted by the said maister and wardeyns and their said feliship or by any of theym shall bryng or delyv̄ or cause to be brought or delyvd̄ in to the ship or vessaill wherin he shall saill any moo clothes [cloths] than oonly iij hoole clothes or other goodes to the value of iij clothes for the which they shalbe sworn upon a boke before the cape (*sic*) m̄chaunt of the same ship that the said clothes and goodes be his p̄pre goodes and caryed atte his aventure or ells y^e they be the goodes of oon of the said feliship of m̄chaunts And if any Burser souldour or maryn do heraft in any thyng contrary to this ordenaunce that than upon due profe therof made bifore the said maister and wardeyns the same Burser souldour or maryn shall pay to the same maister and wardeyns for eny cloth or other goodes to the value of a cloth so coloured vjs. viij*d*. And on that clerely and uttly shalbe dismyssed of saylyng as Burser souldour or maryner in the company of any of the said marchaunts forevmore **Provided** alwey that if any p̄son of the said company of marchaunts or any that hath ben Appntice unto any of theym happen to saile as a souldour or maryner in any ship or other vessaill heraft that then hit shalbe lefull unto hym to bryng goodes in to the ship or vessaill wherin he so shall saile vj clothes or other goodes of his p̄pre goodes to the verray [true] value of vj clothes therin to be caryed in to that porte beyonde see unto the which that ship or vessaill shall happen to be fretted And that it shalbe lefull unto evy of theym to be Attorney in feate of marchaundise to eny other p̄sone of the said company.

Provided also that evy maister quart maister or other maryner conduytyng govnyng saylyng or suying in any ship may for that viage bryng in to the same ship asmoch clothe or as many clothes of his p̄pre goodes or of the goodes of any marchaunt or marchaunts of the said feliship of marchaunts as shall amounte in frette to the verry value of the Portage that the said maister quart maister or maryner shall hold for his wages in the said ship in the same viage.

Also that fromhensfurth no burgeis of the said Towne of Bristowe bey or cause to be bought any goodes or marchaundises p̄teignyng to any fforeyn Alien Straunger in any ship bote or

vessail beyng or for to be in the porte of Bristowe afforsaid nor in any other place within the said Toun of Bristowe or suburbes of the same but oonly in the comon hall called Spicer's hall of the same Toun which is a comon place ordeyned for that cause And that no marchaunt of the said company nor other burgeis of the said Toun fromhensfurth shall shewe or offer any wyne wode or other marchaundizes to be sold to any psonē or psones or suffer any psonē or psones not being of the said company of marchaunts to se or taste any wynes or other marchaundises of his in any other place than oonly in his mansion or shop or in celers or vawts y^t he holdeth or shall hold in ffee or for terme of lyfe or for terme of yeres within the said Toun or suburbes ffish and fruyte excepted upon peyn to pay unto the said maister and wardeyns iij*s.* iiij*d.* of evy xxs. of the value of the said wynes and marchaundises so sold offerd to be solde seyn or tasted contrary to this ordenaunce of the which sommes the said maister and wardeyns shall fro tyme to tyme delyv and pay the oon half unto the said Chambreleyn or to his successour to thuse of the said maire and co'altee.

Also it is enacted ordeyned and establisshed that fromhensfurth no psonē of the said company nor other burgeis of the said Toun shall make or cause to be made for any psonē or psones hereaft offending contrary unto the said Actes and ordenaunces or to any of theym any labour request desire or prayer unto the said maire or to his successour or to the said maister and wardeyns of the said feliship that nowe be or hereaft shalbe or to any of theym whereby to stirre theym or any of theym to pardon forgeve or relese the said penalitees or ffynes or any pcell of theym to the said psones so offending or to any of theym upon peyn of forfaitur of v*s.* viij*d.* to be levied of his or their goodes and marchaundises so making any such labour request desire or prayer and to be applyed in fourme folowyng that is to say the oon half therof to the use of the said Chambre and the other half therof to the contribucion of the said feliship of marchaunts And that asoften and when as he shall make or do to be made any such labour request desire or prayer.

Also that the said maister and wardeyns yerely before the ffest of Alhalowes shall yeld unto their successoures maister and wardeyns of the said feliship a iust and trewe accompt of all money by theym or by any oftheym receyved or to be receyved, aswell for ob. [a halfpenny] of evy ton of salt and for j*d.* of evy ton or ton lode of other marchaundises as for ffynes and forfaitures to be made or forfeited by force of the said ordenaunces or of any of theym And truely answer to theym the same upon payn of xx*li.* to be paid to the said Maire and Coialtee and to their successoures to the comon pfite of the

said Toun by hym or theym of the maister and wardeyns of the said company of marchaunts that shall make default in making or yeldyng any such Accompt or that shall not truely answeere all arrerage to be founde upon hym atte eny such Accompt.

Also it shalbe lefull unto the said maister wardeyns and feliship that nowe be and heraft shalbe for the goode rule of the same feliship to make ordeyn and establissh by their Aller [unanimous] Assent Actes and ordenaunces under such paynes as they shull thynke resonable And the same to revoke and adnull asofte and whan as it shall pleas theym So alwey that the same Actes and ordenaunces so to be made ordeyned and establisshed by the same maister wardeyns and feliship be in no wise contrary to the Kyngs lawes nor p'iudiciall nor hurtfull to the comon wele of the said Toun of Bristowe.

Also it is ordeyned and establisshed by auctorite of the said comon counsaill that if any psone or psones of the said mchaunts or burgeises that shall happen to do contrary to the said ordenaunces or to any of theym will refuse to pay the said fynes and penalitees or any parte of theym that than it shalbe lefull aswell to the Chamberleyn of the forsaid Toun for the tyme beyng for the ptes therof p'teynyng unto the said Chambre as unto the said maister and wardeyns or their bidell for the ptes therof belongyng to the said feliship and to eny of theym to entre in to the vawtes celers shoppes mansions and all other houses of the same psone or psones so refusyng to pay the said sommes of money for the forsaid ffynes and penalitees or any parte of theym and ther to distreyn by his or their ppre goodes for the same And the distresses there so taken alwey to cary lede and toward theym self to reteyn unto the tyme all the same sommes be to theym fully content and paid.

Que quidem actus ordinationes et statuta omnia et singula sup̄ius exp̄ssat maior Aldermanni Vicecomites et p̄bi hoies de d̄to coī consilio sup̄ius noiati volunt et Concidunt p̄ p̄sentes inviolabilit̄ in omn̄bs observari iuxta verū formam tenorem et effectū eōrdem p̄petuis futuris temporib̄s duratur (sic) Reservat̄ tamen eis ac maiori Aldermannis Vic̄ et p̄bis hominib̄s de coī consilio ville p̄d̄te qui nunc sunt et erunt in futur̄ omnib̄s et singulis potestate et auctoritate Actus ordinationes et statuta p̄dicta in p̄te vel in toto revocare diminuire adnihilare augmentare et p̄ eōr libito voluntatu alia Actus ordinationes et statuta utilia loco eōr sic revocator̄ creare et de novo fac̄e quotiens quando et p̄nt sibi p̄ [prouit] utilitate honore et bono publico Coitat̄ d̄te ville necnon meliori suaviori gubnacione d̄te societ̄at̄ m̄cator̄ p̄d̄tor̄ melius videbitur expedire.

Dat̄ in Guyhald̄ d̄te ville Bristoll sub sigillo Coī maioris et comitatis ejusdem civitat̄ die et anno supradict̄.

CHAPTER II.

INCORPORATION OF THE SOCIETY: CHARTERS AND ORDINANCES.

THE corporate ordinances described in the preceding chapter proved ineffectual to prevent the retail traders of the city from carrying on mercantile business. Commerce, moreover, appears to have been severely depressed during the long reign of terror that set in soon after the fall of Cardinal Wolsey, when despotic rule, judicial murders, wholesale confiscations of property, an enormous increase of pauperism, repeated debasements of the coinage, and widespread popular discontent deadened the energies of the nation. The first half of the sixteenth century has left few local records bearing on commercial affairs, the chroniclers contenting themselves with noting the help rendered to Henry the Eighth by the Bristol shipowners during his wars with France; though on this point their jottings (see Barrett, p. 83) are sometimes grossly untruthful. One important reform was, however, effected about this period. During the Middle Ages, many English fortified boroughs raised a portion of their income by a system still pursued in Paris and other continental centres, namely by the imposition of a toll upon all food and merchandise passing through the town gates. The charge in Bristol being found oppressive on the poor and an impediment to trade, some leading inhabitants seem to have entered into negotiations with the Corporation, which was then bargaining with the Government for the purchase of some of the estates of the suppressed religious

houses, but was much embarrassed to raise the amount demanded; and a curious agreement was arrived at in 1540. The various parish churches possessed at that date an enormous quantity of silver and silver gilt plate in the shape of processional crosses and monstrances, candelabra, incense boxes, patens, chalices, and other articles. The manner in which the monasteries had just been plundered of similar valuables, and the anticipated intention of the Crown to devastate the parochial chantries, naturally induced the parishioners to think of turning this portable property to advantage before it fell into the royal maw. By general consent, therefore, the vestries handed over to the civic body a mass of plate to the value of £523, a large sum in those days, and the Corporation, in consideration of the gift, abolished the obnoxious tolls, and also the dues on victuals landed at the quays, to the great relief of the community. (The money, with about £480 more, was laid out in acquiring St. Mark's Church, and part of the estates of Gaunts Hospital and Athelney Abbey, together with the Bristol houses of the Grey and Carmelite Friars, the last-named of which was long the site of Colston's School.) The wisdom of the citizens in making the above donation was strikingly proved a few years later, when the royal commissioners swooped down upon the city and seized upon the real and movable estates of all the local chantries, to the value of over £5,000; whilst a second batch of spoilers confiscated the remainder of the parochial plate, apparently worth upwards of £1,000.

Before this havoc had been completed the merchants of Bristol addressed a "lamentable representation" to Edward the Sixth, alleging that whilst in former times the trade of the port was profitable to the whole community, and the merchants were able in time of war to

offer the services of 25 ships for the defence of the realm, commerce had drifted mainly into the hands of strangers, and "scant five ships belonged to the city." And this was due, it was averred, to the conduct of divers artificers and handicraftsmen, destitute of mercantile experience, who had presumptuously undertaken to traffic in merchandise to and from foreign parts, and commonly in foreign vessels, to the huge loss of legitimate merchants, and the general decay of ships, mariners, and the city at large.

In response to this appeal the young King, on the 18th December, 1552, granted the following charter, which may be termed the Magna Carta of the Society of Merchant Venturers. As many readers find it tiresome to wade through the legal tautology of documents of this kind, it may be briefly stated that the King, after reciting the complaints addressed to him against the incompetent craftsmen who rashly intermeddled in commercial undertakings, to the undoing of legitimate merchants, the decay of shipping, the injury of the port, and the diminution of the royal Customs, granted to Edward Prynne, Thomas Hicks, Robert Butler, and their brethren, freemen of the city, that they should thenceforth be, for ever, a body corporate, with perpetual succession. Edward Prynne was nominated the first Master, and Hicks and Butler the first Wardens, for the government and correction of the mystery and commonalty, and were to be succeeded yearly by similar officers, elected by the members generally and sworn in before the Mayor and Aldermen. The body thus incorporated was to have the usual powers to plead and be impleaded in all Courts whatsoever, and was empowered to make statutes for the governance of the fellowship as needs might arise. But it was provided that such ordinances must not contravene the laws of the realm, or prejudice the rights of the Mayor—meaning

doubtless the Corporation. The chief object desired by the applicants for the charter is then dealt with. The King ordained that thenceforth no artificers or other persons living in the city should traffic in merchandise either in domestic or foreign ports before being admitted into the Society, unless an apprenticeship of seven years to the mystery should have been first duly served. But it was provided that the ordinances made by the Society should concern only the members themselves, and not outsiders, and should not be in prejudice of any person or body claiming privileges or rights by virtue of previous royal grants; especial reservation being made for the protection of the Merchant Adventurers trading with the Low Countries, whose statutes and privileges were to be in no wise interfered with.

Edwardus Sextus Dei gratia Anglie Francie et Hibernie Rex fidei defensor et in terra ecclie Anglicane et Hibernice Supremū caput **Omnibus** ad quos presentes littere pervenerint salutem **Sciatis** q^d ex lamentabili insinuatōe Edwardi Pryn Thome Hicks et Roberti Butler fidelīū ligeorum nrorum civitatis nre Bristolli ac aliorum mercatorum periclitantiū civitatis p̄dicte vōc Marchaunte Venterers ponentiū se factores servientes bona et mercandisas in periculo super mare ad diversas partes transmarinas pro mercandisis extra hoc regnū nostrum Anglie educend ac in idem regnū inducend accepimus qualiter diversi artifices et homines artis manualis in eadem civitate inhabitantes occupationesque victu suo querend habentes qui nunqm fuerunt apprenticii aut educati ad vel in recursu artis mercatorum predictorum nec aliquam bonam cognitionem in eadem arte habentes qui vulgariter excitant utuntur et occupant dictum recursum mercandise ad et a partibus transmarinis vulgariter in navibus sive vasis extraneis per quod diversa genera comoditatum huius Regni nostri Anglie occulte educuntur et convehuntur incontrariū bone ordinis et legum nostrarum ac in magnam defraudationem customarum nrarum taliter se habentes et exercentes in et secundum tales malos mores et irregulatos quales fuerunt et existunt in magnū scandalum dictorum mercatorum ac decasum naviū et marinariorum ac portus civitatis predicte et precipue dictorum mercatorum ad et in dicto recursu mercandise educatorum

magnamque cognitionem in eodem recursu habentiū **Unde** nos supplicaverunt sibi per nos de remedio congruo provideri nos indemnitati nostre in hac parte **ac** utilitati et bono ordini predictorum mercatorum imposterum habēnd̄ prospicere volentes, ut tenemur, **De** gratia n̄ra speciali concessimus et licenciam dedimus ac per presentes concedimus et licenciam damus pro nobis heredibus et successoribus nostris quantum in nobis est̄ prefatis Edwardo Pryn Thome Hicks et Roberto Butler ac aliis mercatoribus periclitantibus voc̄ Marchaunte Venterers dicte civitatis n̄re Bristolli q^d decetero habeant unū magr̄m artis sive mistere de marchaunte Venterers Civitatis predicte et ipm̄ Edwardum Pryn magr̄m artis sive mistere predicte facimus ordinamus et constituimus per presentes **Et** q^d habeant duos Custodes artis sive mistere predicte et ipos Thomam Hicks et Robertum Butler Custodes artis sive mistere predict̄ facimus ordinamus et constituimus per presentes **Ac** dtm̄ Edwardum magistrum artis sive mistere predicte **Ac** prefatos Thomam et Robertum custodes artis sive mistere predicte nominamus assignamus discernimus et declaramus per presentes Et q^d tam predicti Edwardus Thomas et Robertus quam alii liberi homines dicte civitatis artem sive misteram de Marchaunte Venturers predict̄ utent̄ qui nunc sunt et de tempore in tempus imperpetuum erunt de civitate predicta decetero sint in facto re et nomine unū corpus et una coītas corporat̄ imperpetuū per nomen Magistri custodum et Coītatis de Marchaunt Venturers civitatis Bristoll et q^d habeant successionem perpetuam **Et** q^d dicti magister custodes et coītas et successores sui imperpetuū singulis annis quotiens necesse erit eligere possint et facere de seipsis unū magistrum et duos custodes sive gardianos ad supportand̄ negocia eorundem et ad supervidend̄ regend̄ et gubernand̄ misteram et coītatem predict̄ et omnes homines ac occupant̄ servientes servitores stuffuras et operationes merces et mercimonia eorundem mistere et coītatis in civitate et suburbiis predict̄ imperpetuū et magistrum et custodes anni precedentis amovere et deſtus eorundem dictam misteram concernen̄ debite corrigend̄ et corrigi faciend̄ **Et** q^d dicti magister custodes et coītas pd̄ti hēant ut prefertur successionem perpetuam et commune Sigillum pro negotiis dicte artis sive mistere et coītatis predict̄ imperpetuū deservitur **Et** q^d iidem magister custodes et Coītas et successores sui per nomen magistri Custodum et coītatis mistere sive artis de Marchaunte Venturers Civitatis Bristoll capaces et habiles sint in lege et placitare possint et implacitari respondere et responderi defendere ac defendi coram quibuscumque Judicibus et Justiciariis temporalibus vel sp̄ualibus seu aliis personis quibuscumque in quibuscumque Curiis et in omnibus actionibus realibus personalibus et mixtis ac placitis nove

disseie necnon in omnibus placitis sectis querelis negotiis et demandis quibuscumque artem sive misteram predictam et negotia eiusdem tantummodo concernen **Et** q^d quilibet huiusmodi magistrorum et custodum mistere sive artis predict^t pro quolibet anno ut premittitur eligend^t sacramentum prestet corporale coram Maiore et Aldermannis Civitatis predicte pro tempore existend^t de officio illo ad quod taliter fuerit electus bene et fideliter faciend^t et exequend^t ac dictis Maiori et Aldermannis pro tempore existen^t ad huiusmodi sacramenta recipiend^t licentiam damus per presentes **Et ulterius** q^d iidem magister custodes et Coitatis dicte mistere sive artis et successores sui plenam habeant potestatem et auctoritatem statuta et ordinationes tantummodo pro bona et salubri gubernatoe supervisu scrutinio et correctione mistere sive artis predicte ac hominu^m mistere sive artis illius ac solummodo misteram et artem illas tangen^t et concernen^t secundum necessitatis et rei exigentiam quotiens et quodcumque opus fuerit facere et ordinare ac ea omnia et singula exequi valeant licite et impune sine occasione impetitione vel impedimento nostri heredum vel successorum nrorum Justiciariorum Escaetorum Vicecomitum Coronatorum aut aliorum Ballivorum vel ministrorum nrorum heredum vel successorum nrorum quorumcumque dummodo statuta et ordinationes illa contra prerogativam nram aut leges et consuetudines regni nostri Anglie necnon in preiudiciu^m Maioris Civitatis nre predicte non existant **Et ulterius volumus** ac per presentes concedimus pro nobis heredibus et successoribus nris prefatis magistro Custod^e et Coitati q^d nullus artifex Civitatis predicte pro tempore existens excerceat recursum mercandise in partes transmarinas in regna seu dominia nisi admittatur in societatem et incorporacionem predict^t per dictos magistrum et custodes neq^{ue} ullus alius nisi tantummodo tales quales fuerunt vel imposterum erunt apprenticii ad dictam misteram sive artem mercatorum predictorum aut eadem mistera usi fuerunt per spatium septem annorum **Proviso semper** q^d statuta et ordinationes imposterum per dictos magistrum custodes et coitatem facienda vel ordinanda tantummodo tangant magistrum custodes et coitatem predict^t vel homines de Coitate illa et non alios qui non sunt neque erunt de coitate illa ac dummodo contra prerogativam nram aut leges et consuetudines regni nostri Anglie Necnon in preiudiciu^m maioris civitatis nostre prede^{te} nec in preiudicium aliquarum personarum sive alicuius persone corporis politici vel corporis corporati vel incorporati habentis vel habentium clamantis vel clamantium aliqua libertates franchises privilegia iura sive preheminent^{ie} virtute colore vel pretextu alicius concessionis doni vel litterarum patentiu^m nostri vel aliquorum progenitorum nrorum autehac dat concess^{us} vel fact^{us} non existant ac dummodo statuta sive

ordinaciones illa non sint sive eorum aliquod non sit in preiudicium dilect̄ subditorum nr̄orum gubernatoris assistencium et societatis mercatorum se bona res et merces suas periculis exponunt vulgariter vocat̄ Marchauntes Adventurers partes Hollandie Selandie Brabandie et fflandrie ac alias regiones terr̄ et dominia eisdem partibus adiacen̄ mercatura et mercandisand̄ gratia aditaut̄ et frequentantiū nec aliquorum statutorum ordinationū sive constitutionū per dictos Gubernatorem sive Gubernatores eiusdem societatis autehac fact̄ edit̄ vel ordinat̄ vel imposterum per eosdem Gubernatorem seu Gubernatores et assistentes vel eorem successores fiend̄ edend̄ stabiliend̄ vel ordinand̄ **Eo q^d expressa** mentio de vero valore annuo aut de aliquo alio valore vel certitudine premissorum sive eorum alicuius aut de aliis donis sive concessionibus per nos sive per aliquem progenitorum nr̄orum prefatis magistro custod̄ et Coit̄ati dicte mistere sive artis de Marchaunte Venturers Civitatis Bristoll̄ aut predecessoribus suis ante hec tempora fact̄ in presentibus minime fact̄ existit̄ aut aliquo statuto actu ordinatione provisione sive restrictione inde incontrarium fact̄ edit̄ ordinat̄ sive provis̄ aut aliqua alia re causa vel materia quacumque in aliquo non obstant̄ **In cuius** rei testimoniū has litteras nostras fieri fecimus patentes **Teste** me ip̄o apud Westmonasteriū decimo octavo die Decembris Anno regni nostri sexto.

Per breve de privato sigillo et de dat̄ pdict̄ auctoritat̄ pliamenti.

WE BOWIS.

TRANSLATION.

[FROM AN ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT IN THE HALL.]

Edward the Sixte by the grace of god, of England Fraunce and Ireland Kinge defender of the Faith, and in earth of the Church of England and Ireland supreme head **To all** those to whome theis p̄nte letters shall come Health, **I knowe yee** that of the lamentable petition of Edward Prin, Thomas Hicckes, and Robert Butler our faithfull Subiects of our Citty of Bristoll̄ and other marchauntes adventurers of the Citty aforesaid (called marchant Venterers) putting themselves there factors servants goods and marchandice in perill uppon the Sea to divers parts beyond the seas for marchandizes out of this our Realme of England to bee carried & into this Realme of England to bee broughte **We** have bin given to vnderstand howe that divers Artificers and **men** of manuell arte inhabitinge the same Citty haveinge alsoe occupacons to gett their liveinge (whoe were never apprentice or brought upp

to or in the recourse or trade of the arte of the marchants aforesaide, nor haveinge anie good knowledge in the same Arte) Doe commonly exercise use and occupie the saide recourse or trade of marchandize to and from the partes beyond the seas commonly in strange shippes or vessells whereby divers kindes of commodities of this our Realme of England are secretly carried and conveyed away, against our good orders and lawes, and to the greate defrauding us of our Customes, In such sorte behaveinge and exerciseinge themselves in and after such like eville and irregular manner, the which have bine and are to the great scandall of the saide marchants and alsoe to the decayeng of the Navye and marriners and the porte of the Citty aforesaide, and chiefly of the saide marchants, haveing bine brought upp to and in the saide recourse of marchandize and haveinge also great knowledge in the same recourse **Wherupon** they have petitioned us that a fitt remedy mighte bee (by us) provided for them **And** wee willinge to forsee our indempnitie and danger in this behalfe, and to provide for the profitt and good order of the saide marchants in tyme to come (as wee are bounde) **Have** of our speciall favour and grace graunted and given lycence, and by theis presents for us our heires and Successors (for as much as in us) Doe graunte and give Licence to the aforesaide Edward Prin, Thomas Hicckes, and Robert Butler and other marchant adventurers (called marchaunts Venturers) of our saide Citty of Bristoll That hereafter they shall have One Maister of the Arte or misterie of marchaunt Venturers of the Citty aforesaide **And** wee doe make ordeyne and constitute him the saide Edward Prin maister of the Arte or misterie aforesaide by theis pnts And that they shall have twoe wardeins of the aforesaide Arte or misterie And we do ordeyne and constitute them the saide Thomas Hicckes and Robert Butler wardeins of the aforesaide Arte or Misterie by these presents **And** the saide Edward, Maister of the saide Arte or Misterie, And the aforesaid Thomas and Robert, wardeynes of the same Arte or Misterie **Wee doe** name assign decree and declare by theis pnts: And that the saide Edward Thomas and Robert and other Free men of the saide Citty, vsing the Arte or Misterie of Marchant Venturers aforesaide wch nowe are and from tyme to tyme for ever shalbee of the same Citty Shalbee from hencefourth in deed matter and name one bodye and one Comynaltie Corporated for ever by the name of the Maister Wardeins and Comynaltie of marchant Venterers of the City of Bristol **And** that they shall have a perpetuall succession And that the aforesaide Maister Wardeyns and Comynaltie and theire Successors for ever, euerie yeere, and as often as need shalbee, may choose and make of themselves one

Maister and twoe Wardeyns or Guardians to supporte the Affaires thereof And to oversee rule and governe the saide Misterie and Comynaltie, and all men and occupiers, dealers servants factors stufes and workes wares and marchandize of the saide misterie and Comynaltie in the Citty and Subburbes aforesaid And the maister and wardeins of the yeere before to amove and their defects concerninge the saide Misterie duely to correct and cause to be corrected **And** that the saide Maister Wardeyns and Commynaltie aforesaide shall have as aforesaid a perpetuall succession and a Common Seale to serve for the affayres and busines of the saide Arte or Misterie and Comynaltie aforesaide for ever **And** that they the saide Maister Wardens and Commynaltie and their Successors (by the name of the Maister Wardeins and Comynaltie of the Misterie or Arte of marchant Venterers of the Citty of Bristoll) shalbee capeable and fitt in y^e lawe, and may plead and bee ympleaded, answeere and bee answered, defende and bee defended, before all and whatsoever Judges and Justice, temporall or spirituall or any other person or persons whatsoever, in whatsoever Courts, and in all acccons reall personall and mixt, and pleas of **Nouel diseisen**, and alsoe in all pleas suits quarrells affaires and demaunds whatsoever concerninge onely the Arte or Misterie aforesaide and the affaires of the same **And** that euery one of them the saide Maisters & wardeins of the Misterie or Arte aforesaide for every yeere as aforesaide to bee chosen shall take his corporall oath before the Mayor and Aldermen of the Citty aforesaide for the tyme beinge well and faithfully to doe and execute the office aforesaide whereunto hee shalbee in such wise elected And unto the saide Maior and Aldermen for the time beinge wee doe give lycence by these pnts to receyve the saide oath **And** further that the saide Maister Wardeins and Comminaltie of the saide Misterie or Arte and their Successors shall have full power and authoritie to make and ordeyne statutes and ordinaunce for the good and profittable government surveying search and correction of the Misterie or Arte aforesaide onely, and of the men of the same Misterie or Arte, and such onely as doe touch and concerne the saide Misterie and Arte accordinge to the necessitie and ymportance of the matter, as often and when as need shalbee **And** that they may lawfully and freely execute all and singular those things without any lett suite or ympediment of us our heires or Successors or of the Justice Escheator Shiriffe Coroners or any other Bailives or Ministers of us our heires or Successours whatsoever Soe as those Statuts and Ordinaunce bee not against our prerogatyve or the lawes and Customes of our Realme of

England, nor in prejudice of the Mayor of our Cittie aforesaide **And** further wee will and by theis pnts Doe grannt (for us our heires and Successors) to the aforesaide Maister wardens and Commynaltie that noe Artificer of the Cittie aforesaide for the tyme beinge shall exercise the recourse of marchandize into the kingdomes or dominions of the parties beyond the seas unlesse hee shalbee admitted into the saide Societie and State aforesaide by the saide Maister and wardens, Neither that any other but onelie those whoe have bine, or hereafter shalbee apprentice to y^o saide Misterie or Arte of Marchaunts aforesaide or have vsed the same Misterie by the space of seauen yeeres **Provided** allwaies that the Statuts and Ordinaunce hereafter (by the saide Maisters Wardeins and Commynaltie) to be made or ordeyned Doe only touch the Maisters Wardeyns and Comynaltie aforesaide or the men of the same Comynaltie and not any others wch are not neither shalbee of the same Cominaltie And soe as they bee not against our prerogative or the lawes and Customes of our Realme of England, neither in prejudice of the Mayor of the Cittie aforesaide, nor in prejudice of anie person or persons of any bodie politicke or Bodie Corporated or Incorporated haveinge or they haveinge Clayminge or they claimeinge anie Liberties Franchises priviledge righte or preheminece by vertue colour or pretence of any graunte, guifte, or Letters pattents of us, or of any of our progenitours before this tyme given graunted or made **And soe as** the saide Statutes or Ordinaunce are not, or any of them bee not, in prejudice of our welbeloved Subjects the Governour Assistants and Societie of marchants commonly called Marchants Aduenturers goinge vnto and frequentinge the Coaste of Holland Seland Braband and Flanders and other Regions Landes and Dominions to the same partes adioyninge, putting forth themselves theire goods wares and marchandizes in perrill for trade and marchandisinge sake, Nor to any Statutes Ordinaunce or Constitucions heretofore made published or ordeyned by the saide Governour or Governours of the saide Societie or hereafter to bee made, published, established, or ordeyned by the saide Governour or Governours and Assistants or theire Successors notwithstandinge that noe expresse mention of the true yeerely value of the premisses or of any other value or certeyntie thereof or of anie other guifte or graunte by us or by anie of our Progenitours to the aforesaide Maister Wardeyns and Comynaltie of the Misterie or Arte of marchant Venturers of the Cittie of Bristoll, or to theire Predecessours before this tyme hath bin made, nor in anie wise by theis pnts is made, nor of anie Statute, Acte, Ordinaunce, provision or

restraint, or of any other thinge cause or matter whatsoever in anie wise made published ordeyned or provided to the contrary thereof notwithstandinge **In Witnes** whereof wee have caused these our Letters to bee made Pattente **Witnes** my Self at Westminster the eightenth day of December In the Sixte yeere of our Raigne.

The members of the infant Society soon learnt from experience that a verbal interdiction of retail dealers and craftsmen from meddling in mercantile affairs, unaccompanied by penalties calculated to enforce obedience, was in practice nugatory. Early in 1566 it was resolved to apply to the Crown for a more effectual remedy. The first step taken was to petition for a confirmation of the foregoing charter, and in answer to the prayer Queen Elizabeth, on the 8th July, granted letters patent, reciting those of her brother at full length, and confirming them in the following terms. (The translated transcript is taken from an ancient copy in the Society's archives) :—

Elizabeth Dei gracia Anglie Fraunc et Hibernie Regina fidei defensor &c. Omnibus ad quos presentes litere pervenerint Salutem Inspeximus literas patentes Domini E. nuper Regis Anglie sexti fratris nostri precharissimi factas in hec verba **Edwardus Sextus** [&c., as in the preceding charter]. **Nos Autem** literas predictas ac omnia et singula in eis contenta rata hentes et grata ea pro nobis heredibus et successoribus nostris quantum in nobis est acceptamus et approbamus ac dilectis nobis Thome Kelke nunc magistro Dominico Chester et Thome Alder nunc Custodibus et Comunitati artis sive mistere de Merchaunt Venturers civitatis nostre Bristoll et eorum successoribus tenore present ratificamus et confirmamus prout litere predictae testantur **In cuius rei** testimonium has literas nostras fieri fecimus patentes **Teste** me ipsa apud Westmonasterium octavo die Iulii anno regni nostri octavo.

TRANSLATION OF THE CONFIRMATION.

And wee acceptinge and allowinge of the saide Letters pattente aforesaide, and all and euerye thinge in the same conteyned, Doe for us our heires and successours Ratifie and approve the same And to our Welbeloved Thomas Kelke now Maister, Dominicke

Chester and Thomas Alder now Wardeyns and to the Commonalty of the Arte or Misterie of Marchante Venturers of our Citty of Bristoll and their Successours by the tenore of these presents Wee doe ratifie and confirme even as the Letters pattente aforesaide doe testifie **In wittnes** whereof wee have caused theis our letters to be made Pattente **Wittnes** my selfe at Westminster the eighte day of July in the Eighte yeere of our Raigne (1566).

Application was then made to Parliament for statutory powers to enforce the royal provisions. The necessary Bill was brought into the House of Commons on the 28th November, passed that Chamber on December 4th, was rapidly carried through all its stages in the Upper House, and received the Royal Assent. The enactment, it will be seen, recites the reasons advanced for its promotion—namely, the impoverished state of the mercantile interest through the ruinous competition of unqualified traders—and thereupon ordains that no citizen except a member of the Society, or a person who has served a seven years' apprenticeship to a merchant, shall thenceforth traffic in merchandise beyond the seas, upon pain of forfeiture of all the goods that he may import or export, one moiety of the penalty being reserved to the Crown, and the remainder to be divided between the Corporation and the Society. The latter body is further empowered to expel from its ranks any member who shall carry on a business not exclusively mercantile. The following contemporary copy of the statute is preserved in the Hall:—

The Coppie of an Acte made at the Parliament holden (by prorogation) at Westminster the last daie of September in the eighte yeere of the Raigne of our Sovereigne Lady Queene Elizabeth & Anno Christi 1566.

An Acte for Confirmation of Letters Pattente graunted to the Marchant Adventurers of the Citty of Bristoll.

Whereas the Cittie of Bristol, beinge an Ancient Towne of this Realme of England, hath allwaies bin inhabited and vsed by and with a number of Marchaunte Aduenturers of the same Citty

vsinge trafficke and marchandize to and from beyond the Seas, By reason whereof the same Citty hath not heretofore bin only greatly enriched, and the Inhabitants of the same of all Science verie well occupied and sett in worke in and aboute their severall Arts misteries and occupacons, but have bine alsoe ayding and assistaunt (by reason of the said marchaunte Aduenturers) uppon the seas unto the Princes Navie of this Realme (in tyme of warres) for the defence of this whole Realme, with twentie five shippes for the moste parte, untill that nowe of late, by reason of a number of the Inhabitants of the saide Citty, of divers faculties and sciences, being not able to have anie convenient shippes or vessells of their owne, have vsed to trafficke marchandize and carry wares to and from the parties of beyond the Seas, in strainge shippes and vessells, soe commonly and so much as the marchauntes aduenturers, haveinge noe other science but onely that to lyve uppon, were not able to mainteyne their own navigacon and shippes, but some were enforced to sell their shippes, and some to leave their shippes, and lay them upp in Docke, untill such tyme as they were spoiled and lost, So as of late there were scant five shippes left belonging to the saide Citty, whereas in tymes past there hath bine twenty five: And this matter beinge of late declared, and informacon thereof made to our late soueraigne lorde Kinge Edward the Sixte, his grace mindinge to provide, as well for the mayntenance and contynuance in prosperitie of the saide Citty As alsoe for the encrease of defences of this Realme from our Enimies, as before this tyme had bin: And to thintent that the marchauntes aduenturers and Navigacon of the saide Citty might encrease and multiplie to such number as before tyme had bin, **Did** by his grace's Letters pattente under his great Seale of England bearing date at Westminster the eighteenth daie of December in the sixte yeere of his grace's Raigne encorporate the Company and Feloushipp of the saide marchaunte Aduenturers by the name of Maister Wardeyns and Comynaltie of the Misterie or Arte of Marchaunte Venturers of the City of Bristoll And by the same letters pattente **Did** not onely graunte unto them to plead and to bee ympleaded by the same name But alsoe divers other Liberties Ordinaunce rules priviledges and auctorities, as by the saide letters pattente therein more fully and at large doe appeare, Which saide letters pattente and all and euery thinge and things in them conteyned and expressed Our Soueraigne Lady the Queenes Ma^{tie} that nowe is, hath to and for thintent and purpose above expressed, likewise by her grace's Letters pattente under her great Seale of England

bearinge date at Westminster aforesaide the eighte day of July in the eighte yeere of her saide graces Raigne, allowed confirmed and ratified As by y^o same Letters pattente doe alsoe therein playnely appeare **Bee it therefore** Enacted by the Queenes moste Excellente Maiestie, the Lordes Spirituall and temporall, and by the Commons in this present Session of Parliament assembled, and by the authorite of the same, for the consideracons and mayntenance of the Cittie of Bristoll aforesaide, that the said Felowshippe and Society of Marchaunte Aduenturers bee incorporate for evermore in such manner and wise, and by such a name, as is declared and conteyned in the aboue resited letters pattente of our said late Soueraigne Lorde Kinge Edward y^o Sixte And that the same Corporacon may evermore hereafter have and enjoy all such like Liberties, ordinaunce, rules, priuledge, and authorities, as are mencōned and specified in the said Letters pattente accordinge to the words sentences true intent effecte and meaninge of the saide letters pattente to all intents and purposes. **And furthermore**, whereas by the saide recited Letters Pattente of our saide late Soueraigne Lord Kinge Edward y^o Sixte yt is graunted to the saide Corporacon that noe Artificer or of anie other science of the saide Citty of Bristoll for the tyme beinge should exercise the recourse of marchandize into the parts beyond the Seas vnlesse they were admitted into the Societie and Corporacon aforesaide by the Maister and Wardeins of the same Corporacon for the tyme beinge, or else weare, or shalbee apprentice to the saide Misterie or Arte of Marchaunts aforesaide by the space of Seaven Yeeres, And for that there is noe penaltie provided or ordeyned for such as shall exercise the recourse of marchandize beyond the Seas contrary to the Clause of the said letters pattente aboue resited, diuers and sundrie psons of the saide Citty, beinge neither admitted into the saide Societie or Corporacon, neither haue bene apprentice to the same Arte by the space of Seaven yeeres, Doe still vse and exercise the recourse of marchaundise beyond the Seas, contrary to the good intention therein had and made, and contrary to the expresse words of the saide letters pattente to the great hindaunce and decay of all the aforesaide Cittie

Bee it therefore Enacted and established by the Authoritie of this present parliament that after the Feaste of Saint John the Baptist next cominge, noe manner of person or persons dwelling or that hereafter shall dwell within the said Citty of Bristoll, or the Subbirbes or Liberties of the same, shall vse or exercise, by himselfe, or by anie other, the recourse or trafficke of marchandize

beyond the Seas, vnlesse the same person or persons bee nowe made, or hereafter shalbee admitted to bee, of the saide Societie or Corporacon^o about named by the maister and wardeyns of the saide Corporacon, Or els that hee or they have byne, or shalbee apprentice or apprentices, and served in and to the saide Arte or misterie of Marchaunts within the same Cittie or Liberties of the same by the space of seaven yeeres uppon paine of Forfeiture of all the goods and marchandice that hee or they, or any of them, shall att anie tyme after the saide Feast of Saint John the Baptist soe vse, carry, transporte or convey to or from beyond the Seas contrary to the tenure aforesaide: the one moyetie of which Forfeiture to bee to the Queenes maiestie, her heires and Successours, and the other moyetie to bee devided betweene the said Corporacon and the Chamber of the saide Citty of Bristoll aforesaide **And** that if anie person or persons that nowe is or are, or that hereafter shalbee anie of the saide Corporacon of marchants shall att any tyme after the saide Feast of Saint John Baptist vse or exercise any other science, misterye, arte, or occupacon then onely that of marchante Adventurers, that then it shalbee lawfull to and for the saide Maister and Wardeyns of the saide Corporacon for the tyme being to dismissee expell remove and put of and out of the saide Societie or Corporacon the same person or persons wch soe shall vse anie other science misterie arte or occupacon then onely of marchant aduenturers as is aforesaide.

The incorporation of the Society must have necessitated the adoption of a common seal for the due execution of legal documents; but there is no mention of such an instrument until 1569, when the following grant of arms was obtained from Robert Cooke, Clarencieux, one of the most grotesque of the tasteless heralds of the Tudor period:—

To all and synguler aswell nobles and gentillmen as others to whom these presents shall come, Robert Cooke esquier alias Clarenciulx, principal herehault and kinge of armes of the sowthe easte and west parts of this Realme of England from the riuier of trent southwards, sendeth humble comendacons and greeting **Forasmoch** as aunciently from the beginninge the valiant & vertuous acts of worthy persons haue ben comended to the world with sondry monvments and remembrances of their good





desertes amongst the which the chefest and most vsuall hathe ben the bearinge of signes in shildes caled armes which are euident demonstracions of prowes diuersly distributed accordinge to the qualities and desertes off the persons meritinge the same to the end that suche as have done comendable seruice to their prince or contry eyther in warre or peace may bothe receiue due honor in their lyues and also deryue the same successively to their posteritie after them for euer **And whereas** the moste noble and excellent prince of famows memory, Kinge Edwarde the sixte, did by his graces lres pattents vnder his greate seale of england, bearing date at westmester the xvij daye of december in the sixt yere of his graces reigne, incorporate the company and fellowship of the marchant aduenturars of Bristoll by the name of maister wardens and comunitie of the misterie or arte of marchants aduenturars, and by the same lres patents his grace did not only grawnt vnto them diuers and sundry liberties, as to pleade and be ympleaded by that name and names as ys aforesaid but further that they sholde haue a perpetuall succession and one comon seale for the business of the said art mistery and comunitie to serue them for euer, at whiche time Edwarde prinne was ordayned maister of the said art and misterie and Thomas Hickes and Robert Butler wardens, which said lres patents the Quenes maiestie that now ys hathe likewise by her graces lres pattents vnder her greate seale of england, bearing date at Westmestre aforesaid the viij day of July in the eight yere of her graces reigne allowed, confirmed, and ratified as by the same lres patents doth also therein plainly appere **And further** the said lres patents of corporation were confirmed by acte of parlament in the viij yere of the Quenes maiesties reigne aforesaid in such manner and forme as more playnly appereth by the said acte of parlament, and forasmoche as the said maister wardens and comunitie haue grawnted vnto them one comon seale to vse about their necessarie affaires as ys aforesaid **In consideration whereof** and at the instant request of Dominyk Chester, maister, Thomas Rowland and John Carre, wardens, withe the consent of the comunitie, **I haue** assigned given & grawnted unto the said maister, wardens, and comunitie the armes creaste and supportars followinge **That is to say** barry onde of viij peces siluer and asur, on a bend golde a dragon volant vert, on a chefe gules a lion passant golde between two besants, vppon the heaulme on a wreath golde and asur the toppe of a ship armed or, in the same a man in maile, in prop coollor, in his right hande a targe and in the lefte hande a darte or, supported withe two supportars, the first a mairmaid the uppar parte charne, her heare and finnes withe an ancar in her hand golde,

the nether parte in proper cooler, the second supportar ys the figure of tyme, the uppar parte charey, his winges and the nether parte golde, in his left hand a sithe, the shaft sables, the sithe argent, mantled gules, dowbled argent, as more plainly apperith depicted in the margent **To haue and holde** the said armes creast and supportars to the said maister wardens and comunitie & to their successors in lyke places, and they the same to vse, beare, and shew for euer at their liberti & pleasure, without impediment, let, or interupton of any person or persons **In witnes whereof** I haue set herevnto my hand and the seale of my office the xxiiij day of august in the eleuenth yere of the reigne of our soveraigne lady Quene Elizabeth.

ROBT. COOKE *alias* CLARENCIEULX,
Roy D'armes.

The Act of 1566 brought about the only serious difference between the Corporation and the Society to be found in the ancient annals. Through the depression of the mercantile interest that then prevailed, the predominance that merchants had previously enjoyed in the Common Council appears to have been temporarily superseded by trading influences. As Parliament did not meet again for five years, no immediate steps were practicable in opposition to the Act, but it is significant that nothing was received in the meantime by the city Treasurer on account of forfeitures for infringements of the new law. The general election in the spring of 1571 occasioned an unexampled conflict for the two seats. After a prolonged contest the previous members for the city—one of whom was certainly and the other probably a member of the Society—were not again returned, John Popham, the Recorder (afterwards the Chief Justice of Wild Dayrell fame), being one of those chosen in their place by the opposition party. Simultaneously, the Mayor and Aldermen forwarded a letter to Lord Burghley on March 28th, alleging that the Act of 1566 was calculated to greatly damage the trade of the city, and praying for

its repeal. (This letter is in the Record Office.) And the Houses had no sooner assembled in April than a "Bill for Bristowe" was introduced, and was read a first time at the fifth sitting of the House of Commons. On the following day it was read a second time; whereupon, says the Commons' Journal, "many and sundry long arguments" were advanced both for and against it. The controversy was so keen that the then unusual course was adopted of referring the measure to a select committee. The existing books of the Society do not contain the slightest allusion to the subject; but the following paper, obviously written on behalf of the fraternity, is preserved at the Record Office, and practically gives a summary of the case laid before the House by the respective parties:—

Articles of a Bill exhibited in Parliament against the incorporation of the Merchant Adventurers of the city of Bristol, and answers unto the same. [April 12, 1571.]

First Objection. The like corporation of general exemption has not been found to continue long anywhere.

Answer. By their corporation, no man is exempted that ever occupied the seas, but such as voluntarily sequestered themselves from the same, for every retailer, leaving off his retailing, may be a merchant, so that he will content himself with the only trade of merchandise, whereas, in other corporations, they cannot be so admitted.

Second Objection. Prices of wares are enhanced, and are dearer in Bristol than in any place in England.

Answer. Foreign wares of the countries to which we traffic are cheaper in Bristol than in London, as appears by our having of late brought great store to London, where we have sold them, notwithstanding the carriage, to a greater benefit than we could have done in Bristol; at present they are better and cheaper than anywhere else in England.

Third Objection. The Navy is supposed to be decayed.

Answer. Our Navy cannot be decayed since the last Parliament, but much increased, for we have built nine or ten new ships and barks, bought divers, and suffered none to decay; and although we have lost divers, and have some embargoed in Spain, yet we have

more than on the confirmation of our patent, and twice as many serviceable as before, as the Vice Admiral well knows.

Fourth Objection. The Customs are supposed to be decayed.

Answer. They are much increased, as appears by a copy of the Customs books, which we can show.

Fifth Objection. The poor craftsmen are not set to work as they might be.

Answer. On the year that the intercourse of trade was open to us, we adventured 400 more cloths, wrought to the full proof by the poor craftsmen, than in the two years before, and so they have had more work from the merchants than heretofore.

Reasons approving our corporation to be for the commonwealth of Bristol:—

The rich retailers, as the grocer, mercer, haberdasher, soapmaker, vintner, &c., adventuring themselves, must needs undo all the poorer sort who do not adventure, and eat out the meer merchants, who have but those to whom they may make their vent.

Unskilfulness in merchandize, and great numbers going over on the seas, must greatly abase our English commodities and advance the price of foreign wares; for the more there are to sell there, the worse market they will make, and the more buyers of strange commodities the dearer they must be.

When the Navy was best maintained in Bristol there were not above forty merchants, and now there are nearly 100, and less merchandize to be vented than at that time, for iron and alum, which were usually brought from thence, are now made better and cheaper in England than in Spain.

It is injurious to him who has served seven or eight years, and was apprenticed to a merchant, to have his living prejudiced by such as are ignorant of the trade, wherein there is more skill than every man judges.

A merchant cannot be a retailer for want of skill and acquaintance of customers, which requires an apprenticeship to bring him to it; neither can he have a fit place to dwell in, for all the houses that stand in place of retail are already in the hands of retailers.

No retailer at any time has built any shipping, and one poor merchant has sustained more loss in the service of the Prince than all the retailers in Bristol.

All the benefits done by townsmen to the city of Bristol, as the erection of hospitals and freeholds, giving out money for clothmaking, and other provisions for the poor, has been done by the merchants only, and never by retailers, or any other sciences.

The retailers were never in better state in Bristol; the meer merchants were never so many, and since the last Parliament very much impoverished by the restraint of the intercourse of trade.

The Society's opposition did not prevent the progress of the Bill. On April 21st the Select Committee returned the measure to the House "corrected in form but not in substance." The preamble recited "that no manner of benefit or commodity appeareth to grow by the said Act [of 1566] to the commonweal, or otherwise to the universal state of the said city according to the supposal of the said Act, but contrariwise." The Society's supporters made another effort on its behalf on the 28th April, when "after many arguments" the Bill was read a third time and passed. (Commons' Journals.) It was read a first time in the House of Lords on May 2nd, a second time on the 17th, and a third time and passed on the 19th. The Royal Assent followed shortly afterwards. (Lords' Journals.)

Considering the great importance of the new Act to the trading classes in the city as well as to the Society, it is an astonishing fact that no reference to the subject is made in the corporate records or in the numerous Bristol Calendars, and that Mr. Barrett, Mr. Seyer, and other local historians appear to have been unaware that such a statute was passed, the matter being entirely ignored by them. It was not, indeed, until 1833 that the Act was disinterred by the Municipal Corporation Commissioners, who by some means became acquainted with the facts. The following copy of the enactment has been transcribed *literatim* from the Chancery Rolls in the Record Office:—

Where in the Parliament holden at Westminster in the eighth year of the Queen's Magesty raigne that now is one Acte was made entytuled An Acte for confirmation of letters patente graunted to the Merchaut Adventurs of the Citie of Bristoll In whiche Acte it is

recited That the late King of famous memory Edward the Syxt by his graces letters patents under his greate seale of England bearing date at Westminster theight daye of December in the sixt yeare of his graces raigne Did incorporate the fellowship of the said merchaunt adventurers by the name of Master, Wardens and comynaltie of the mystery or arte of merchaunt Adventurers of the cite of Bristoll And by the said lres patents graunted unto them not onely to impleade & to be impleaded by the said name but also dyvers other liberties Ordynances pryvyledgs and auctorities as by the said lres pattentes more at larg appeared And by the said acte it was enacted and established that the said fellowship and Society of Merchaunt adventurers should be incorporate for evermore in suche manner and wyse and by suche name as is declared and contayned in the above rehersed lres patentes of our said late soveraigne lord King Edward the syxte And that the said corporation myght evermore thereafter have & inioye all such liberties ordynances rules pryvyledgs and auctorities as above menconed and specyfyed in the said lres patents according to the words sentences true intente effecte & meaning of the said lres patents to all intents and purposes And wheare furthermore it was by the said Acte of Parlyament further enacted and established that no man' of p'son or p'sons dwelling or wh' thereafter sholde dwell within the said cite of Bristoll or the suburbes or libertyes of the same shold after a certayn tyme in the same Acte mentioned use or exercise by hymself or by any other to recourse or trafficke of any merchaundize beyond the Seas unless the same p'son or p'sons weare then made or thereafter should be admitted to bee of the said Societie or corporation by the Master and Wardens of the said Corporation or elles that he or they had been or thereafter should be an apprentice and served in & to the said Arte or mystery of merchaunt adventurers within the same cyttie or lyberties of the same by the space of seaven yeres uppon payne of forfeiture of all the goods & merchaundize that he or they or any of them should at any tyme after a certen daye in the same Acte expressed so use carrye transporte or conveye to or fro beyond the Seas contrarye to the Tenour aforesaid Thone moitye of wh' forfeiture to the Queenes Ma^{tie} her heires & successors and thother moitye to be dyvyded betweene the said corporation and the Chamber of the said citty of Bristoll aforesaid And that yf any p'son or p'sons that then was or weare or that thereafter shold be any of the said Corporation of Merchaunts shold at any tyme after a c'tayne tyme in the said acte mentyoned use or exercyse any other science mystery art or occupacon then only that of merchaunt adventurers That then it should be leyfull to and for the said Master

and Wardens of the said Corporation for the tyme beyng to dysmysse expell remove and cutt of & out of the said socitye or corporation the same p'son or p'sons wh' so should use any other science mysteric or occupation then only of Merchauntes Adventurers as is aforesaid as in the said Act of P'lyament more at large appeareth Forasmuche as the like Corporation of gen'all exemption hath not any wheare ben founde to be suffered long to contynewe tho' in some place attempted and nevertheles uppon the experience thereof geven over agayne and for that also the experience thereof hath thought that no manner of benefit or comodytie appeareth to growe by the said Arte [Act ?] to the comon weale or otherwise to the unyversall state of the said citye of Bristoll according to the supposell of the said acte but contrarywyse well knowne and fownde oute that sithen the making of the said Acte the prices of all manner of merchaundize have ben and yet are much enhanced the quenes custome as is supposed decreased the welth of the citie verie much consumed and the Navye thereof as is also suggested partly decayed for that a greate many of welthe inhabitantes and citizens of the said citie which before that tyme occupied greate stockes were thereby cut of from the trade of the Seas And thereof followith that the poore craftes men are not wrought as they might be to the greate ruyn and decaye of all the said Citye and of thenhabitants of the same and to the greate damage of the cuntrye envyroning the same yf speedye remedye be not in that behalf provyded and the wonted libertye of the said citizens thereof to trafficke for merchaundize beyond the Seas fullye restored Bee it therefore enacted by the Queenes most excellent Ma^{tie} the Lordes Spirituall & temporall and the comons in this present P'lyament assembled and by thaucthoritye of the same That the said acte be from henceforth wholly repealed and utterlye made frustrate voyde and of none effect to all Intents & purposes.

It is satisfactory to be able to show the precise extent of the commercial fleet of Bristol about the period when this Act was under deliberation. The Queen's relations with Phillip II. of Spain being in a critical state, the Government ordered the officers of Customs at all the ports to make a circumstantial return of the vessels belonging to each place, with the tonnage of the ships. The voluminous statistics in the Record Office are dated 1571-2. London had then one merchant ship of 240

tons—the largest in the kingdom; 17 others varied between 220 and 150 tons, and 31 from 140 to 100 tons. Bristol, standing second in point of strength, possessed one ship of 140 tons, 3 of 100 tons, 5 of 80 tons, and 35 of 60 to 20 tons. (The accuracy of William Worcester's statement that William Canynges possessed ships of 900, 500, and 400 tons a century earlier may be left to the reader's judgment.) It is clear that the commerce of Bristol was at a low ebb in the reign of Elizabeth. The port contributed 33 ships for the reconquest of Gascony in 1451. In 1588, when the country was in deadly peril from the Spanish Armada, only three ships and a pinnace could be furnished for the Royal Navy.

At a period when the Corporation and even the small craft guilds kept a record of their proceedings, it is impossible to suppose that the transactions of a Society comprising the best educated and the most experienced business men in the city could have been less carefully preserved. As a matter of fact, however, no proof exists of any meeting of the Society from the date of its incorporation in 1552 until nearly half a century afterwards; and although officers were undoubtedly elected annually, the names of the only four Masters known to us would have been lost but for their occurrence in charters and other documents. A conjectural explanation of this remarkable hiatus will be offered later on. During the long period of darkness, only a few fitful gleams of light are obtainable from casual State Papers. Trade with Southern France, Spain, and Portugal had been the main-spring of local commerce in the fifteenth century and for many years afterwards. In the reign of Elizabeth the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition and the massacre of St. Bartholomew in France excited a passionate thirst for vengeance in the breasts of English Protestants, and

though peace long existed between the Queen and the Roman Catholic powers, a system, which can be described only as deliberate piracy, sprang into widespread popularity, and was, in many instances, notoriously encouraged by Elizabeth herself, who not only instigated the adventurers to a course of systematic plundering, but often claimed a share in their spoil. Through these proceedings, the legitimate and profitable intercourse of Bristolians with the Spanish ports had greatly diminished before the actual outbreak of hostilities with Philip II. As regarded France, local commerce was in little better condition. As an illustration of the outrages winked at by the Government, the following amongst many similar documents in the Record Office may be taken as a fair specimen. On June 6th, 1592, the deputy of the inhabitants of Bayonne—one of the chief resorts of Bristol ships—addressed a letter to the Privy Council, complaining of the piracies of English subjects in spite of the peace between the two countries, and notifying that, being unable to bear such indignities longer, the goods and persons of English merchants at Bayonne would be proceeded against unless justice were done. The writer proceeds to give particulars:—

In 1591, a Bayonne ship from Newfoundland with 108,000 dried fish, and other goods, to the total value of 6,000 crowns, was taken by a ship appointed by Sir Walter Raleigh, and taken to Uphill, near Bristol; and though the owner obtained a letter from the French Court to the Queen, and sent over two men for recovering the vessel, his agents had been forced to fly to France to save their lives, being threatened by the crew of Raleigh's ship and certain rich merchants of Bristol, who had received and still held the proceeds of the merchandise. Another Bayonne ship, with 200,000 fish, had been captured by three English ships, and taken to Bristol, where the Englishmen, several dwelling in Bristol, sold the vessel and cargo, value 7,000 crowns, the owner being utterly refused relief, and consequently ruined. Other captures, of a similar kind, were estimated to be of the value of 50,000 crowns.

There is no evidence that the sufferer from Raleigh's piracy obtained any relief. The outrage by the three Bristol ships was found to be so discreditable that the Privy Council ordered an inquiry, which resulted in the shipowners being ordered to restore the captured vessel and half of the fish, and to pay the hapless owner £60. Yet nothing was done, and nearly a year afterwards the Privy Council wrote to the Mayor and Aldermen, ordering that the unfortunate man should receive satisfaction, and pointing out that further delay would provoke the French King to grant letters of marque for the harrying of Bristol vessels. The civic reply is missing.

It was impossible for a commercial city to flourish under these circumstances, and a document has been fortunately preserved in the Society's "Book of Trade" which, though evidently marred by querulousness and exaggeration, affords trustworthy evidence of the prostration of commerce and industry. In 1595 the Privy Council sent down a mandate requiring Bristol to find and equip three ships towards a fleet then being prepared to suppress the ravages of Spanish ships of war and Dunkirk privateers, then swarming in the English Channel; whereupon the Corporation and the Merchants drew up and forwarded a lengthy account of the condition of local affairs. The following is a summary:—

Having stated that the Privy Council's letter had been maturely considered, the writers thank the Queen for her continued care of her subjects, and the Council for its efforts; but having considered the fortunes of this (now poor) place, they find its condition so changed of late as to be unable to bear the burden of the suggested contribution. To explain the causes of the city's decay, they state that Bristol had formerly a free traffic into the Straits, securing much increase in wealth, shipping, and provisions; but this trade the Londoners had so interrupted and monopolised that if the writers trade there, they are forced to compound therefor "at very near a quarter part, and so enrich them with our labour

and adventure," whilst prices are raised and trade reduced; especially since the Londoners by conveying their wares by cloth wains at an easy rate, and giving great time (which their riches may bear) draw customers within ten miles of Bristol, "and might sell better cheap, but keep up our prices, gaining thereby clearly a fourth part, which is our composition, whereby we wanting vent cannot gain by any possible adventure." Similarly, Bristol had formerly a good trade with Spain in which 20 or 30 tall ships were employed—now reduced to 8 or 10 small ships, the Spanish embargo and English reprisals having undone this trade. Through these difficulties the writers fear they shall be forced to ask permission to sell their ships to strangers, "as strangers more than we bring commodities inwards," and by paying double Customs cause the Customs books to show apparent prosperity in the city; whilst under cover to pay debts in London, &c., these strangers exchange their money thither, and do not export Bristol wares, whereby manufactures are towards an utter overthrow. Through the decline of these trades, the chief local merchants, losing hope in continuing here, bestow their money in country purchases, and have removed there their widows (*sic*) and daughters, transporting much Bristol money with them, while the meaner sort have spent what they had, or at best are trading without advantage, and the artisans lie without profitable employment. London, having infinitely increased by our and others' ruin, possesses almost the only trade; the eagle followeth the carcase, and no wonder the enemy so often falls upon them, seeing that they seldom encounter others. But that they, wealthy and strong, should meanly press the Queen and our poor purses to secure their own gains is surely a great wonder. Heretofore Bristolians had joined with them in protecting the Bordeaux fleet, but they had only served their own turns without respect to ours. The defence of the east and south coasts mainly concerns London traders, who have constant traffic with Normandy and Brittany; but Bristolians, having no trade in these parts, cannot reasonably be asked to consume in contributions the last ruins of their poor fortunes. The city has diligently served in protecting trade with Ireland, Portugal, and Cadiz without grudge or complaint. Having laid these considerations before the Council, the writers hope that they will not be treated as aliens in their own country, but being the common children of one glorious mother may receive alike favourable treatment. "Wherefore we pray that our sighs may be heard, and that the Londoners may be commanded to receive us into a community of trade," expressing willingness thereupon

to assist them in all public causes. In the meantime, though there is no general inclination to contribute, yet the abler sort show willingness to strain to their uttermost for a cause of this consequence. The letter ends with assurances of zeal for the country's service, and of affection for her Majesty.

The Privy Council, evidently believing that the Bristolians "protested too much," refused to abate its demands. Whereupon the citizens somehow found means to hire, equip, and man the three ships, which took part in the expedition to Cadiz, and also paid the wages of the crews on their return, the total outlay being stated at £2,500. The Privy Council was so highly pleased with these patriotic exertions that they called upon the deputy-lieutenants of Somerset to raise a contribution of £600 towards the relief of the citizens; and though the county gentry made protracted efforts to wriggle out of the charge, they were doubtless compelled to submit. (Privy Council Minutes.)

A few years after the above Jeremiad was penned the Society became practically moribund, and some of its more enterprising members, of whom the philanthropic John Whitson was perhaps the most prominent, became members of a Spanish Company* in London, that had obtained a charter of incorporation from Queen Elizabeth, and traded in conjunction with it. Doubtless with a view to assist the embarrassed Society, the Corporation, on September 20th, 1601, granted them a lease, for 90 years, at a rent of £3 6s. 8d., of "all those duties which are usually and of right ought to be taken of all ships, barques, and other vessels whatsoever arriving within the port for anchorage, cannage, and plankage," on the lessees covenanting to find sufficient planks, and to keep clean

* Having no armorial bearings of his own, Whitson sculptured the arms of this Company on the grand mantelpiece of his dwelling. This is now in the Red Maids' School.

the slip at Hungroad. It would appear from the civic Audit Books, however, that this was merely a renewal of a former lease of those dues, granted about 1570, and later statistics prove that the profits must have been too small to render much effectual aid. The situation becoming gradually more critical, and the subordination of some of the Society's members to a London fraternity being decidedly unpopular, the Corporation on December 31st, 1605, once more undertook a complete mercantile reorganisation. Practically ignoring the Society's charters, or claiming under them the "rights" they reserved to "the Mayor," it was resolved by the Common Council:—

That the Merchant Adventurers of this city shall exempt themselves from the Company and government of the Merchant Adventurers of London trading with Spain and Portugal, and that there shall be a Company of Merchant Adventurers of the city of Bristol continued and established in the same city, to be ordered and governed amongst themselves by such orders, constitutions and policies as shall hereafter be set down and agreed upon by the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council according to the charters of the said city. And that every burgess of this city which is or shall be willing and desirous to be of the said Company of Merchants, and to use the trade of merchandise, shall be admitted into the same Company, paying 20s. as a fine to the use of the same Company, and giving over the exercise of all other trades, occupations, and professions of getting his or their living. And all other merchants of the city which are already free of the same Company shall pay towards the contribution of the same Company only 6s. 8d. Provided always that any others who shall not be admitted into the said Company within the space of one year But shall be desirous to be admitted after the space of one year next ensuing, shall pay for his admittance as is paid in like cases in London. Except only such persons as are or shall be of the Common Council, who shall pay only 20s. and no more to the use of the said Company at what time soever any such person being of the Common Council shall be admitted into the said Company. And all the sons and apprentices of every freeman of the said Company shall pay only 6s. 8d. for his admittance at any time hereafter, being brought up in the trade of merchandise. And this

day Mr. William Hicks (Alderman) is chosen and appointed to be Treasurer for the said Company, to receive the fines and contributions of the same Company. And that Mr. John Hopkins, Mr. William Vawer, and Mr. John Whitson, Aldermen, are appointed to admit any into the said Company that shall be hereafter desirous to be admitted according to this present Ordinance. And every man to bring in his fine by the 15th of the month of January next. (Corporate Minute Book.)

Having made the above Ordinance, the Common Council proceeded to appoint Alderman John Hopkins as Master and Aldermen Vawer and Whitson as Wardens "of the Company of Merchants." (Hopkins had been appointed Master of the Society in the previous May.) William Flook [Fleet?], merchant, was appointed collector of the fines and contributions of the Company, which he was directed to bring in to the Treasurer. And Matthew Haviland, Robert Aldworth, John Rowbero, John Aldworth, John Roberts, Thomas Aldworth, John Butcher, John Eglesfield, William Cary, Robert Rogers, Thomas Moore, and Arthur Needs (probably all old members) were appointed "committees for the Merchants' Ordinances."

The infusion of new blood effected under the above thorough-going Ordinance endowed the Society with a vigour that it had never before possessed. Having taken the matter in hand, moreover, the Corporation resolved on further measures to ensure that the recovery should be not only complete but lasting. On May 20th, 1606, the Common Council resolved that every citizen of London importing or exporting goods at Bristol should pay the same dues for weighage and wharfage that Bristol merchants did in London. And as there were no wharfage dues then payable in Bristol, it was further resolved that every person, not being a free burgess of Bristol, should thenceforth pay sixpence per ton for every ton of

goods shipped or landed in this port, "which money shall be paid for and in the name of wharfage, and be employed for and toward the reparation of the Key and Back"—salt, corn, fish, coals, and goods brought coastwise in trows and small boats being exempted from the impost. (Corporate Minutes.) On June 30th, 1606, the Mayor and Corporation gave authority to Emanuel Ashe and John Gunning, two members of the Society, to collect the new dues during pleasure, the document asserting that, although £1,500 had been spent on the quays "of late years," they were in great decay and want of repair, and that their restoration could not be effected except by levying duties on goods laden or discharged. (Society's Book of Trade.) There can be little doubt, however, that the real object of the Corporation was to establish the Society on a sound financial basis. Such, at all events, was the origin of the Wharfage Dues, with which the Society were identified for more than two centuries and a half.

It will be observed that the charge was originally designed to affect non-freemen exclusively; but this intention was soon tacitly abandoned, for the Common Council resolved in the following February to apply through the members of Parliament for the city for the consent of the Crown to the imposition, "to be paid for all forms of merchandise . . . as well by all strangers or foreigners as citizens and burgesses of this city." It may be assumed that the King's confirmation was obtained, though the fact is nowhere recorded. However that may be, the Corporation gave authority, during pleasure, to William Fleet (the merchant previously appointed to gather in the Society's contributions) to collect the due, which he would conveniently do in conjunction with the charges for anchorage, &c., already in

the Society's hands. Amongst the civic receipts for the year ending Michaelmas, 1607, were £50 "received from Mr. Alderman Whitson [then Master] for money that he received for Wharfage." Three years later, £50 were again paid in by the Alderman "for part of the Wharfage money." And £40 more were received in the same way from Alderman Gunning in 1611. This was the last payment made to the city Treasurer, and the total profits of the due were afterwards allowed to be retained by the Society, which was thereby placed in a prosperous condition. The precarious nature of the arrangement induced the Hall, in 1623-4, to appoint a committee "to be suitors to the Corporation for a lease of the wharfage dues," but so far as can be discovered the application fell stillborn. It was not, indeed, until 1661 that the Society's wishes were realised. (See *post.*)

In April, 1612, the Corporation, repenting of its opposition to the Act of 1566, or swayed by the mercantile element which had recovered its former ascendancy, passed a resolution granting the Society permission to make Ordinances, by virtue of their charters, forbidding any member to exercise a trade other than that of a merchant adventurer, and interdicting any burgess, save a member, from using the trade of a merchant adventurer. The Society were directed to produce such Ordinances for the consideration and approval of the Common Council. This was accordingly done in the following August, when the new Ordinances were confirmed. So far as can be traced, this was the last occasion on which the Corporation claimed a right to interfere in the Society's affairs.

At a meeting of the Society on July 6th, 1618, an "Act" was passed, couched in the following terms:—

An Acte that the ordinaunce and decrees of the Societie of marchante Adventurers of the Citty of Bristoll shalbee perused, revised, and put in execucon, and that noe person shalbee reputed to bee of the Company onlesse hee bee first admitted in open Courte, and then entred into the Register of the saide Societie.

Memorandum that att a generall Courte of the Maister Wardeins and Commynaltie of the Arte or Misterie of marchaunte Adventurers of the Citty of Bristoll houlden the sixte day of Julie 1618 Yt is enacted and Ordeyned that Mr. John Barker nowe Maister of the saide Arte or Misterie, with the Assistance of Mr. John Langton, Humfrye Hooke, Richard Holworthie, William Jones, Humfrey Browne, and Thomas Colston mchants, shall pervse the Ordinaunce and Lawes heretofore made for the Rule and governance of the saide Arte or Misterie: And shall collect and gather such of the same Ordinaunce and lawes, and ordeyne and appointe other ordinaunce and lawes for the better governement of the Commynaltie of the same Arte or Misterie as to them shall seeme convenient accordinge to the tyme and recourse of marchandice now vsed in the Citty of Bristoll: **And** for that expresse mention is made in and by the seuerall Ordinaunce Charters and letters pattente graunted to the maister wardeyns and Comynaltie of the saide Arte or Misterie That noe manner of person or persons dwelling or that shall dwell within the saide Citty of Bristoll, the Subburbes or Liberties of the same, shall vse or exercise the recourse or trafficke of marchandise beyond the seas vnlesse they bee admitted into the saide Societie as by the same Ordinaunce Charters and Letters Pattente may appeare **It** is therefore this daie alsoe ordeyned enacted and established that noe manner of person or persons whetsoever inhabitinge or dwelling within the saide Citty of Bristoll or the Subburbes or Liberties of the same shalbee reputed nor taken to bee of the saide Societie vnlesse hee will subscribe to the Ordinance of the saide Company, and shalbee admitted in open Courte, and his or their name and names entred and recorded into the Lyste or Register of the saide Societie, in the presence of the Maister Wardeins and Assistants of the saide Arte or Misterie for the tyme beinge, or the moste parte of them **And that** they and every of them shall well and truly observe perform fulfill holde and keepe not onely all the Acts Ordinances Statutes and decrees wch they the saide John Barker, John Langton, Humfrey Hooke, Richard Holworthie, William Jones, Humfrey Browne, and Thomas Colston shall collect or make and present to the Maister Wardeyns and Comynaltie of the said Arte or Misterie at their next generall Assemblie but alsoe

all other Acts Ordinaunces and decrees wch by the Maister Wardeyns and Comynaltie of the said Arte or Misterie for the tyme beinge shalbee made decreed and agreed uppon.

The committee appointed by this instrument devoted four months to the fulfilment of their instructions, and presented the result of their deliberations to a Hall held on November 17th, 1618, when the following Code appears to have been unanimously approved and confirmed:—

The Actes Ordinaunces & Decrees of the Maister Wardeyns and Comynaltie of the Arte or Misterie of Marchaunte Aduenturers of the City of Bristol, as they were collected perused & revised by Mr. John Barker, John Langton, Humfrey Hooke, Richard Holworthie, William Jones, Humfrye Browne, and Thomas Colston according to the late Order in that behalfe made, and presented att a generall Courte of the saide Societie holden the xvijth day of November Anno Dni 1618, and then approved allowed and enioyned by the Maister Wardeins & Comynalty of the saide Arte or Misterie to bee in all points observed performed holden and kept by euerie brother of the saide Companie, as followeth.

The Office of the Maister and Wardeins.

The Maister and Wardeyns shall (to their vttermoste power) Overseer, rule, and gouerne the saide Misterie and Comynaltie, and all the men occupiers, dealers, factors, wares, and marchandices of the same, and shall supporte and maynteyne (by their best skill knowledge and endeavours) the Affaires thereof, and all the Actes Ordinaunces and priuiledges which are or shalbee made for the Rule and government of the saide Misterie and Comynaltie, and shall doe righte and Justice to all persons in all matters and questions (that shall depend before them) without favour or affection Malice or Displeasure, haueing noe singuler respect to themselves, in derogation of the Common Wealth of the saide Comynaltie And alsoe to their power shall assist all the Officers of the saide Misterie & Commynaltie intill their lawfull and just doeing, toucheinge or concerning the maynteynance and supporte of the graunte and Ordinance made or to bee made by force of the Charters or Letters pattente of the Maister Wardeyns and Comynaltie of the saide Arte or Misterie **Item** that euerie person and persons wch shalbee

chosen Maister or Wardeyns of the saide Arte or Misterie, and shall refuse to execute the same, haueinge noe lawfull cause soe to doe, shall forfait & pay to the use of this Societie the somme of *xxli*.

The Office of the Treasourour.

The Treasourour shall yeerely at the tyme of his Election, or at the next Courte then after, become bound with one sufficient suretie to bee allowed of by the maister and wardeyns, to make and giue a iust and true accompt vnto the succedinge Treasourour of all such money as he shall receyve to the vse of the saide Societie, and to redeliver the Ordinaunces, Charters, Letters pattente and other writings of the said Societie (wch shalbee in his power) vnto the next succedinge Treasourour.

Hee shall duringe his Office vse all diligence to levye and receyve All manner of debts dueties forfeitures, brocks, and fines belonging to the Company, and attend att euerie Courte (being summoned) without speciall lycence to the contrary vppon paine of vs. to bee forfeited of and for euerie such his defaulte.

If anie person bee indebted to the Company and shall refuse to pay the Treasourour the some due (hee requireinge the same) the Treasourour shall informe the maister and wardeyns thereof, whoe by thaduisse of the Assistants shall take order for the Leavieng of the same.

If anie presentment bee made to the Treasourour of anie offence comitted against the Ordinaunces, or anie of them, hee shall Cause the same to bee registred into a booke, therefore to bee appointed, but shall not bewray the name of the presenter to anie pson, but to the M^r or Wardeins, vnlesse the person presented shall in open Courte require to knowe his accuser, and then the person presentinge shall iustifie his presentment in Courte.

Hee shall also receyve of the Beadle the absence money and alsoe all such money as shall growe due from the Beadle for the Wharfadge, Keyadge, planckadge, and other dueties wch hee is appointed to receyve & shall chardge his accompt therewith.

Hee shall att the next generall Courte after hee shalbee dismissed from the Office of Treasourour exhibite his accompte of all the money that hee hath receyved and paide duringe his Office to or for the vse of the saide Company.

Hee shall yeeld vpp his accompt before Auditors assigned for that purpose, and deliuer to his Successour All such money as by the same accompt shalbee found to remayne in his handes, and that within tenn daies next after the Auditing thereof.

Euerie person chosen Treasourour and refusing it without lawfull Cause shewed to the Contrary shall forfeite and loose the somme of tenne pounds.

The Office of the Clarke.

The Clarke of this Companie shalbee diligent and attendant vppon the Maister Wardeins and Treasourour att all tymes requisite and appointed, for matters touchinge the Companie.

Hee shall obey the Commaundement of the Maister Wardeyns and Treasourour concerninge the Affaires, busines, and availles of the Company.

Hee shalbee of honest and courteous behaviour towards the M^r, Wardeins and Treasourour, and all others of the Felowshippe.

Hee shall make due and true reporte of any thing belonging to his Charge and Office when hee shalbee required.

Hee shall write and register all acts that shalbee made, incontinent after they bee concluded.

Hee may in the Pamphlett or Declaracon of anie Acte amend the phrase or enditinge, by takeing, adding, or altering any Wordes, soe as the meaninge bee not altered, and that the amendement bee read att the next Courte, and bee confirmed if it bee liked.

Hee shall at the end of euerie Courte (generall, or of the Assistants) read that which passed that daie, and at the next Courte hee shall read againe that which passed at the laste Courte (ymediately before the entringe into the matter of the Courte) to the intent it may bee ratified, or disanulled as the Company shall finde occasion.

Hee shall haue for his yeerely Fee or Salarie the sume of Fower poundes to bee quarterlie paide by the Treasourour or Beadle.

The Office of the Beadle.

The Beadle shall give diligent Attendance vppon the Wardeyns and Treasourour, and their Commaundements touching the businesse or Affaires of the Company hee shall observe and obey to his power.

Hee shall (according to directions given him) summe and warne the Companie to appeare and meete att all tymes, and in all places appointed.

Hee shall euerie Courte, as well of Assistaunts as generality keepe a noate to the best of his power whoe shalbee absent (being lawfully warned) or whoe cometh late, halfe an hower after the first sittinge of the Maister, or after tyme warned to appeare And at the next Courte deliver there names to the Treasourour.

Hee shall demaund of euerie person that maketh defaulte at anie Courte generall or of Assistants, or cometh late to either of them, such fine as (by the ordinaunce) is due for his defaulte or absence.

Hee shall informe the Maister and Wardeins or Treasourour of euerie person that shall refuse, or doe not paie to him, such somme of money as is due for his defaulte or absence.

Hee alsoe shall informe the M^r and Wardeyns or Treasourour of all offences done against anie the Actes or Ordinaunce whereof hee shall have anie knowledge.

If hee shall have knowledge of anie offence done against anie of the Ordinaunces or Actes and doth not within xiiij daies next after such his knowledge thereof disclose and vtter the same to the Maister and wardeyns or Treasourour, hee shall forfait his Office.

Hee shall collect and receyve the keyadge, planckadge, and all other dueties and Somes of money given vnto him in charge concerning the Company, and shall repay the same to the Treasourour and bee accomptable therefore when hee shalbee therevnto required.

Hee shall monethly deliver to the Treasourour such somes of money as hee shall receyve for absence, or late comminge to the Courte, and shalbee allowed for his collection thereof ijs. in every xxs. over and above his yeerely Salarie and soe after the Rate.

Hee shall have for his yeerely Fee or Salarie the somme of *vj*l*. xiijs. iiij*d*.* to bee paide out of his Collections.

An Ordinaunce concerning the number of Assistantes, their Office and place.

There shalbee twelve of the moste discreet wise and worthie men of the Societie elected and chosen yeerely to bee Assistants and Helpers to the Maister Wardeins and Treasourour of the saide Company in their severall Offices, whoe shall by and with their best Counsell knowledge power and skill, suporte the Affaires of the Companie, and helpe and assiste them in all matters and busines concerneing the order rule and quiet governement as well of the saide Fellowshipe, as of their goods and marchandice, without anie singular regard to themselves in derogacon of the Common Weale of the saide Company, And shall to their vttermoste power supporte and observe the privilegedgs graunts and Ordinauncs of this Societie made or to bee made, without consenting to the breach or violacon of anie of them, without the Common Consent of the Company. Righte and Justice they shall doe to their power vnto all persons in all matters and questions depending before them, without favour, affection, or displeasure.

And being soe chosen, every of them shall remayne in the same Office, and bee reputed an Assistant of the saide Maister and Wardens during one whole yeere or during soe long tyme as the Maister Wardeins and residue of the saide assistants, or the more parte of them, shall find and approve him capable of such degree and place And that vppon the avoydance of anie of the saide Assistants from the saide Office, there shalbee other discreete wise and worthie men of the saide Company elected and chosen in their places And soe like choise to bee made from tyme to tyme for ever **And that** the Maister Wardens Treasourour and Assistants for the tyme beinge, or as many of them as shalbee necessarie (whereof the Maister Wardeins and Treasourour to bee of the number) may assemble and meete together as often as they shall please in the Common Hall of the saide Company, and there kepe Courte, discourse, treat of, and conclude the matters, dealinges, and busines of the saide Societie, and therein give order and sett directions for the good and benefitt of the saide Society in such manner, and to such purpose as in their wisdomes shall seeme moste Convient.

An Ordinance for keeping of Courte and for fines for lacke of apparance vppon due warninge aswell for the Assistants as the Generalitie.

It shalbee lawfull for the Maister and Wardeins for the Common Weale and benifitt of the Companie, or for anie other vrgent cause, to call the Companie together, and keepe either a generall Courte or a Courte of Assistants on any daie whatsoeuer, not beinge Sondaie or anie principall or solemp Feast daie, To the which Courte and Courtes euerie person free or admitted of the Companie (beinge warned of by the Beadle) shalbee bounde to come. And if anie of the generalitie (beinge warned) doe not come to the generall Courte, haveinge noe reasonable excuse to the contrary, and soe allowed by the maister and wardeyns, and the greatest number of Assistaunts then present, shall forfeite for every tyme that he shall make defaulte as aforesaide xij*d*. And every one cominge halfe an hower after the Maister shalbee sate, haveinge noe reasonable excuse to bee allowed of as aforesaide shall forfeite vj*d*. And if anie shall departe the Courte before the breakinge vpp of the same and haue not leaue of the Maister shall forfeite vj*d*. And hee that absenteth himselfe from Courte three Courte daies one after another without lycence or lawfull excuse shall forfeite vs. And every assistant beinge warned, and not cominge to the Courte, but absenteth himselfe from the Courte, haveinge noe leave of the Maister nor reasonable excuse to the

Contrary to bee allowed as aforesaide shall forfait ijs., and comeinge late to the Courte haveinge noe reasonable excuse to be allowed of as aforesaide shall forfeite xij*d*. And euery person that shalbee warned to appeare vpon a paine certeyne, and shall make default of apparance, haveinge noe reasonable excuse to the contrary, and soe allowed as aforesaide, shall without favour, pardon, or mittigacon, pay the somme and penalty wherevpon he was warned, soe the some exceed not xx*s*. And that there shalbee present at every Courte aswell of the Assistants as of the Generalitie Seaven Assistants at the least besides the Maister, wardeins, and Treasourour, or els nothinge to bee concluded at the Courte where such number shall lacke And all things passed at any Courte of Assistants shalbee read at the end of the same Courte and beginninge of the next Courte of Assistants And in like manner all things that shalbee passed at a generall Courte shalbee read at the end of the same Courte and at the beginninge of the next generall Courte; And all persons commaunded by y^e maister to departe the Courte for anie reasonable cause shall absent himselfe, vntill hee bee againe called vpon paine of *x*s**. **And that** vpon the tuesdaie next after the fiveth day of November yeerely (if noe extraordinary occasion shall hinder) the M^r, Wardeins, and residue of the saide Companie shall meete together in their Comon Hall, and there make choise of a newe Maister, Wardens, Treasourour, and Assistants for the yeere followinge **And** likewise that Fower tymes at the least in every yeere, viz.: within *xx* daies next before or after every of the Feasts of the birth of our Lord god, the Anunciacon of the blessed virgin Mary, the Nativitie of Saint John Baptist, and St. Michaell the Arch Angell, there shalbee holden and kept a generall Courte, wherevnto every person of the saide Societie shalbee bounde to come and appeare vpon lawfull warninge, there to haue Communicacon together aswell of the recourse and traffique of marchandice as to heare Complaints, take informacons, and sett dirrections (according to reason and good conscience) between *ptie* and *pties* of the saide Societie concerning the same And that noe *pson* or *psns* of the saide Societie shall att any tyme sue or ymplead any other of them for anie matter concerning the recourse or traffique of marchandize before the same bee first shewed to the M^r and Wardeins, or one of them, vpon paine of *xx*li**.

For Placing the Assistants and Generallity.

The Assistant shall take his place neere vnto the Maister and Wardeins, accordinge to his degree, place, and antiquitie amongst the Companie vnlesse anie Alderman or other of this City (whose

place or Office shall require the contrary) be there present, And those that have served in the Office of Maister or Wardeins (being not of the number of Assistants) shall take place accordinge to their degrees as they have proceeded in the same Offices vnlesse anie other person bee then present whose Office and place in the City shall require the contrary, And all the rest of the generallitie shall take place next beneath those that have byn wardeins and assistaunts every man accordinge to his degree and antiquitie in the Company And yf anie question or Curiositie shall arise or bee offered by anie person or persons for sittinge or placeinge of them as aforesaide, Euerie such person shalbee directed by the M^r and Wardens of the Company for the tyme beinge, and shall sitt where hee shalbee appointed vpon paine to forfeite xij*l*. euerie tyme hee shall refuse soe to do.

For direction and speache in Courte.

For avoidinge of Confusion, and superfluous speech and talke in Courte, either generall or of Assistaunts, Yt is ordered and enacted that noe person of this Societie shall speake whilist another is speaking, nor yet one to another, after silence is commaunded by the Maister or Wardeins, But shall give attentive eare to him that is speaking, who shall direct his speach to the Maister onely, without nameing any other, and shall frame his speach to the matter propounded, or in question. Neither shall anie man speake but thrice to one matter without licence of the Maister vpon paine to forfeite eurie tyme that hee shall offend contrarie to this acte the somme of vjs. viij*l*.

For decent speache in Courte.

It is ordered and enacted that noe person of this Societie shall in open Courte vse anie vnseemely or reproachfull speach, but shall in comely and quiet manner speake to the matter propounded, And if anie ill language bee given that may breed offence (contrary to the meaninge of this Act and soe adiudged by the Courte) the partie offendinge shall forfeite vjs. viij*l*. every time that hee shall offend in such case.

For Silence in Courte.

If the Maister shall with the stroake of the hammer or otherwise commaund silence to bee kept, euery person not obeying, or doeing contrary, shall forfeite xij*l*.

For Order in Courte by moste voices.

Wf anie question or matter shall depend in Courte, wherein it shall be necessarie that the same shall passe by consent of moste voices, then every man shall speake and give his voice by order accordinge to his degree and place in the Companie, And in anie matter of fine, penaltie, guifte, or other disbursement to bee made, noe person or persons shall exceed the value or quantitie thereof wch shalbee prescribed or nominated to bee done by the Maister Wardeins and Assistants for the tyme beinge.

For absence in Courte of the person questioned.

Wf anie matter bee moved in Courte, which may concerne anie person present in Courte, That partie whome the matter shall concerne, his brother and partener, shall at the Commaundement of the Maister departe the Courte, and absent himselfe soe long tyme as that matter shalbee treated vpon.

Against disclosing of matters passed in Courte.

Wf anie brother of this Societie shall reveale or disclose anie matter treated of or passed in Courte either generall or of Assistaunts to anie person not beinge free of the Companie to the hurte or anoyance of anie of the Companie, The partie soe offending shall forfeite for the first tyme vjs. viij*d.*, for the second tyme xijs. iiij*d.*, and for the third tyme xxs. and soe for evy other tyme vjs. viij*d.* over and aboue his last fine, And if the matter disclosed shalbee or may turne to the preiudice or hurte of the saide Societie, Then hee or they soe discloseinge such matter shall paie such fine as the Maister Wardeins and Commynaltie of the said Company shall taxe vpon him, or els loose the benefitt and priviledge of this Societie, and bee discommoned therefrom for ever.

For admittance of Retailers.

Noe Retailer or Artificer, whilest they remaine Retailers or Artificers shalbee receyved or admitted into the Freedome of this Societie for anie fine whatsoever without approbacon and allowance of a speciall Courte houlden for that purpose.

For admission of the Sonnes & apprentices of meere marchantes.

The Sonnes and apprentices of every meere marchant of this Societie, demaunding the Freedome of the same, haveinge served out such termes of apprentishipp as they shall bee bounde for,

beinge of the adge of xxj yeeres and upward, and vseinge noe other trade, shall enioye the Freedome of this Societie paienge at the tyme of his admission these sommes followinge, viz.: to the Treasourour for the tyme beinge to the vse of the Company iiij*s*. v*d*., to the Clarke of the Company v*d*. and to the Beadle iiij*d*.

For Admission of the Sonnes of Redemptioners.

By Redemptioner ys meant euery one that shall come in vnto this Societie by waie of Composition after these actes shalbee established by the Company And then the sonne of every Redemp-tioner (exercisinge the trade of marchandisinge onelie and haveinge served noe apprentishippe therevnto) shall pay successivelie for ever xls. for his admission, with the accustomed Fees to the Treasourour, Clarke, & Beadle as is before menconed.

Whoe may clayme his freedome by Patrimonie.

All persons Claymeing the Freedome of this Companie by Patrimonie shall bee borne meere Englishe, that is to saie, within the Kings maiesties Dominions, or made a Denizen by Acte of parliament, and bee the sonne of a brother of this Societie lawfully and orderly admitted.

Whoe maie claime his freedome by Apprenticeshood.

All such persons as have served meere marchants or at this daie have anie time to serve them, or have served anie Redemp-tioners lawfully admitted, or at this daie have anie tyme to serve them, or shall hereafter serve either of them, beinge bounde accordinge to order, and enrolled amongst the enrolments of this Societie, may enioy the freedome of this Companie, requireinge the same, and paienge the accustomed Fees to the Treasourour, Clarke, and Beadle as is before menconed, soe as the apprentice of the Redempconer bee employed in the trade and recourse of marchandice onely during his terme.

For what terme apprentices shalbee bound.

Noe man or brother which is or shalbee free of this Company shall hereafter take any apprentice to bee bounde for anie lesse terme then seaven years, neither the yeeres of anie such apprentice shall end before hee bee of the adge of one & twenty yeeres vpon paine of xx*li*.

At what yeeres sonnes or apprentices shalbee admitted.

Noe manner of person being the sonne or apprentice of any brother of this Companie shalbee admitted into this Societie vnlesse hee bee of the full adge of one and twentie yeeres and upwards.

For Inrollinge of Indentures.

The Indenture of euerie apprentice of every brother of this Societie hereafter to bee taken shall (within the space of sixe moneths next after the makinge thereof) bee enrolled and entred (by the Clarke) into a booke for that purpose to bee kept And the Indentures of all other apprentices that nowe stand bounde to anie brother of this Societie shalbee enrolled into the same booke within twelve moneths next ensueing And the Clarke to haue for every such Inrollment *iiij*℥.

**Against mariadg or dealinge of apprentices duringe
theire terme.**

Noe Apprentice of this Societie shall from hencefourth marry duringe his apprenticeshood, neither vse nor deale in Feate of mchan-dize for himselfe vntill hee hath served seauen yeeres of his apprenticeshipp, without the Licence of his maister (the same Licence to be signified to the maister and wardens and soe recorded) neither deale for anie other without his maisters Licence, Nor yet willinglie absent himselfe from the service of his saide maister by the space of twoe moneths vppon paine never to enioy the Freedome of this Societie by apprenticeshood.

**Apprentices shall confer with the Clarke before
hee demaund his freedome.**

Curie parson clayming his Freedome by Patrimonie or apprenticeshood shall present himselfe twoe or three daies before the Courte to the Clarke, to thintent hee may enforme the Courte of such matters as shall be requisite in his admission, or else shall not bee admitted at that Courte.

**That apprentice shall shewe his Indenture and bringe
Certificate.**

An Apprentice claymeinge his Freedome by apprenticeshood shall shewe forth his Indenture made in due forme according to the custome of this Citty, And withall a Letter from his maister (if hee

bee not present in Courte to justifie the same) testifieng that hee hath well and truely served him as an apprentice accordinge to the ordinances.

Against Untrue Certificate of the Service of an apprentice.

¶ If anie person shall att anie tyme hereafter write declare avowe or testifie, by his letter or otherwise, for the iust and true service of his apprentice, whereby such apprentice shall attayne and enjoy the Freedome of the Company, and the testimony or Declaracon thereof shall afterwards bee disproved, such a M^r soe offending shall forfeite to the vse of the Societie x*li*. And the apprentice soe fraudulently mad free shall be disfranchised and dismissed out of the Companie.

For persons admitted gratis.

All persons admitted into the Freedome of this Societie gratis shall enjoy the Freedome but for their owne persons onelie, vnlesse they doe voluntarily bestowe some gratuity to the vse of the poore of this Societie to the value of xls. at the least.

That Factors and pursers shall deale but for such as are of the Company.

¶ From hencefourth Noe marchant or brother of this Society neither Factor Attorney or Purser of anie shippe barke or vessell wch shalbee employed by anie brother or brothers of this Company goeing vnto anie the parts beyonde the Seas, or comeinge into anie the kings ma^{ties} Dominions within the Realm of England, shall att anie tyme hereafter Joyne himselfe in Company, or bee Factor or Attorney with or for anie person or persons of this Citty for anie goodes wares or marchandises to bee boughte vttered or sould within the Porte or Citty of Bristoll, or anie other Porte or place neere therevnto beinge, But onely with or for those marchants wch are or shalbee admitted and free of the Companie and Societie aforesaide vppon paine to forfait aud pay for the first Offence xx*li*. And if he offend the second tyme therein, to loose his Freedome of this Societie, and be disfranchised and excluded therefrom for ever.

Against Joinct dealing with Foraines.

¶ From hencefourth Noe person Free of this Company shall Joyne or Deale in Partnershippe with anie person not free of this

Companie to colour his goodes, or with any Retayler or Artificer of or for anie goods wares or marchandizes to bee transported or brought to or from anie the parts beyond the Seas, vppon paine of vs. in every pound starlinge of the value of the saide goodes so coloured to bee paide by him that shall Deale or Joyne in partnershipp against the true meaninge hereof.

For readinge of letters & requestes.

All letters, requests, or writings sent and directed to the Generality, or which may concerne the whole Societie, shall at the next Courte after the delivery or receipt of them, bee published and openly read vppon payne to forfaitte xs., to bee paide by the partie offendinge.

For collectinge j° per li vppon Marriners wages.

Euery Marchant, Factor, purser and other of this Societie & their servants, which shall collect the Averadge of anie shippe barke or vessell vnladeing in this Porte, shall in his Collection endeavour to gett into his power (out of the Fraight and Dueties due to every owner of such shipp barke or vessell) j° . vppon every pounce sterlinge wch y° marriners wages for that voyadge shall amounte vnto, to the intent that the Owners may discounte it in the wages of the Company towards y° reliefe of poore Seafareing men remayninge in the Almshouse of this Company And haveinge receyved it shall deliver the same vnto the Beadle of this Societie, requiringe the same, and he to bee accomptable vnto the Treasourour thereof.

For the Execution of Ordinaunces.

If anie person or persons which is or shalbee Free of this Societie shall transgresse or breake anie Ordinaunce or acte made or to bee made by Common Consent of the Company yt shalbee lawfull for any brother of the same To Informe the M^r, Wardeins, and Treasourour thereof mentioninge both tyme place and all other Circumstances wch may sett forth the matter, the wch Information The Clarke shall register into a booke for that purpose to bee secretly kept, and onely shewen to the maister and wardens vnlesse in open Courte it shalbee otherwise commaunded.

Any person presented, and sent for, and spoken with by the Officer, to appeare at a Court of Assistants or generality to answere anie offence p^sented against him, makeinge default & haveinge noe reasonable excuse to bee allowed of by the Court shall forfait xs.

¶ Doe person condemned in Courte of Assistaunts for anie Affence shall sue for grace or pardon before the whole somme wherein hee shalbee condemned bee paide to the Treasourour, nor then neither, except it bee in Courte of Assistaunts, and within three Courte daies next after the payment of the money (absence money or for late coming onelie excepted).

¶ Doe person haveing sued for grace, and receyved his answere, shall sollicite for any further grace.

¶ Euerie person wch shall transgresse anie of the Acts or Ordinaunces of this Societe shalbee Censured in Courte of Assistaunts onely vnlesse it shalbee otherwise appointed by the Maister and Wardeyns.

¶ Att a generall Courte holden the xvijth November 1618 **¶** Wee the marchante aduenturers of the City of Bristoll whose names are subscribed doe acknowledge hereby to have seene and pused the actes ordinaunces and decrees of the maister Wardens and Commalty aforesaid wch are before written and conteyned in this booke, and have alsoe approved of the same And doe promise to bee ordered and ruled thereby, submitting ourselves and every of us to the Forfaitures fines and penalties in them and every of them conteyned And further Doe bynde ourselves to observe pforme and keepe not onely the acts ordinaunces taxacons and decrees aforesaide, but alsoe all other Actes ordinaunces taxacons & decrees of the saide Societie hereafter to bee duely & lawfully made concluded or agreed vppon either in any Courte of Assistants or of the Generalitie of the saide Societie And in wittnes whereof have subscribed our names.

(Here follow the names of the members.)

The following interesting list of members is also dated November 17th, 1618, and accompanies the foregoing document :—

A Catalogue or Register of the names of all such persons as haue bine lawfully admitted into the Societie of the maister wardeins and Comynaltie of the Arte or Misterie of marchante Adventurers of the City of Bristoll, accounteing them only wch nowe bee and wch from henceforth shalbee of the same Societie (the marke in the margent serveing only to discribe y^e Redemptioner).

November the Seauententh, 1618.

5. Mr. John Barker, Mr of the Companie	Robert Haviland
3. Mr. John Whitesone	Phillipp Dickenson
Mr. Thomas James	Edmund Gainsford
Mr. William Vawer	Beniamyn Crokhey
Mr. Mathewe Haviland	Humfry Fitzherbert
5. Mr. Robert Aldworth	John Locke
5. Mr. Abell Kitchen	Walter Ellis
3. Mr. Iohn Guy	Phillipp Ellis
2. Mr. Iohn Doughtie	Thomas Colston
5. Mr. William Pitt	Francis Derrick
2. Mr. John Gonninge	Nathaniell Butcher
5. Mr. John Langton	William Wyatt
5. Mr. Humfrie Hooke	Edward Wakeham
5. Mr. John Tomlinson	Giles Elbridge
5. Mr. Andrew Charlton	Miles Jackson
Mr. Richard Holworthie	Peter Miller
3. Mr. Thomas Wrighte	Richard Ellis
Mr. Edward Coxe	Thomas Rowland
5. Mr. William Jones	Willm Griffeth
Mr. Humfrie Browne	Alexander James
5. Mr. Richard Longe	John Griffith
Mr. Nicho. Meredith	George Butcher
Mr. Boulton	Thomas Adames
John Rowberoe	William Stevins
Thomas Hopkins	Edward Paine
5. Arthur Hibbins	William Chetwind
George White	Francis Madley
Nicholas Hickes	Richard Vickris
Thomas Davies	Thomas Slocumb
Robert Johnson	Richard Stanfast
Edmond Browne	Francis Creswick
George Goughe	Walter Williams
Michaell Wrighte	William Powell
William Pitt	John Gardiner
William Hickes	Erasmus Wrighte
Iohn Griffith, senr.	Richard Griffeth

In 1621 the Society prepared another Parliamentary Bill for a confirmation and enlargement of their privileges, which was sent up for presentation to the representatives

for Bristol, Aldermen Whitson and Guy, two members of the Hall. Those gentlemen were requested to plead the services that Bristol had rendered to the Crown, especially in the reigns of Henry VII. and Henry VIII., when the city furnished three ships for Calais, and, above all, in its continuous service in the Irish wars and for the suppression of piracy in the Bristol Channel, £500 having been recently expended on the latter work alone. It was added that the maintenance of the Society's eight poor almsmen, and of its school for poor children (of which this is the first mention), could not be continued unless authority were given for the better ordering of trade, which was much impaired through the excesses of inexperienced interlopers (Society's Letter Book). The Corporation lent zealous support to this movement by promulgating what it styled a "Certificate" addressed "to all Christian People," but of course really directed to the members of the Legislature. With a regard for truth which may be appreciated by the help of manuscripts already quoted, the document boldly asserted that the repealing Act of 1571 was procured, not by the exertions of the Corporation itself—as was actually the fact—but solely by "shopkeepers and tradesmen," at a time when the meer merchants were weakened by heavy losses in the service of the Crown and by shipwrecks and pirates; and that, in consequence of the repeal, and of an Act of 1606 authorising all persons to trade with France and the Peninsula, many shopkeepers and manual labourers, having forsaken their trades and practised as merchants, had ruined themselves through inexperience, and grievously prejudiced legitimate commerce. It was added that, through want of proper laws, and the inability of the Society to restrain the exorbitance and dishonesty of sailors and boatmen, the citizens generally were much

prejudiced, navigation decreased, and the royal Customs diminished, and that the remedy of these evils would be very profitable to the inhabitants. The prolonged attack on monopolies made by the House of Commons during the Session doubtless warned the members for Bristol against untimely action; and the Bill was not introduced. After the General Election in 1624, when two past Masters, Messrs. Guy and Barker, were returned for Bristol, the charters were sent up to those gentlemen on the opening of Parliament, with an urgent request to introduce the Bill; and the Mayor, William Pitt, who became Master in the same year, produced another corporate "Certificate," repeating the assertions of the first. The Commons, however, being busily engaged in suppressing monopolies, the Society's wishes were again prudently postponed; and nothing more was attempted in the matter for fourteen years.

Only eight years after the emphatic adoption of the Code of Ordinances drawn up in 1618, the Society discovered that a number of its leading members had wilfully broken the laws concerning the merchandise of strangers and foreigners. Clear evidence had been obtained that Humphrey Browne (Master, 1629) and John Taylor (Warden, 1622; M.P., 1642) had clandestinely bought 80 pipes of Cognac wines; that Derrick Popley (Warden, 1624), Taylor, and Thomas Colston (Master, 1644), had illegally bought 100 pipes of Malaga and 90 barrels of raisins of the sun; and that William Cann (Master, 1645) had purchased a parcel of figs, all which goods should have been first carried to the Back Hall in conformity with the Ordinances. The delinquents excused themselves by alleging that they were ignorant of the regulations, which was scarcely credible; but having pleaded for tender treatment, and promising

future fidelity, they were let off with reduced fines,—£20 for the Cognac, £20 for the Malaga and raisins, and £2 for the figs. A third of the £40, and the whole of Cann's fine, were ordered to be distributed amongst the poor of the city. A new Ordinance of a more stringent character was then enacted to prevent further irregularities.

Extract from the Records of the year A.D. 1626.

Alsoe this yeere in the xxth day of December 1626 at a generall Courte was publiquely read the Ancient Ordinances and Decrees of this Societie against forebuyenge and bargaineinge for goods with Strangers before the goods were brought in to the Common Hawle called Spicers Hall alias the Back hawle within the same Citty, and to the end that certeyne persons of the saide Company (that are found to bee delinquent in that behalfe) may bee eased at present of a parte of those fines wch they are liable vnto, and to give notice and warninge vnto others of the saide Societie not to offend in the like Case, and to revive and put in practize the saide Ancient Ordinances and Decrees of the saide Company, yt is, vpon consideracon and deliberacon of the saide Company, at severall assemblyes, ordayned and enacted as followeth, viz. :

Forasmuch as at this generall Courte, it doth manifestlie appeare that M^r Humfrie Browne, M^r John Tayler and Company, M^r Derricke Popley, M^r John Tayler, M^r Thomas Colston and Company, and M^r Willm Cann and Company, beinge members of this Societie, haue of late delt wth strangers and Alians, and haue vnlawfully bought sundrie sorts of marchandices, contrary to the Ancient lawdable and approved ordinances and Customes of the said Societie, to say, the said Humfrie Browne, John Tayler and Company for buyeinge of lxxx pipes of Coniacque wyne, the said Derricke Popley, John Tayler, Thomas Colston and Company for buyeinge of one hundred pipes of Mallaga wyne, and fowerscore and tenne barrells of Reysons of the Sunne, and the said Willm Cann and Company for buyeinge of a parcell of Figgs, before the said goods were landed, and brought vnto Spicers Hall, comonly called the backe Hawle of Bristoll, beinge the comon and vsuall place of buyeinge and sellinge of Strangers goods, whereby the said psons haue severally transgressed against the said ordinances and haue incurred the paines penalties and forfeitures in the said ordinances on that behalfe conteyned And for that the said

delinquents haue declared that they were vnacquainted wth the tenor of the said ordinances, and haue severally submitted themselves to the Judgment and censure of this Societie in generall, for the ballatinge of their fynes, promising hereafter to support the Ancient and Lawdable vsages and Customes of this Societie and Company to their vttermost powers **Therefore** in regard that this their facte is the first that hath bin lately questioned of that kind, and in mitigacon of the penalties wch (by the said ordinances) the said delinquents are lyable vnto, Yt is this day ordered, concluded, and enacted, by a generall consent and full agreement of this Societie, that the said Humfrie Browne, John Tayler and Company, their partners and associats in the said bargaine, shall satisfie and pay vnto the Treasurer of this Societie, for the vse and comon profitt of this Company, the some of thirteene pounds sixe shillings and eight pence of Currant Englishe money without delay, togeather wth sixe pounds thirteene shillings and fower pence of like money to bee distributed amongst poore people of the City of Bristoll at the discretion of the said Treasurer, **And** that the said Humfrie Browne, John Tayler and Company, their partners and associats in the said bargaine shalbee acquitted and discharged by this Acte of and for the said Offence, **And** alsoe that the said Derricke Popley, John Tayler, Thomas Colston & Company, their partners and Associats in the said bargaine, shall likewise pay vnto the said Treasurer, for the vse and Common profitt of this Societie, the some of Thirteene pounds sixe shillings and eight pence of like money without delay, togeather with Sixe pounds thirteene shillings and fower pence of like money, to bee distributed amongst the poore people of this City of Bristoll at the discretion of the said Treasurer, **And** that the said Derricke Popley, John Tayler, Thomas Colston and Comp: their partners and associats in the said bargaine, shalbee acquitted and discharged hereby of and for the said offence, **And** further that the said Willm Cann and Company shall pay vnto the Treasurer of this Societie the some of Fortie shillings of like money, to bee distributed amongst the poore people of this City at the discretion of the said Treasurer, and then shalbee noe further questioned of and for the said Offence **And** moreover for the better practise and puttinge in execution of the Ancient ordinances, Statuts, and Decrees of this Societie, in regard that Ignorance of the said ordinances shalbee noe excuse to any delinquent hereafter, **Yt** is alsoe ordayned, Concluded, established, and at this assemblie renewed, by a generall consent of the whole Societie, **That** from henceforth noe manner of person or persons, beinge a brother or

member of this Company, shall see, taste, or buy, or cause to be seene, tasted, or bought any goods, wares, or mchandices whatsoever, apperteyninge or belonginge to any forreiner, Alien, or Stranger to the Liberties of this Citty, in any shipp, boate, or vessell whatsoever, beinge or to bee within the Porte of Bristoll aforesaid, or the members of the same, nor in any other place within the Citty of Bristoll, or Liberties of the same, but onely in the Comon Hall called Spicer's Hawle, alias the backe Hawle of the said Citty, wch is the Comon place ordained for buyeinge and selling of Strangers goods, and then not before the said goods, wares, and marchandices haue there laine and continued by the space of three dayes and three nights togeather, Vppon paine that every person soe doeing shalbee excluded and putt of from the bargaine by him or them made, and shall alsoe pay vnto the Treasurer of this Societie for the tyme beinge, for and to the vse and profit of the Maister, Wardens, and Cominaltie of this Company, and of the Mayor and Cominaltie of the Citty of Bristoll (as in the Ancient ordinances of this Society ys expressed) the some of three shillings and fower pence vppon every twentie shillings of the full value of the goods, wares, and mchandices soe seene, tasted, or bought contrary to the true meaninge of this ordinance, or any clause or branch of the same, **And** for an equall particon and devison to bee made amongst the members of this Societie of such wynes, or other goods, wares, or marchandices wch now are brought, or hereafter shalbee brought into the said Comon Hawle, wherein any member of this Company will and may lawfully deale or bargain for, **It** is further ordained, concluded, and agreed vppon by a generall consent of this Societie, that as often and before any such goods, wares, or marchandices shalbee bought or devided, there shalbee summoned all the said Societie to meete and appeare in their Comon Hawle, and then by consent of the Maister and Cominaltie of this Societie, there shalbee fower out of eight indifferent men of the said Company Chosen and drawne out by lott, to bargain and deale for the said goods, for the vse and benefitt of the Company in generall, and to allott and appoint vnto every brother of the said Company that shall deale in the Comoditie to bee devided a proporconable parte of the same goods, wares, and marchandices, accordinge to each man's bulke of trade, wth which allotment every brother of this Societie shall hold himselfe contented, **Provided** there bee a Hall called before the buyeinge of the said goods. **And** it is further ordained that whosoever of this Company doth not by himselfe, servant, or frynd, vnderwrite and subscribe for what parte he is to haue of the said goods shalbee

exempted and excluded from haueinge any parte of the said bargaine **Provided** alsoe that the parcell of goods to bee bought shall exceed the some of one hundred pounds. And it is further ordayned that the maister of the saide Company for the tyme beinge, vpon request made by any of the Company of this Societie, or vpon his owne knowledge shall within three dayes next after such request or knowledge made to him, summon a meetinge at the hall of the saide Company for the buyenge and devidinge of the saide Comodities vpon paine of one hundred pounds of lawfull Englishe money, to bee forfeited and paide to the Treasurer of this Societie, to the vse of the Mayor and Comynalty of this Citty, & of the Mr, Wardens, and Comynalty of this Societie, accordinge as it hath byne accustomed & formerly ordeyned.

tertio die Decembris, Anno Dni 1627.

Memorandum that the Acte next entred before in this booke was publiquely read in the hearinge of this Societie, and was approved by the whole Society in generall, and vndertaken by every of them to bee performed, And in wittnes whereof they haue subscribed their names.

(Here follow the signatures.)

The revival of the movement for extended privileges is involved in much obscurity, for the books now in the Hall are silent on the subject. But it seems certain that in 1638, when Charles the First had dispensed with Parliaments for many years, and was ruling as an absolute sovereign, the Society besought him for a fresh charter and a concession of additional powers. In response the King, by letters patent dated January 7th, 1639, containing an "inspeximus" of the charter of Edward the Sixth, and reciting the charter of Elizabeth, but making no mention of the subsequent Acts of Parliament, confirmed the grants of his predecessors, and empowered the Society to make laws for the government and correction, not merely of their own body, but of every Bristolian trading beyond the seas, and to impose fines and levy

distresses on such as should violate their regulations. But these concessions were followed by a proviso that the Society's Ordinances must not be repugnant to the laws and customs of the realm, or prejudicial to the Mayor [*i.e.* the Corporation] of Bristol, or to the Merchant Adventurers to the Low Countries. And it must have been soon apparent that any attempt to restrain the chief commerce of non-members would be a violation of the Act of the previous reign, permitting all Englishmen to trade with France, Spain, and Portugal in despite of any restrictive royal charter. The chief permanent features of the following instrument, of which we give a contemporary translation, consisted in the practical confirmation of the Society's Ordinance of 1618, creating a body of Assistants to act with the Master and Wardens, the number of these officers being reduced from twelve to ten; and in the fixing of the annual elections, previously held somewhat capriciously, on the 10th November—no provision being made for altering the date when it fell upon a Sunday.

Charles by the grace of **God** of England Scotland France and Ireland King Defender of the Faith, &c. To all to whom these present Letters shall come Greeting **Wee have seen** the Letters patents of Edward the Sixth late King of England made in these words **Edward the Sixth** &c. [as in the original Charter] **And whereas** the late Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth by her Letters pattents under the Great Seale of England bearing date at Westminster the Eighth day of July in the Eighth year of her Reign did ratifye and confirm the same Letters pattents of the said King Edward the Sixth before recited And all and singular the things therein contained unto the then Master Wardens and Cominalty of the Art or Mistery of Merchants Venturers of the City of Bristoll and their Successors As by the same Letters pattents of the said Late Queen plainly appeareth. **Know yee** now that at the humble petition of the said Master Wardens and Cominalty of the Mistery of Merch^{ts} Venturers aforesaid We do ratifye & approve of the same severall Letters pattents of the said late King Edward the Sixth and late Queen Elizabeth and all and singuler the Gifts and Grants and other

things contained therein with the Additions amplifications and alterations hereinafter expressed And all and singular the same do by these presents confirm for us our Heirs and Successors unto the said Master Wardens and Commaltye and their Successors. And moreover for the better governing of the said Art or Mistery of Merchant Venturers of the City aforesaid And for the augmentation and increase thereof We of our ample grace speciall and certain knowledge and meere motion have given and granted And by these presents for us our Heirs and Successors do give and grant unto the said Master Wardens and Commaltye and their Successors That for ever hereafter They have and shall have tenn of the gravest and discreetest men of the Art aforesaid in the City aforesaid to be chosen in manner and form as hereafter in these presents is expressed who shall be and shall be named Assistants of the same Mistery of Merchants Venturers who from time to time shall be assistant and aiding unto the said Master and Wardens of the same Mistery for the time being in all causes and matters touching or concerning the Mistery aforesaid and the good Government thereof **And moreover** we will and by these presents for us our Heirs and Successors do grant unto the said Master Wardens and Cominaltye and their Successors That the same Master Wardens and Assistants (for the time being) or the greater part of them (whereof the Master and one of the Wardens we appoint to be two) may have & shall have full power and authority to prescribe constitute ordein & make from time to time such Laws Statutes and Ordinances reasonable whatsoever as in their discrecons shall seem good wholesome profitable honest and necessary for the good rule government ordering surveying search and correccon of the Mistery or Art aforesaid and of all the works wares goods & merchandizes which the same Master Wardens and Cominalty and their Successors or any other Merch^{ts} or other persons whatsoever of the City aforesaid adventuring beyond the Seas shall export or import out of or into the Realm of England or Dominion of Wales As also of all men & Merchants of the City aforesaid and their Servants Factors Apprentices & Agents of the Art or Mistery aforesaid trading as well in the said City as in the parts beyond the Seas And also for the declaracon of the manner and order how the aforesaid Master Wardens & Assistants for the time being shall behave carry and use themselves in their Office and Business and likewise for the good and publick profit and rule of the Mistery aforesaid and all the ffreemen of the same Mistery As also for the preservacon displacing placing and granting of the Goods Chattles Lands Tenement possessions revercons & hereditam^{ts} given granted assigned or confirmed or

hereafter to be given granted or assigned unto the said Master Wardens and Cominalty and their Successors And the things matters businesses suits and other causes whatsoever of the Mistery aforesaid and touching or in any wise concerning the Estate and Interest thereof And that the said Master Wardens and Assistants or the greater part of them as is aforesaid as often as they shall prescribe make ordein or establish such Laws Statutes and Ordinances in form aforesaid shall and may impose and assess such reasonable paines penaltyes and punishments by ffines and Amerciaments or either of them upon all Delinquents against such Laws Statutes and Ordinances or any of them as shall seem reasonable and requisite unto the same Master Wardens & Assistants for the time being or the greater part of them as is aforesaid And the same pains and penaltyes fines and amerciaments may levey & have by Distress or other lawfull means by so many and such Ministers Officers and persons as the said Master Wardens & Cominalty under their comon Seale shall nominate To the use of the same Master Wardens & Cominalty and their Successors without the impediment of us our Heirs or Successors Justices Escheators Sheriffes Coroners or any other Bailiffes or Ministers of us our Heirs or Successors whatsoever and without any account or other thing to be therefore rendered paid or done unto us our Heirs or Successors All and singuler which laws statutes & ordinances so as is aforesaid to be made we will have observed by all & singuler persons whatsoever of the Cominalty aforesaid And all other Merchants & others whatsoever and their Servants Factors Apprentices and Agents of the City aforesaid Adventurers beyond the Seas using or exercising the Art or Mistery aforesaid as well in the City aforesaid as in the parts beyond the Seas under the pains therein contained So as the aforesaid Laws Statutes Ordinances Constitutions ffines & Amerciaments be reasonable & not repugnant nor against our prerogative or Laws or Customs of this our Realm of England nor to the prejudice of the Mayor of our City aforesaid And so as also these Statutes or Ordinances be not nor any of them bee to the prejudice of our well beloved Subjects the Governor Assistants & Company of Merchants trading themselves their goods wares & merchandizes comonly called Merchant Adventurers into the parts of Holland Zealand Brabant & fflanders and other Country's Lands & Dominions to the same parts adjoining whereunto they resort & frequent for Traffick & merchandizing sake nor tend to the prejudice of any Statutes Ordinances or Constitutions made published or ordeined by the said Governor or Governors of the same Societie or hereafter to be made published or ordeined by the same Governor

or Governours & Assistants or their Successors. **And** for more better execucon of this our Grant & Confirmacon we have assigned nominated appointed & made And by these presents for us our Heirs and Successors Do assign nominate constitute & make our well beloved Humfrey Hooke to be the first Master of the Art or Mistery aforesaid Willing that the said Humfrey Hooke shall be & continue in the Office of Master from the day of the date of these presents untill the Eleaventh day of November next coming And from that day forward untill he or one of the Wardens or Assistants of the Mistery aforesaid for the time being shall be appointed unto the same Office and be sworn according to the Ordinances & Constitucons in these presents expressed & declared if the said Humfrey Hooke shall so long live Taking first this Corporall Oath before the Mayor and Aldermen of the City aforesaid for the time being well and faithfully to do & execute the said office Unto which said Mayor & Aldermen for the time be We give lycense & power for the taking of the said Oath by these presents. We have also assigned nominated and appointed And by these presents for us our Heirs and Successors Do assign nominate and appoint our well beloved Gyles Elbridge & Thomas Colston to be the first & next Wardens of the Art or Mistery aforesaid to continue in the same Office of Wardens from the day of the date of these presents untill the Eleaventh day of November next coming And from that day forward untill they or two of the Assistants of the Art or Mistery aforesaid shall be appointed unto the same Office or place and sworn according to the Ordinances and Constitutions in these presents menconed if the said Gyles Elbridge and Thomas Colston shall so long live unless they or one of them in the meantime by reason of ill Government or misbehaviour in themselves in their Office or for other lawfull Cause shall be dismissed by the Master Wardens & Assistants or the greater part of them for the time being Taking first their Corporall Oath upon the Holy Evangelists of God well and faithfully to execute their s^a Office Unto which said Humfrey Hooke we grant power & authority to minister and receive the said Oath. **We have also assigned** nominated appointed and made And by these presents for us our Heirs and Successors do assign nominate constitute and make our well beloved John Tomlinson Andrew Charlton Richard Longe William Jones Richard Aldworth Alexander James Ffrancis Creswicke Miles Jackson Gabriell Sherman & William Cann the first and next Assistants of the Art or Mistery aforesaid To continue in the same Offices or places from the day of the making of these presents untill the said Eleaventh day of November next coming And from thenceforth forwards untill they or Tenn others of the

Cominalty aforesaid shall be appointed to the said Offices or places and Sworn according to the Ordinances and Constitucons in these presents menconed if the same Assistants shall so long live unless in the meantime by reason of ill Government or misbehaviour in their said Offices or some other lawfull cause they be displaced or some of them displaced from their said Offices Taking first their Corporall Oaths before the said Master and Wardens well and faithfully to execute their said Offices or places Unto which said Humfrey Hooke Gyles Elbridge and Thomas Colston we grant power and Authority for to minister and receive the said Oath by these presents **And moreover** we will and by these presents for us our Heirs and Successors do grant unto the said Master Wardens & Cominalty and their Successors That the Master Wardens and Cominalty of the Art or Mistery aforesaid (for the time being) for ever hereafter may have And shall have power and authority yearly and every year upon the tenth day of November in the Comon Hall in the City aforesaid called the Merchants Hall or other place convenient within the City aforesaid by themselves or the greater part of them to be there assembled and continued And they or the greater part of them then and there assembled shall choose and nominate one of the Cominalty of the Art or Mistery aforesaid which hath first born the Office of Master Warden or Assistant to succeed to be Master of the Comonaltye aforesaid one whole year then next following And shall then nominate and choose two of the Assistants of the Art or Mistery aforesaid for Wardens of the Art or Mistery aforesaid for one whole year then next following And shall then and there also nominate and choose Tenn of the discreetest Men of the Cominalty aforesaid to be Assistants of the Comonaltye aforesaid to continue in the same places for one whole year then next following as is aforesaid **Furthermore** we will And for us our Heirs and Successors do ordein and declare by these presents That every person and persons which shall be hereafter chosen into the severall offices and places of Master Wardens and Assistants of the Society aforesaid shall take this Corporall Oath upon the Holy Evangelists of God before the last precedent Master and Wardens or any two of them respectively of the Society aforesaid for the time being well & faithfully to execute the said offices before they be admitted to take upon them their said offices Unto which last precedent Master and Wardens and any two of them (for the time being) We grant power and Authority by these presents for the ministering of the said Oath And after such Oath so taken They may undertake and every one of them may undertake the Office of Master Wardens & Assistants of the Art or Mistery aforesaid for one whole year

then next following And from the end of the said year untill others in due manner & form shall be appointed to be Master Wardens and Assistants of the Art or Mistery aforesaid and sworne according to the ordinances and constitucons in these presents mencōned **And moreover** we will and by these presents for us our Heirs and Successors do grant unto the said Master Wardens & Comīnalty of the Art or Mistery aforesaid and their Successors That if it shall happen the Master of the Art or Mistery aforesaid at any time hereafter within one year afterwards he shall be appointed and sworn unto that Office of Master of the said Art or Mistery as is aforesaid to decease or be removed That then and so often it shall and may be lawful for the said Wardens Assistants and Comīnalye aforesaid for the time being by themselves or the greater part of them assembled together within one Month after the decease of such Master in the said place called the Merchant's Hall or any other place convenient within the City aforesaid to choose nominate and appoint one honest and fitt man of the said Comīnalye of the Art or Mistery aforesaid who hath been Master Warden or Assistant of the Art or Mistery aforesaid to succeed in the room and place of the said Master so deceased And that such Master so chosen and appointed unto the said Office Taking first this Corporall Oath before the Wardens of the said Mistery in the aforesaid place called Merchant's Hall or other place convenient within the City aforesaid shall and may have and exercise the said Office of Master during the residue of the said year And from the end of the said year untill another of the said Society shall be appointed unto the same Office in due manner as is aforesaid And the like course and Order to be done when and so often as any such Accident shall befall And if the aforesaid Wardens of the Art or Mistery aforesaid shall decease or either of them shall decease or be dismissed from their said Office for lawfull cause as is aforesaid That then the Master Wardens and Assistants & Comīnalty or the greater part of them assembled in the said Hall or other place convenient within the City aforesaid shall and may choose and appoint one or more of the Assistants aforesaid to succeed into the place or places of such Warden or Wardens so deceasing or removed And that he or they so chosen and appointed taking first his or their Corporall Oath before the Master Wardens & Assistants or the greater part of them unto whom we give Authority by these presents to minister the said Oath well and faithfully to execute the said Office or Offices unto which he or they shall be chosen appointed and sworn untill the Eleaventh day of November then next following And from that day forward till some other or others shall be chosen and appointed unto the said Office of Wardens

in manner as is aforesaid And if any Assistant or Assistants of the Art or Mistery aforesaid shall decease or be removed from his Office (which Assistant or Assistants or any of them misbehaving themselves in their Office We will shall be removed at the good will and pleasure of the Master Wardens & Com̄inalty or the greater part of them for the time being) That then and so often it shall and may be lawfull to and for the said Master Wardens Assistants & Com̄inalty of the same Society for the time being or the greater part of them assembled in the said place called the Merchants Hall or other convenient place within the City aforesaid To choose one or more of the discreetest persons of the Com̄inalty aforesaid to succeed in the place or places of such Assistant or Assistants so deceased or removed from his or their Office or Offices for to make up the number of Tenn Assistants of the Society aforesaid And that he or they so chosen and appointed shall take his or their Corporall Oath before the Master and Wardens of the Art or Mistery aforesaid for the time being or any two of them well and faithfully to execute their Office in all things before they be admitted into the Office or place of Assistants And the like course and order to be done when and so often as any such Accident shall befall **And** our desire is That the said Master Wardens and Com̄inalty may chearfully proceed and go forward in the Trade of Merchandizing And We do by these presents for us our Heirs and Successors ordein that all and singuler the Fees payable and to be paid by the said Master Wardens and Com̄inaltye or any member of the same Society unto the Officers and Ministers of us our Heirs or Successors in the Port of the City of Bristoll or members thereof from time to time for executing their Offices shall be appointed limited and prescribed by our Cheife Treasurer of England and under Treasurer for the time being for the Limittacon appointing and prescribing of which said Fees We do by these presents give power and Authority unto our said High Treasurer of England and under Treasurer for the time being willing and by these presents commanding for us our Heirs and Successors All and singuler the Officers and Ministers of us our Heirs and Successors within the said port and the Members thereof for the time being That in executing their Offices there or under colour thereof They do not exact or cause to be exacted any greater fees of the said Society or any Member thereof under pain of the Contempt of our Royal Commandment & the danger ensuing thereupon **And whereas** the Lady Elizabeth late Queen of England by her Letters pattents under her great Seale of England bearing date at Westminster the twelfth day of April in the fifth year of her reign Reciting that whereas in the Parliament holden at Westminster the

23rd day of January in the first year of her Reign It was enacted that it shall not be lawfull for any person or persons after the first day of September next after the said Parliament to lade or cause to be laden or landed of and from any Wharfe Shipp or Port or other place into any Shipp or Vessell any Goods Wares or Merchandizes whatsoever (Fish and salt only excepted) to be transported unto the parts beyond the Seas or in or to the Realm of Scotland Neither to carry away discharge or unlade nor cause to be taken away discharged or unladen out of any Shipp or Vessell being not leakey nor shipwrecked and brought to land Any goods wares or merchandizes whatsoever (Fish and salt only excepted) to be transported from any the parts beyond the Seas or from the Realm of Scotland by way of merchandizing but only in the day time viz. From the first day of March till the last day of September between the Sunrising and the going down thereof And from the last day of September till the first day of March between the hours Seaven in the morning and Four in the afternoon upon pain of forfeiture of the same goods wares and merchandizes or the value thereof soe laden and discharged contrary to the Tenor and true meaning of the said Statute **And whereas** the said late Queen Elizabeth being informed that the Port of the City of Bristol (except only at Spring Tides) was so dangerous wanting depth of Water that no great Shipp or Vessell laden with goods and merchandizes could approach unto the said City by the space of four miles for that the tide there suddenly ebbed and flowed and in every spring not above five or six hours And then only for six days in a Spring It was convenient to lade and unlade the Shippes and Vessells there The said late Queen for herself her Heirs and Successors by the aforesaid Letters pattents Hath given and granted Lycence unto the Mayor Burgesses and Cominalty and the Inhabitants and Dwellers in the same City That they and all others repairing unto the said City Town and Port of Bristoll with Shippes or other Vessells laden or discharged for ever thenceforwards without incurring the penalty of the Statute aforesaid may lade and unlade their Shippes and Vessells of and with their goods wares and merchandizes And the same land and sett on shoar And also putt on board of any Ships or Vessells to be transported to the parts beyond the Seas or to the Realm of Scotland at any time between the hours of Four in the morning and Eight in the afternoon The Statute aforesaid or anything therein contained to the contrary thereof in anywise notwithstanding Saving the Customs and Subsidies Tonnadges & Poundages to be therefore due unto the said late Queen her Heirs or Successors As by the said Letters pattents more plainly appeareth **Know yee** that we of our speciall favour unto the Merchants of

the said City and for the benefit and easement of the same Merchants trading in the Port aforesaid of our special grace and certain knowledge and meer motion Do will and ordein And by these presents for us our Heirs and Successors do grant Lycense unto the said Master Wardens and Cominalty of Merchants Adventurers of the City aforesaide and their Successors That they and their Successors and every Member of the same Society for the time being coming and repairing unto the City and Port of Bristol aforesaid or the Members thereof with Shippes or other vessells laden or unladen from henceforth for ever hereafter without incurring the penalty of the aforesaid Statutes shall and may lawfully lade and unlade their Shippes and Vessells of and with their Goods wares and merchandizes And the same putt on Shoar or land there And likewise from the land or shore putt into any their Shippes or Vessells to be transported unto the parts beyond the Seas or to the Realm of Scotland any time between the hours of Four in the morning and Eight in the afternoon every year The Statutes aforesaid or anything therein contained to contrary thereof notwithstanding And without the impediment suit molestacon or disturbance of us our Heirs or Successors or any the Officers or Ministers of us our Heirs or Successors giving attendance in the said Port or the precincts thereof now or for the time to come **Saving** always the Customs Subsidies and other payments and sums of money due and payable to us, our Heirs and Successors for the same goods wares and merchandizes Nevertheless We will and by these presents for us our Heirs and Successors do ordein and declare That such lading and discharging of the goods wares and merchandizes aforesaid within the said Port or the precincts thereof between any of the hours aforementioned which shall be contrary to the form of the Statutes aforesaid from time to time (and not otherwise) be done in the presence of the Officers or Ministers of us our Heirs or Successors within the Port aforesaid or some of them unto whom the same shall appertain **And therefore** We command all and singuler the Officers and Ministers of us our Heirs or Successors within the Port aforesaid or the precincts thereof for the time being that at the reasonable request of the said Society or any member thereof They be present and ready at such lading and discharging upon pain of Contempt of our Royall Command and the danger ensuing thereupon Forasmuch as there is no express mention of the true yearly value or certainty of the premises nor of any of them Neither of other Gifts or Grants by us or any of our Progenitors or Predecessors to the contrary in any wise before this time granted unto the Master Wardens

and Cominalty of the said Art or Mistery of Merchant Venturers of the City of Bristoll Neither of any Act Ordinance Provision Proclamation or Restraint to the contrary thereof made published ordained or provided or any other thing cause or matter whatsoever in any wise notwithstanding **In Witness** whereof we have caused these our letters to be made pattents **Witness** myself at Westminster the seaventh day of Ianuary in the Fourteenth year of our Reign.

WOLSELEY.

Having obtained the above charter, the Society lost no time in revising its Ordinances, and on April 4th, 1639, the following code of laws was approved and subscribed by the members. It will be seen from the document that the Society tacitly recognised the futility of the King's concessions touching the regulation of interloping local traders, who are alluded to only obliquely. Every member of the Society was forbidden to deal with the wares of a non-member for the purpose of either exportation or importation, on pain of being fined one-sixth the value of such goods on a first offence and one-third the value on a second. No member freighting a ship was to permit a non-member or a foreigner to load goods in such vessel; and if a non-member or foreigner freighted a ship, no member was to place cargo in it unless no other was available. When the goods of strangers, to the value of £200 or upwards, were imported into the city, they were to be carried to the Back Hall, and the members of the Society, having been thereupon duly summoned, were to choose four of their body to bargain for the whole of the merchandise, and to allot their purchases proportionably amongst those desirous of a share—a system reminding one of what is vulgarly called a “knock out.” Any member presuming to buy on his own account before the selected four had concluded their dealings was to forfeit one-sixth of the value of his

purchases. A Master neglecting to summon a Hall for the above purpose was to be fined £40. The only other interesting item is that requiring each member to pay the sum of fourpence at each of the four quarterly Halls towards the funds of the Society—the “quarterage” to commence at the following Candlemas.

The Actes Ordinances & Statutes made by the Maister Wardeins and Assistants of the Arte or Misterie of Merchants Adventurers of the City of Bristoll, By vertue of letters Patents lately graunted by our Sovereigne Lord King Charles to the saide Company, bearing date at Westminster, the seaventh day of January in the fourteenth yeare of his hignes Raigne **By which graunt** his Maiestie hath bine alsoe graciously pleased to confirme other letters patents heretofore graunted to the saide Company by King Edward the Sixt **All which Acts** Ordinances and Statutes being they are made for the good governement of this Societie, the Regulateing of Trade, the better Reliefe of the poore people of their Almehouse, the Sustentacon of decayed Marchants, Seamen, & their widowes, A stipend for a Schole maister to teach poore Seamens children gratis, and a Curate to read praier at Shirehampton, neere vnto the Roade of Hungroade, within the Porte of Bristoll, bicause Shippkeepers shall not bee draune farre from their Charge, haveinge [been] publiquely read at a generall Court of the saide Societie, holden in their Common Hawle, called the Marchants Hawle, the Fourth day of Aprill A^o Dni 1639, were well approved and allowed by the whole Company, And in Testimony of such their Acknowledgment and promise of observeing and performing the same in all points, They have willingly subscribed their names, as in the end of the same Acte may appeare.

For chooseing the Maister Wardeins & Assistants according to his ma^{ties} letters patents or Charter, whoe have power to make Lawes and orders for Regulating of all men tradeinge to and from this Cittie.

That vpon the tenth day of November yeerely and every yeere The whole Societie are to meete and assemble in the marchaunts Hall, or any other convenient place within this Cittie, where the saide Societie or the greater parte of them shall appoint, And shall then choose and nominate one of the Comynaltie (wch hath first bine Maister Wardein or Assistant) To be maister of

the Comynaltie aforesaide for one whole yeere then next following, And shall then choose twoe of the Assistants of the saide Comynalty to bee Wardens for the saide one yeere following, And shall then and there alsoe choose and nominate Tenne of the discreetest men of the saide Comonaltie to bee Assistants vnto the saide M^r & Wardeins, And that every person and persons soe chosen to bee maister and wardeins shall take his Corporall oath vpon the Holy Evangelists of God, before the last precedent Maister and wardeins, or any twoe of them, well and truely and faithfully to execute the saide Offices according to that forme of oath registred in pag: 8 of this booke, for administringe of which Oaths power is given to the precedent maister and wardens or any twoe of them, And that every Assistant soe chosen (not being one of the Assistants formerly sworne) shall take his Corporall oath in the same manner before the maister and wardens or any twoe of them, And the like Course to bee holden when any maister, wardens, or assistants dye, or bee removed, and new chosen in their places.

The Office of the Maister and Wardeins.

[As in the Ordinances of A.D. 1618.]

The Office of Assistants.

[As in the Ordinances of A.D. 1618, except that the number is to be Ten instead of Twelve.]

The Office of the Treasurer.

[As in the Ordinances of A.D. 1618.]

The Office of the Clark & Biddle.

[These are to be performed by one and the same person at a salary of £8 sterling, the duties being the same as were set out in the Ordinances of A.D. 1618, when the offices were separate.]

An Ordinance for Keeping of Courte, &c.

[This varies in no important particular from the similar Ordinance in A.D. 1618, excepting that it requires "that there shalbee present at every Courte, aswell of the Assistants as of the Generallity, the maior parte of the Assistants, and the maister and one of the wardeins at the least, or else nothing to bee Concluded at that Courte where such number shall lack," and that it fixes the 10th day of November yearly, "yf noe extraordinary occasion shall hinder," for the election of officers and the swearing of the Master, Wardens, and Assistants.]

[Next are set out the remaining Ordinances of A.D. 1618 down to that "For reading of letters and requests," and in addition to them the following.]

For Collecting the Duties belonging to the Company towards Relief of the poore and other necessarie disbursements for y^e Society.

The Collector shall receyve the duties of Kannadge, plankadge, anckorage, poundage of marriners wages, tonnadge for the poore, wharfadge, and other duties belonging to this Society as it hath byn anciently accustomed according to the Rates wch shalbee yeerly given him in Charge, and haveing Receyved the same shall pay it in and bee accomptable vnto the Treasurer of this Societie requireing it, And shall become bound with one sufficient suertie to bee allowed of by the maister and wardeins for the tyme being to make and give a iust and true account vnto the saide Treasurer of all such money as hee shall from tyme to tyme Receyve to the use of the Company aforesaide.

For payment of Quarteridge.

Euerie person beinge a brother or member of this Societie, beinge lawfully admitted, shall appeare in person, by himself, his servant or friend, at the fower generall quarterly Courte days, beinge warned therevnto, and there pay vnto the Collector of the hall Duties his quarteridg money, viz., fower pence every quarter of a yeere, the which dutie of quarteridg shall beginne from the Feast of the Anunciacōn of the blessed virgin Mary next ensueing the date hereof, The which Collector, haveinge Receyved it, shall pay the same over vnto the Treasurer of this Societie for the tyme beinge, to the vse and Common profit of this Company.

Against Receyveing of Goods belonging to any person not free of this Societie.

Noe person or marchant of the saide Fellowshipp, nor noe sonne, servant, or Apprentice of any of this Societie, shall at any time hereafter receyue at or in the Porte of Bristol aforesaide into his keepinge, Any Cloth or other goods, wares, or marchandice of any person or persons not beinge admitted a fellowe or brother of this saide Company of merchants to the intent to sell, carry, or deliver the same Cloth, goods, wares, or marchandice into or att any Porte, Creeke, or place beyond the Seas, to the vse or profit of the same person, or of any other not being fellowe of

the saide Company of marchants, Nor buy nor receyue beyond the Seas for any person not being a fellowe or brother of the said Company of Marchants, any goods, wares, or marchandice to bee conveyed from thence to the said Porte of Bristoll or to any other Porte, Haven, Creek, or place within the River of Seaverne, vpon paine to pay at first time hee shall doe contrary to this ordinance of every twenty shillings of the whole value of the marchandice for wch hee shalbee soe Attorney iijs. iiij*d*. And at the Second tyme vjs. viij*d*. in every xxs.

The Chiefe lader in every shipp or vessell to appoint the tyme and place where averidge shalbee laide.

The Chiefe lader with those that haue the maior parte of Tonnadge in the shipp (his tonnadge and the rest being accounted therein) shall appoint the tyme and place where the saide Averidg shalbee laide And the same shalbee approved of and allowed by the rest of the Laders haveing notice thereof, and of the day and place, given at the Dwelling house of each lader, And if it shall happen that the Chiefe Lader, or any other lader of such shippe, shalbee found to bee remisse or Refractory in this order, either in delayeng of the tyme, or not paieng of his money according to such averidg bill, every such person soe offendinge shall pay such fines as shalbee agreed vpon by the Maister, Wardeins, and Assistants, or the greater number of them accordinge to the quality of the offence.

Item the saide Chiefe Lader shall appointe a Collector to receyve the said Averidg, whoe shalbee there ready to attend at the layeng and makeing thereof.

Item the saide Chief Lader shall pay vnto all Labouringe people theire hire and duties for dischargeing of the saide shipp or vessell, And alsoe pay the duties of Kannadg, planckadg, ancoradge, tonnadge for the poore, poundage of marriners wages, wharfadge, and other things that are or shalbee payable vnto this Society, and shall charge the said duties in the Averidge bill.

Item It is ordered and ordayned that the saide Averidge shalbee laide as aforesaide within Eight Dayes next after the Discharge of every shippe, bark, or vessell, And that, if twoe or more marchants of the greatest laders shall have equall tonnagd, Then in such case the Elder in Degree shalbee held to bee the greatest lader, And the Collector of the Hawle Duties shall deliver a note of the same duties vnto the saide greatest lader as soone as any shippe or vessell is discharged.

For freighting Shippes.

Noe Marchant being a brother of this Societie and Company freighting any shippe from this Porte, or the members of the same, to the Parts beyond the Seas, or from thence to this Porte, shall suffer any Stranger or Forreiner not free of this Societie to have any tonnadge or ladeing in the saide Shippe, And that if any Forreyner or Stranger not free of this Company shall freight anie Shippe Barke or Vessell to or from this Porte, Noe brother or member of this Societie shall take any tonnadge in such shippe, barke, or vessell, yf any freight or Tonnadge may at that tyme bee had or obeyned in Shipping laden, or to bee laden, by any of this Company, And all Factors, servants, Apprentices, and others of this Societie that shalbee employed by the Marchants of this Company or any of them, shall not enterteyne any ymployment to or from this Citty, and Porte of Bristol for any person or persons not being free of this Societie and Company.

For the place assigned for bringinge Strangers Goods vnto, and Sellinge the same.

The Goods, wares, and marchandice of all and every Stranger or Strangers to the Liberties of this Citty wch shalbee ymported into this Porte (from any of the Parts beyond the Seas) shalbee brought into the Common place or hawle called Spicers Hawle, alias the Backhawle, within this Citty, according to the ancient Custome, And that whensoever the Maister of this Societie (for the time being) shalbee acquainted or informed of any such goods, wares, or marchandice lying within the saide Hawle (the Quantity being such as doth amount to the somme of Twoe hundred pounds or vpwards) The said Maister shall cause All the Company of Marchants of this Societie to bee summoned to appeare at their Common Hawle, there to treat concerning the buyng of the saide goods, And if it shalbee then thought meet for to deale for such Goods, There shalbee Fower out of Eighte indifferent men of the saide Company chosen and draune out by lott, to bargaine and deale for the saide Goods, and to allott and appoint vnto every brother, being a member of this Societie, a proporconable parte of the saide Goods, according as in their discrecons shalbee thought fitt, Soe as every such brother of this Company Doe by himself, Friend, or servant, vnderwrite for the accepting of such parte thereof as shalbee allotted vnto him before that Court doe arise, And that noe brother or member of this Societie shall presume to deale for any of the said goods vntil such tyme as those, whoe by this Company shalbee appointed to

deale for the same, have first refused the buyeng thereof, Provided they take not aboue three days tyme for effecting it, Vpon payne of three shillings fower pence vpon every xx^s value of the whole goods that shalbee so dealt for, To bee paide by him that shall offend therein to the vse of this Company **And further** that if the Maister of this Societie shall not cause the Company to bee summoned to treate and meete as aforesaid within three daies next after request or notice made vnto him by any member of this Company The saide Maister shall forfeite and loose to the vse of this Society the Somme of Forty pounds starlinge Currant money.

For Regulating Maisters of Shippes Marriners, Seamen, and Sailors, touching their abiding aborde their Shippes in Kingroade & dischargeinge and ladeinge them in Hungroade.

Whereas the Roade of Kingroade is an open Road, And by that meanes dangerous for Shipping, Especially in the tyme of Tempestuous or Stormye weather, and therefore not fitt to leave shipping there without a competent number of men to guard and looke vnto them, And for that when shippes are brought from thence into Hungroade there to bee discharged of her ladeinge of Goods and marchandice The marriners and seamen doe vsually vnlade and discharge their shippes by Hired men, to the great damage of the Marchants, laders, and Ouners, **For Remedy** whereof, and for the more Safety of Shippes and Goods It is thus ordered and agreed That from hencefourth vpon all Shippes arriveing in that Roade from any the Parts beyond the Seas, The maister of every such Shippe, with his Mates, and the whole Company (except such as the M^r shall send on shore vpon the Shippes occasions) shall remaine aborde vntill every such Shippe bee fast and well moared in Hungroade **And** that vpon all Shippes outwards bounde Ridinge at ankor in Kingroade aforesaide, and there attendinge a Faire Wynd, There shall Remyne aborde every such Shippe, The maister, his Chiefe Mate, The Boteswaine, and halfe the Companie at least, vntill they sett sayle. **And for** all shippes dischargeinge in Hungroade (during the tyme of such their dischargeinge and vnladeinge their goods & marchandice) There shalbee allowaies aborde the saide Shippes The Maister or one of his mates, the Boteswaine and Quarter Maisters, with a competent number of the saide Shippes Company to discharge and vnlade the saide Shippe, And shall not make vse of any hired men in doinge the same. And if any Maister, marriner, or other Seaman bee Refractory, and will not submitt to these good, Reason-

able, and necessarie Orders, Hee shalbee held unworthie to Receyve any employment from this Societie, And there shalbee defaulted out of his wages and hire, for every such offence, one Eight parte of every such Offenders wages, to the vse and Reliefe of the decayed Seamen in the Marchants their Almehouse, and of other poore wch haue Reliefe from this Company.

For Regulateng of Maisters, Marriners, and Seamen, touching the Goods and marchandise wch they, and euery of them, shall carry in their voyadge.

Whereas the Maisters, Marriners, and other seamen saileing to and from this Porte, Have of late very often taken, vpon their credit and other waies, divers goods and marchandice of great value, And carried the same in the shippes (wherein they have byn hired) vnto the partes beyond the Seas, And in Returne thereof have brought home in the saide Shippes divers other wares and marchandice, And all, or the moste parte thereof, without the leave, privitie, or knowledg of the Ouners of the saide Shippes, or Marchants whoe tooke the saide Shippes to Freight, To the great prejudice of the saide Marchants, by gettinge the same privately into and from the shippes without paieng any freight to the Marchant or Ouner, And without paieng his ma^{ties} Customes or any other dueties, Whereby his maiesty is much deceyved, and the marchants dishartened and disencouraged in their trade **It is** therefore ordered and agreed That from henceforth Noe Maister of Shippeing, Marriner, or other Seaman shall putt any goods, or marchandice aborde any Shippe, barke, or vessell, or take any on shore, vntill they have made known vnto twoe of the Chiefe laders, and twoe of the Chiefe Ouners the quallity and quantity thereof, And then Receyve their approbacon for the lading of the same, And what orders the saide Chiefe Laders and Chiefe Ouners shall make touching the same shalbee approved of and allowed by the generall Laders and ouners of such shippe. Butt if any Maister, Marriner, or Seaman shall neglect to doe as aforesaide, Hee shall pay double the value of the Freight of all such goods as hee or they shall carry And the Chiefe Lader of such Shipp, and Chiefe Ouner of the same shall cause the aforesaide double Freight to bee shortned out of their wages at the pay day, And that it may bee the better knowne what goods they doe carry forth or bring home Every Boteswayne and Purser of every such Shippe shalbee required vpon paine of the losse of their wadges To enforme the saide Chief Laders and Chiefe Ouners of the quantety and quallitie of such their Goods, And the Factor or Factors employed in sale of the marchants goods in such Shippe shall vse his and their best endeavours To enquire

and finde out what their goods are, And shall informe the marchants thereof, that Course may bee taken against them **And if** any Maister, Marriner, or Seaman shall hereafter bringe home in Returne of the goods allowed him to carry out Any Wynes, They shall soe order it amongst themselves That it shalbee brought in Butts or hogsheads, and noe lesser Caske.

For the Execution of the Ordinances.

[As in the Ordinances of A.D. 1618, with the following addition.]

And it is further ordered and agreed vpon That the Clerke of this Societie shall forthwith bring into the Hall, and deliver to the Wardeins, All bookes, copies of writings, coppies of letters, and all other papers whatsoever that may any way concerne this Company, That the same may bee laide vpp amongst their other Writings, And from hencefourth their saide Clarke shall not make any writings, or enter any Acts or Orders that concernes this Company in any other place then in the Common Hawle, called the Marchants Hawle, vnlesse hee shall haue leave from the Maister and Wardeins, And shall allwaies bring and leave the key of the Hawle with the Maister for the tyme being.

[Here follow the Signatures of the Members of the Company.]

The xjth of November 1639.

Att a generall Courte of the Master, Wardens, and Coi^lalty of the arte or mistery of Marchants Adventurers of the Citty of Bristoll in ample nomber assembled in their Comon Hawle; It was agreed that not only at this tyme, but at all tymes hereafter, the manner of eleccion of the Master, Wardens, and Assistants shalbe thus (viz^t) the Master to be chosen (for the tyme being) shalbe chosen out of three, whereof one to be named by the M^r (for the tyme being) one by the Wardens and Assistants, and the Third by the Coi^lalty, and according to this order the Master, Wardens, and Assistants are this day chosen and sworne, being this p^rsent Eleaventh day of November, 1639.

In 1643, during the occupation of Bristol by the Royalist garrison, the King granted the Society another Charter, by which, in consideration of the loyalty and fidelity of the merchants of Bristol to his Majesty's cause, he conceded them free intercourse with the regions to

which various London Companies had previously enjoyed a monopoly of trade. The following is transcribed from a copy dating from 1669, preserved in the Hall:—

A Copie of the Charter granted by Kinge Charles the First at Oxford.

Charles by the grace of God, Kinge of England, Scotland, Fraunce, and Ireland, Defender of the Fayth &c. **To all** to whome these presents shall come Greeting **Whereas** by our Letters Patents vnder our great Seale of England Wee have heretofore graunted that the Merchants of our City of Bristoll should be incorporated and made a Body Politique to have contynuanee for ever by the name of Master, Wardens, Treasurer, and Assistants of the Company of Merchants Adventurers of the City of Bristoll, but they are yet restrayned from that free Trade vnto divers forraine parts which some other Companies of Merchants by the favour of vs and our Auncestors and Predecessors Kings and Queenes of this Realme have enjoyed and doe enjoy **And whereas** our good and lovinge Subjects the Merchants of the said City of Bristoll have expressed their loyalty and fidelity vnto vs in these late tymes of difficulty when our City of London and the Cittizens and Merchants thereof who have held and enjoyed many more priviledges and Imunityes for the advancing of a free and ample trade into all Forraine parts have forgotten their duty vnto vs and many of them have trayterously rebelled against vs their Sovereigne & Leige Lord **Knowe ye** therefore that we, for the encouragement of our said Subjects the Merchants of Bristoll and others by their Example to contynue faithfull and constant vnto vs and to our Crowne of England in their duty and allegiance vnto vs, Have given and graunted, And by these presents, for vs our heires and Successors doe give and graunt vnto the said Maister, Wardens, Treasurer, and Assistants of the Company of Merchants Adventurers of Bristoll and their Successors That they and their Successors and all or any and every of the Members for the tyme being of the said Company, by themselves or their Factors, Agents, or servants, shall and may have a free Trade and Commerce with their Shippes and other vessels and their goods and merchandizes vnto and from all those parts and places beyond the Seas whither the Eastland or Russia Companies of London doe or may trade, And to and from the Hanse Townes, and any Townes, Ports, or places where the Company of Merchant Adventurers of London doe or may trade, and to and from any the Ports or places in the Levant Seas where any of our Merchants of

the Turkey Company doe trade, and to and from any Ports or places under the Comand or Domynion of the Kinge of Denmarke or great Duke of Muscovye, **All** which Liberty and Freedome of Trade and Traffique in, vnto, and from any the Ports and places aforesaid, Our will and pleasure is, And wee doe fully and freely graunt vnto the said Company of Merchant Adventurers of our said City of Bristoll in as full, ample, and beneficiall maner as we can graunt the same **And we doe** for us, our heires and Successors, covenant, promise, and graunt to and with the said Company of Merchants to renewe, strengthen, and enlarge this our Graunt and to doe such other Acts for their better enjoying of the benefitt thereby graunted, or intended to be graunted, in such maner and as farr as by their Counsell shalbe reasonably advised, and as shalbe best for the setling and enlarging of their said trade and for the removeing and avoyding of any restreint or impediment that may hinder the said Trade **Saveing** allwaies to vs our heires and Successors from our said Subjects the Merchants Adventurers of Bristoll, their Factors, Agents, and Servants, to be duly paid vnto vs and to our Successors, or to our vse, such Customes and other duties and payments vpon and for their merchandize and goods to be exported and imported as from tyme to tyme shall become due and payable to vs our heires and Successors in that respect **In witnes** whereof we have caused these our **Lres** to be made Patents **Witnes** our Selve at Oxford the Two and twentieth day of December in the Nyneteenth yeare of our Raigene.

Per breve de privato Sigillo

WOLSELEY.

This is a true Copie of the originall vnder the great Seale, examd the eight and twentieth Day of May, Anno **Dni** 1669.

By us

RICH. PELL,

JOHN HARTWELL.

Soon after the Restoration of Charles the Second, the Society appointed a committee, which was directed to apply for a renewal of the charters, "with such additional privileges as may conduce to the benefit of the Company." In April, 1661, the charters were sent up to the members of Parliament for the city, with instructions to prosecute the Society's suit; but their exertions were fruitless. In November, 1665, the subject was revived, and the Hall

once more resolved to apply for a new charter and a confirmatory Act of Parliament. The issue was as disappointing as before. In November, 1667, a new committee was appointed to press the matter forward, and also to procure, if possible, an Act of Parliament prohibiting the manufacture of white soap from tallow or any kind of oil save olive oil alone. In the following March a member of the Society, Richard Elsworth, was directed to ride to London to promote the objects in view, and was furnished with £50, afterwards increased to £100 with a promise of more, "so as we do not fail in our hoped desire," the agent being especially requested to seek the support of the members for the city, the Recorder (Sir Robert Atkyns) and some "popular leading" Commoners, as well as all the London merchants sympathising with the soap project. It being presently found that the Bills could not be obtained during the current Session, Elsworth was instructed to carry on his campaign with the Londoners on the soap question "as private as possible," so that the scheme might be secretly ripened for the following year, and in the meantime to use every exertion to obtain the confirmation of the charters by the King. The committee's letter to the above effect contains the curious admission that they were pursuing this course in despite "of many opposers and dissenters of this Company." It further appears that the Mayor (Edward Morgan), five aldermen, and two councillors—of whom four were members of the Hall Committee—despatched another "Certificate" in support of the Society's appeal. In 1669, and again in 1670, solicitations were renewed by Elsworth, who, besides being one of the Customers of Bristol, held a petty sinecure office in the royal household, and had received a knighthood; but his efforts proved wholly ineffectual. The project being at last abandoned

in despair, the agent sent in a bill of additional expenses, amounting to £182 11s. 2d., some of the money having been spent in an entertainment of the Duke of Albemarle, presents of wine "to several," and "fees"—meaning bribes—to Court officials. The committee struck off more than half the charges, but eventually paid £125 17s. 10d., including £50 to Elsworth "for his paines." All that was ever extracted from Charles the Second, in fact, was a Charter granted in June, 1665, baldly exemplifying the second charter of his father. The following is a copy, with translation:—

Carolus Secundus, Dei gratia, Angliæ, Scotiæ, Franciæ, et Hiberniæ Rex, fidei Defensor &c, omnibus ad quos hæ litteræ nostræ pervenerint salutem, Insperimus Irrotulamentum quædam litterarum patentium precharissimi nup. patris nostri Domini Caroli nuper Regis Angliæ defuncti geren. dat. apud Oxon. vicesimo tertio Die Decembris anno regni sui Decimo nono in Rotulis Curiæ Cancellariæ nostræ irrotulat. ibidemque de Recordo remanen. in hæc verba Charles by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, Fraunce and Ireland &c. [reciting the last Charter of King Charles I. word for word] **Nos autem** tenorem Irrotulamenti predicti ad requisicoem predictæ Societatis Mercator. Bristol. duximus exemplificand. per presentes **In Cuius** rei testimonium has litteras nostras fieri fecimus patentes **Teste** me ipso apud Westmonasterium vicesimo tertio die Junii anno regni nostri decimo septimo.

GRIMSTON MARSHAM.

TRANSLATION.

Charles the Second, by the grace of God, of England, Scotland, France and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, &c., unto all to whom these our letters shall come, greeting **We have seen** the inrolment of certain letters patent of our late very dear father, Lord Charles, late King of England, deceased, bearing date at Oxford the twenty third day of December in the nineteenth year of his reign, inrolled in the Rolls of our Court of Chancery and there remaining on record in these words Charles, by the grace of God, [quoting the Charter word for word] **We therefore** at the request of the aforesaid Society of Merchants of Bristol consider that the tenor of the Inrolment

aforesaid should be exemplified by these presents **In witness**
whereof we have caused these our letters to be made patent
Witness myself at Westminster the 23rd day of June in the
17th year of our reign.

How little was really gained in the way of suppressing interlopers may be inferred from the remarks of Roger North, who was an acute observer of local events during his visits to Bristol as Recorder a few years later, and who observes in his amusing reminiscences, which are far from complimentary to local merchants, that "petty shopkeepers, and the like," constantly ventured a bale of stockings, or a piece of stuff, in vessels bound for Nevis or Virginia.

CHAPTER III.

THE SOCIETY UNDER THE STEWART DYNASTY.

FROM the beginning until nearly the middle of the seventeenth century the Society, and indeed the citizens of Bristol generally, suffered much grievous oppression under the arbitrary rule of the first two kings of the House of Stewart. Detailed information on the subject, however, has mysteriously disappeared from the Society's archives, the earliest Minute Book of the Standing Committee now in existence commencing so late as 1639—nearly ninety years after the charter of incorporation granted by Edward the Sixth. Possibly an explanation of this remarkable circumstance is to be found in a memorandum inserted in a contemporary Minute Book at the Council House, dated 15th January, 1640 (1641), from which the following is an extract:—

“That a letter be written to the burgesses now serving in Parliament . . . to seek reformation and redress against such persons as by unjust informations to his Majesty, or by their illegal and unwarrantable proceedings, have injured and abused the merchants of this city, and by entering into the Merchants Hall, *taking away their book of accounts and other writings*, and procuring many of the inhabitants of this city to be pursued up [to London] and unjustly handled and ill-dealt with.”

Dealing with this long period of obscurity in the only manner now practicable, namely by resorting to the manuscripts of the Corporation, to the Journals of Parliament, and to the State Papers in the Record and Privy

Council Offices, it may be observed that the earliest grievance protested against by the mercantile body was the royal demand for "purveyance"—a prerogative that had led to crying abuses in the closing years of Elizabeth, and was revived by James the First immediately after his accession. Bristolians had been previously exempted from this burden on account of their liability to another, of very ancient date. They had been accustomed to submit to the royal claim for "prisage," under which the Crown Officers had taken one tun of wine out of every cargo of 10 tuns, and two out of every shipload of 20 tuns landed at the port—choosing always the best samples, and paying, or rather promising to pay, about a fifth of the value of the "prise." The effect of this exaction was to raise the price of Bristol wines at least 20s. per tun in excess of the wines of London and Southampton, where prisage was unknown. In 1601, however, the Government for the first time demanded from Bristol merchants a "composition for purveyance," by which the local burden would have been practically doubled. The encroachment was firmly resisted, and though some exactions were levied in 1603, the agents who carried them out were prosecuted and convicted in the Mayor's Court; to the great wrath of their superiors, the Board of Green Cloth, who angrily rebuked the Mayor (Alderman Whitson) for his contempt of the royal prerogative, and informed him that he would have been brought up to Whitehall under arrest but for his official duties during the prevalence of the Plague. At the opening of King James's first Parliament in 1604, the undismayed Alderman, through Mr. Thomas James, one of the members for the city, brought the matter under the attention of the House of Commons, and Mr. James made a personal protest against the insolence with which he had been treated by one of the Crown

officials. Complaints of a similar character were made on behalf of several other towns, and the House emphatically petitioned the new monarch for redress, declaring that purveyance was rife with tyrannical abuses, although it had been declared illegal in no less than thirty-six statutes, and that the merchants of Bristol had especially suffered, large sums having been extorted from them, and many having been kept in prison until they paid heavy fees to the pursuivants. The King, in reply, expressed his anxiety to remove grievances, adding that measures had been taken to avoid the recurrence of complaints, and the House allowed the subject to drop. (Commons' Journals.) The issue was characteristic of the new reign. The King angrily prorogued Parliament in July, owing to the Commons persisting in the discussion of various grievances; and the abuses in Bristol were at once revived under a new royal warrant, authorising the extraction of compositions both for wines and groceries. Two deputations were sent up to Court by the Corporation (and probably by the Society) praying for relief, and a good deal of money seems to have been spent in "gratifying" the underlings at Whitehall, but these efforts were unavailing, and Mr. John Aldworth, a member of the Society, underwent imprisonment for refusing to pay the imposts. Moreover, when the King repaired to Woodstock in 1605, his purveyors made their appearance in Bristol, and seized 51 hogsheads of claret, appraised at £14 16s. per tun, and 10 butts of sack, worth £13 each, for which nothing was paid, the Society having to satisfy the owners by borrowing from the Corporation, which recouped itself by levying a due upon foreign imports. A few months later a duty on currants, which the King imposed without Parliamentary sanction, was declared

by the Court of Exchequer to be legal by virtue of the royal prerogative, and in 1608 the Lord Treasurer Salisbury, availing himself of the resource thus temptingly offered to him, issued a new tariff increasing the duties on many articles of commerce, some of the imposts being styled "compositions for purveyance." The Bristol merchants, who had been harried in the previous year in respect both of groceries and wine, now earnestly petitioned for exemption from the additional wine duty, pleading the burden they endured from prisage, and Lord Salisbury ultimately submitted their case to the Court of Exchequer. In 1609 Lord Chief Baron Tanfield with his colleague, Sir George Snygge, accordingly summoned the merchants, who complained of the hardship of their case, urging amongst other arguments that while the Government was seeking to mulct them both for prisage and purveyance, wines could be—as in fact they were—imported into Chepstow free from both imposts. The learned judges nevertheless reported to the Lord Treasurer that after the King's prerogative had been proved to the merchants the latter had submitted so far as to bear purveyance whenever the Court came within twenty miles of the city. As regarded the composition for groceries, the merchants pleaded that they had none save what were brought from London and "Lixbon," and that the Londoners bought in East India and Turkey, where Bristolians were not allowed to trade; but in this matter also, wrote the judges, they submitted to the same conditions as regarded wine, which their lordships adjudged to be a satisfactory compromise. The relief was but temporary. In 1612 the Lord Treasurer issued a mandate for the levying of 5s. per tun on all sweet wines imported into Bristol. A deputation hurried to Court imploring relief, and the

solicitations continued in 1613 and 1614, causing the Society a large outlay for travelling expenses. A man who had farmed the new tax from the Crown in the meantime raised an action in the Court of Exchequer for the sum alleged to be due—a payment of £100 made to him by the Society to be freed from the burden being coolly ignored. The result does not appear. In 1613 the Queen sojourned at Bath, paying also a visit to Bristol, and enormous demands were made by the purveyance officers, about 7,400 gallons of wine, and groceries to the value of £360, being wrung from the defenceless Bristol merchants. All that could be got from the Treasury in payment of the account was £220. The balance, about £800, was advanced by the Corporation, who were not reimbursed until 1617, when part of the King's debt for the Woodstock wines taken eleven years before was also recovered, but not until more than £120 had been expended in bribes to Court officials.

After a few years quietude, Lord Treasurer Middlesex, in November, 1622, ordered a fresh enforcement of the composition for purveyance on the scale paid in London, repudiating Chief Baron Tanfield's compromise and judgment on the ground that Baron Snygge, who had concurred in the decision, was by birth a Bristolian. The Society, in a letter to the Master, Alderman Guy, M.P., then in London, expressed their determination to resist. If, however, the Master thought that a gift of "£50 to the Remembrancer, and some thankful acknowledgment to the Lord Treasurer (all not exceeding £100) may stop this gap and ease us from further demands," the Society would be content to bear the expenditure. (Letter Book.) The "thankful acknowledgment" appears to have effected its purpose, for in February, 1623, the Lord Treasurer ordered the Customs officers to forbear from taking ready

money on account of the composition for groceries, but to obtain bonds for future payment when such was demanded; and they were also directed to give three months credit to the merchants for the 13s. 4*d.* per tun due for wines. These concessions probably explain an item in the Society's accounts:—"Given in gold to Mr. William Willett, Collector of this port, for his courtesies, £11." The relief seems to have been only transient, for on March 29th, 1625, William Barrett, the King's Grocer, in consideration of £110 paid to him by the Corporation, released the citizens of Bristol of all claims for purveyance of groceries for the term of his life. (Society's Book of Trade.) Nevertheless, in 1631, a composition in lieu of grocery purveyance, together with an entirely new impost on Levant oil, was demanded by the Board of Green Cloth, and Messrs. Hooke and Colston, the two members of the Society delegated to negotiate by the Corporation, knowing the subservience of the judges to the behests of the King, consented to pay the royal Grocer £100 on account of arrearages, and £66 13s. 4*d.* each following year in lieu of purveyance. The King was to have power at any time to terminate this agreement, from which non-burgesses and foreigners were excluded. The illegal abuse was at length abrogated by the Long Parliament.

The Society's troubles in connection with the wine duties were still more serious. In 1621, James the First, having insultingly dismissed the House of Commons, resolved on raising money by the exercise of his so-called prerogative, and a mandate was issued to the Customs authorities to collect a double duty on wine. In 1622, his Majesty, after cancelling this warrant, issued another, ordaining the levying of a wine impost of 20s. per tun in London and of 13s. 4*d.* at the outports over and above

the statutory duty, for the maintenance of the King's daughter, the Princess Palatine, and her family. In April, 1624, when the King's embarrassments compelled him to summon another Parliament, the new tax was suspended for six months, in the hope that the Commons would grant a generous supply. But as their liberality failed to reach expectations, his Majesty, in October, in defiance of the remonstrance of the Commons, ordered the imposition to be rigorously collected, and threatened those who dared to be contemptuous with penalties and "corporal punishment." (Book of Trade.)

The accession of Charles the First in the spring of 1625 brought about no alteration in the royal policy. On the 26th April the King, in a warrant to the officers and farmers of the Bristol Customs, intimated his will and pleasure that the wine duties imposed by his father should be collected as before, and directed that every one refusing to pay them should be imprisoned until he submitted, mayors and other officers being commanded to assist in carrying the mandate into effect. The Society thereupon appealed to the Lord Treasurer for relief, asserting that, in consequence of the rise in prices caused by the increased tax, they were unable to sell their wines, much of which had "grown eager" (sour) and would not bring its cost, freight and prisage. No answer seems to have been made to the appeal. On the other hand, the patentee, or farmer, of the composition in lieu of wine purveyance raised a suit in 1630 against the merchants for the recovery of his demands. And though the Court of Exchequer dismissed his claim as illegal, and forbade him to renew his molestations, the King, in 1634, in defiance of the judgment, peremptorily set forth his "ancient right of purveyance," and commanded the household officers to treat with the merchants for

compositions on wines, alleging that the royal expenditure was "likely to increase by God's grace by reason of our children," then mere infants. No wine was to be allowed to be landed until the composition was paid, and if any merchant proved refractory the Customs officials were to seize 16 tuns out of every 100, giving [or rather promising] him £6 10s. per tun—a fraction of the value—"according to our ancient right."

This arbitrary decree continued in force until 1638, when the King, who had ruled despotically for nine years, issued a mandate imposing a further duty of £2 per tun on all wines, and forthwith farmed out the tax to the Vintners' Company of London. One morning in September, 1638, a deputation of the farmers arrived in Bristol, accompanied by one of the King's detested pursuivants, and armed with a warrant from the Privy Council; and summoned the alarmed merchants before them. Having demanded and obtained a sight of all the liquor stored in the city, the vintners required the immediate payment of the tax, not only on the existing stock, but on all that had been sold during the previous three months. Powerless to resist, and having, as they afterwards recorded, been grievously oppressed by suits and pursuivants for fourteen years, at a cost of upwards of £1,000, the Society offered to pay the farmers a composition of no less than £3,500 per annum, which the vintners accepted upon ten members of the Society becoming guarantors. The collection of the money was soon found to be impracticable. Half the vintners in Bristol became bankrupt; others refused to pay their quota; and the total amount obtained in three years was only £1,036. In 1640 the farmers sued the guarantors for £4,450, being a year and a half's composition, less £800 paid on account, and the action was still pending in 1642.

The House of Commons, then dealing trenchantly with abuses, had been already implored by the Society to remedy the grievance. The first deputy sent to Westminster for this purpose was Mr. George Bowcher, whose unhappy fate during the impending struggle was then unforeseen. Three other members, Messrs. W. Fitzherbert, R. Vickris, and G. Lewis (the last in the place of Thomas Colston, who refused to serve), subsequently repaired to London and urgently appealed for redress. A committee of the House of Commons had been by that time appointed to consider the illegal wine tax, and the Society, in a petition to that body, asserted that during the first year of the Vintners' Company's impost the loss of Bristol merchants on French wine alone amounted to £4,000, besides a heavy loss on Spanish; and that the Privy Council were nevertheless keeping a local merchant in prison for non-payment of the duties. The King's arbitrary impost was soon afterwards annulled. (Many letters and papers on this subject are preserved in the Society's "Book of Trade.")

At the Restoration, the Society was under so much apprehension that this obnoxious regal privilege would be revived that an active member of the Hall, Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Knight, M.P., was desired to make the best composition he could if resistance were impracticable. Charles the Second, however, surrendered the privilege, together with other relics of feudalism, on receiving compensation in the shape of an excise duty on beer, cider, spirits, tea, and coffee. (12 Charles II., c. 24.)

Grievances of a similar character to those just dealt with arose from the extortionate demands made from time to time by Custom House officials. The first notice of them occurs in 1624, when the Society appointed a committee to complain to the King's Commissioners of

the recent exaction of excessive fees. The abuse had been already laid before the House of Commons, which had recommended that such disputes should be amicably settled (Commons' Journals); and after a conference and much debate an arrangement was entered into by a formal deed, the fees being reduced to the small amounts paid in the reign of Elizabeth. No further difficulty arose until after Charles the First had resolved to dispense with Parliaments. But in 1632, doubtless at the instance of the local officers—the chief of whom, John Dowell, seems to have been notorious for his annoyances, and will be heard of again—Lord Treasurer Weston granted them a warrant empowering the collection of fees on the scale payable in London. And on being informed that many merchants refused to pay the enhanced charges, he forwarded a second mandate to enforce their obedience. Following their usual course, the Society sent repeated deputations to London to remonstrate against the exactions, but without effect, for several recalcitrant merchants were harassed with prosecutions. In 1634, the Lord Treasurer (then become Earl of Portland and Lord High Steward of Bristol) despatched a testy letter to the Society, desiring them to end their differences with the Searcher—the chief officer concerned—whose increased fees they ought to pay, and requesting in menacing terms that he be “no further troubled.” The Society replied that the Searcher would listen to no reasonable proposals, and they were doubtless encouraged in their resistance by the knowledge that the Attorney General had informed the Lord Treasurer that as Bristolians generally made shorter voyages than Londoners, the high scale of fees had to be paid by them more frequently. A few weeks later Lord Portland found it advisable to change his policy, revoked his previous

warrants, ordered the excessive fees already paid to be disgorged, and commanded the Searcher to be content with the ancient scale; the Society thus scoring a complete victory.

Other Crown exactions nevertheless continued, and the situation having become less than ever tolerable, Alderman Barker, a prominent member of the Society and representative for Bristol in the Parliament of 1628, addressed an earnest protest to Secretary Nicholas, with whom, when in the House of Commons, he had been on friendly terms. A copy of this interesting letter, which shows how imperfect is our information on the subject, has not been preserved in the Hall. The following summary is extracted from the State Papers:—

August 1st, 1634.—The molestation which the Bristol merchants have sustained within these last five years has been so great by ungrounded informations and bills in the Star Chamber at the suit of the Attorney General, unwonted and vexatious commissions, false informations of the Customs officers, and insolence of his Majesty's messengers and common informers, as they cannot longer forbear to complain and to crave redress—all being done under pretence of his Majesty's service, whereas the consequences are altogether contrary. As Nicholas knows the welfare of the country to consist in the free course of commerce, the writer points out the grievances demanding relief. I. The King having granted licenses for the transport of some commodities prohibited by law, and the officers having received money for customs and license, they have afterwards conspired with informers to molest the merchants for the same. II. The officers, conspiring with the King's messengers, have informed the Attorney General, who has therefore sent for many to appear, and though nothing could be proved, they were compelled to give large fees to the messengers before their discharge. III. Twenty merchants have been summoned to the Star Chamber by the Attorney General, and though no bill has been put in against some of them, they had to pay largely for their discharge, not knowing their offence. IV. Commissions have been issued to examine sailors touching the payment of imposts, and they have been tempted to make accusations against their employers, and threatened for not doing so. V. A commission is now on foot concerning alleged short entries, though the merchants

have paid all duties justly. Such vexations have cost the merchants over £1,000 in the last five years, besides their reputations being wounded. Understanding from Mr. Colston that the Secretary disapproves of these courses, the writer craves his advice and offers further information.

Secretary Nicholas's reply to the above is also in the Record Office. He expressed regret at the information conveyed to him, and asserted that the Lord Treasurer would redress abuses if so good a man as Barker represented them in a respectful way.

The obnoxious Searcher—who was really the deputy of a sinecurist serjeant-at-law who received the bulk of the fees but did no work—seems to have subsided for five years. At the close of 1639, he again raised complaints against the merchants, and asked the Lord Treasurer's permission to revive the higher scale of fees; and he pertinaciously continued his appeals until the reassembling of Parliaments brought this and other scandals to an end.

Scarcely had Charles the Second been restored than the Searcher—still the sinecurist lawyer—recommenced his extortions, and raised actions against those who withstood them. On the 16th October, 1660, the Society resolved that no fees should be paid in excess of the old rates, and that a suit should be commenced against the Searcher for exacting the illegal scale. This was probably unsuccessful, for after a struggle of nearly eleven years, Sir John Knight, M.P., was appointed to treat for a compromise, and the Hall, on the 30th March, 1671, confirmed the agreement that he had effected. Astounding as it now appears, this treaty was also repudiated in 1687, when James the Second evinced an intention of following in his father's footsteps; and the Society once more determined on resisting the Searcher's demands. The Revolution doubtless brought the long conflict to a close.

Attention must now be directed to another long controversy between the two first Stewart kings and the Society. Piracy during the seventeenth century was the constant scourge of commerce, yet the Crown rarely considered that its suppression was a duty incumbent upon the State. The Bristol Channel often swarmed with piratical vessels, especially in the month of July, when they gathered to plunder the numerous ships from many foreign and domestic ports laden with goods for the great Bristol fair. In 1613, having obtained King James's gracious leave to protect themselves, the Society hired and equipped two "ships of war" to repress the brigandage; and in the following year four such vessels were engaged in the same service, the cost of these expeditions to the Society amounting to the then large sum of £492; exclusive of £21 disbursed for a "present and entertainment" to Sir Thomas Button, who had lent assistance in H.M.S. *Phoenix*. In 1617, when it was reported that upwards of 300 English merchantmen had been captured within a few years by Algerian and Tunisian corsairs, and their crews led into slavery, the merchants of London petitioned the Crown to take vigorous measures for suppressing the evil, and offered to give £40,000 towards the equipment of an expedition. After considerable delay, the Government consented to take action, but in order to diminish its own expenses, it was resolved to make the outports contribute £8,550 towards the outlay by reviving the ancient imposition of Ship-money. The assessment on Bristol was £2,500; Exeter, Plymouth, and Dartmouth were each required to raise £1,000; Barnstaple and Hull, £500 each; Weymouth, £450; and Newcastle and Southampton each £300. The minor ports, amongst which Liverpool does not appear, were assessed at £1,000.

Ship-money had always been an unpopular tax, it having been constantly demanded as a royal prerogative needing no sanction from Parliament; and King James's chronic quarrels with the House of Commons on financial questions were not calculated to lessen discontent. The Society's response to the Privy Council's demand was to the effect that, in despite of the large outlay recently incurred for suppressing piracy, and of their late heavy loss of five ships with their cargoes, through wreck and brigandage, they were willing to contribute £600. As a matter of fact, the Corporation subscribed two-thirds of that sum and lent the Society the remainder (Civic Audit Book). But the Mayor (John Guy), foreseeing that this offer would prove unpalatable, informed the Privy Council that, by his earnest persuasion of the rest of the citizens, he had been able to enlarge the contribution to £1,000. Soon afterwards the Corporation lent a further sum of £200 to the Society. In order, it may be presumed, to pay off this debt the members of the Society entered into a personal subscription, and the results, which are of some historical interest, are fortunately jotted down in the Hall's "Book of Trade." The names are as follows:—

Donors of £10 each.—John Barker, John Whitson, William Pitt, John Doughtie, John Gonning, Christopher Whitson, John Langton, Humphry Hooke, John Tomlinson, Andrew Charlton, Richard Holworthy, William Jones, Humphry Browne, Richard Long, Abel Kitchin, Robert Aldworth, Thomas Wright, and Edward Coxe.

Donors of £6 each.—Edward Williams, Peter Miller, William Pratt, Arthur Hibbins, William Hicks, Thomas Colston, Giles Elbridge, Walter Ellis, N. Butcher, G. Butcher, Francis Creswick, Derrick Popley, Francis Derrick, John Locke, John Gardner, Philip Ellis, Miles Jackson, Thomas Clement, William Pitt, Richard Plea (?), Alexander James, and Nicholas Meredith.

The Mayor (John Guy) and Matthew Haviland gave £5 each.

The Privy Council, in a letter to the Mayor, promptly expressed their surprise that the merchants and ship-owners of Bristol showed so little zeal in furthering the expedition, especially as other and far inferior ports, less subject to loss, had shown much greater willingness; adding that no part of the assessment could be remitted, and requesting that the merchants might be dealt with "effectually." The Society thereupon drew up a curious document entitled "A Collection of Reasons to show that £1,000 from Bristol is in good proportion to the £40,000 of London." The following is an abstract of the chief points advanced:—

That the Londoners deal on a larger scale, and have a more gainful trade.

That the security of trade is of more importance to London than to Bristol—much of Bristol trade being carried on by merchants of Ireland, Barnstaple, and Western ports.

That the Bristol shipowners are very few and poor, the navigation being employed by Scotch and Flemish ships.

That the wine trade—one of the greatest in the city—is much impoverished, because former customers for wine now repair to the Welsh ports, which are free from imposts and so sell cheaper, and Bristol merchants will thus lose this year above £1,000 by Gascony wines.

That Bristol has always been ready to do the King service in Ireland; and seeing they are to serve therein when the rest are free, they crave to have the more favour.

"That this city is poor, and so insensible of any proportion with London that two or three merchants of London are able to buy all the inhabitants of Bristol out of all their means in the world, saving their persons. There are about 700 widows here."

That money lent by the city upon Privy Seals may be considered; also the charges the city has been at to suppress piracy in the Bristol Channel.

That the loss which the merchants of Bristol sustained in entertaining the King at Woodstock, in 1605, and the Queen at Bath, in 1613, amounted to [blank].

The paper concludes with a table professing to show the "Collection of Customs of Subsidie" for the three years ending 1615. The "medium" is—Exeter, £3,836; Bristol, £3,449; Weymouth, £1,978; Lyme, £2,905; London, £125,000.

The pleas alleging the poverty of the city and of its merchants were unquestionably insincere, and stand in amusing contrast with the claims to wealth and grandeur which the Corporation produced when occasion required on behalf of the "second city of the kingdom." The truth was that the writers did not dare to proclaim the real causes of their stinted offering. The task of suppressing the Turkish bandits was a national one, and if the Royal Navy was incapable of fulfilling it, the blame rested upon a Government which, with double the income enjoyed by Queen Elizabeth, profligately squandered its resources, and had habitually spurned the advice of Parliament. Who could feel assured, moreover, that the money thus arbitrarily demanded would not be diverted to some less worthy purpose?

The first demand for the city's aid was made in April, 1617, but the Government had taken no step towards carrying out its project in November, 1619, when the Privy Council informed the Mayor and Aldermen that the expedition, which, "for reasons best known to the King," had previously been deferred, would be sent out in the following spring, and requested the immediate collection of the Bristol contribution. A still more peremptory order being received soon afterwards, the Mayor and other civic dignitaries departed with £1,000 in hand, and were accompanied by the Master (J. Gonning) and Alderman Guy on behalf of the Society; but their appeals for an abatement on the ground of the King's wine debts and of the large sums spent in suppressing local piracy were scornfully rejected, and the balance of the impost was required to be at once forthcoming. A further delay having occurred, which the Mayor declared to be due to the impoverished condition of the merchants, who had lately lost £8,000 by wrecks and pirates, Mr.

Whitson and the Master were again summoned to London during the summer, and angrily rebuked for their remissness by the Privy Council. As the expenses of the Society's delegates during their two journeys amounted to £77, it may be surmised that large gratuities were vainly made to Court underlings. And equally unavailing was their production of a list of losses during the previous ten years, by which it was shown that two of their largest ships (150 tons each) had foundered at sea, 29 others had been "taken by the Turks," and 14 small vessels had been wrecked. (Book of Trade.) The obdurate Privy Council having learnt from Alderman Whitson that many Bristolians of good means, but not engaged in foreign commerce, had refused to contribute, commanded the Mayor to deal with them sharply, and to send them up to Court if they offered resistance. The Government eventually succeeded in extorting the full amount, about £1,000 being raised on loans, which were gradually cleared off by levying increased dues on shipping and merchandise. The expedition, which at length sailed in October, 1620, ended, like most of the King's enterprises, in disgraceful failure, being inadequately equipped both in provisions and ammunition.

Although the treatment of the city by the Government throughout the preceding transactions was little calculated to inspire the community with a desire for a closer connection with the Court, the King made a singular proposal in the summer of 1621 in the hope of improving his revenue. In a letter to the Mayor, Lord Treasurer Mandeville announced his Majesty's desire to "prefer" the farming of the Customs to the inhabitants of each of the outports, and requested the views of the city thereon, with information as to the amount that would be given in excess of the previous

average receipts (which during the seven years ending 1620 had been £3,706). The Mayor having forwarded this missive to the Hall, the Society promptly directed his worship to reply that through the restraints imposed on local trade and the losses by pirates, the mercantile body was much decayed; that as the chiefest dealers had retired into the country, and most of the rest were young men and small adventurers, the Customs were likely rather to decrease than augment; and that the Society dreaded "to bear the weight of so doubtful a matter." (Book of Trade.)

Voluminous papers having been preserved in the Hall relating to the Turkish expedition, it is somewhat remarkable that not a scrap of information can be found respecting the lengthy oppression endured by the Society after Charles the First had freed himself from constitutional restraints. From 1628 to the eve of the Long Parliament twelve years later, the records of the Society are absolutely blank, though for nearly the whole period—Mr. Barker's letter to the Secretary of State has already spoken emphatically as to the first six years of it—local merchants were the victims of continual extortions on the part of the Government. The most probable explanation of this dearth seems to be that in their dread of such outrages as that recorded in the corporate books (see page 111) the Society did not venture to keep any minutes of their proceedings. The deficiency is not supplied by Bristol historians, who have treated the period in a most perfunctory fashion. The State Papers, however, contain many interesting documents, some of which may be briefly summarised.

In June, 1626, shortly after Parliament had been dissolved in consequence of the House of Commons having refused the Government's demand for four

subsidies, the Privy Council addressed letters to the ports and maritime counties, requesting that an amount equivalent to the subsidies should be furnished as a token of attachment to the Crown. The sum demanded from Bristol was £2,400, for the hire and equipment of three 12-gun ships; but the city petitioned so earnestly for an abatement that the Privy Council, admitting the decay of local trade and the recent great losses of the merchants, fixed the contribution at £1,000, or two ships, but ordered that the reduced amount should be instantly collected by a levy upon the members of the Corporation. The two adjoining counties having been required to supply the third vessel, or pay £800 in equal moieties, an amusing effort was made both by town and country interests to shift the burden of the impost, Bristolians representing that they were unfairly weighted in proportion to their rural neighbours, whilst the county justices protested that their share of taxation was unreasonably large, and that Bristol, "a rich and wealthy city," might fairly pay a larger amount. (Privy Council Minutes.) No relief was obtained by either party. The sum assessed on the city was expended in hiring and equipping the two ships, which lay idle in the harbour until the three months' stock of provisions was consumed, when the Corporation declined to revictual them, informing the Duke of Buckingham that the outlay already incurred was equal to four subsidies, and that the counties still withheld their contributions. The ships eventually sailed for the Irish coast. Rendered more rapacious by success, the Government, in the following December, demanded that the city should hire and equip a third ship; but the Corporation refused to make a further effort, and though the mandate was twice repeated in 1627, it remained ineffectual.

In January, 1631, the King issued a proclamation by

which Bristol merchants were prohibited from pursuing a branch of commerce which was even then one of great local importance. The mandate of his Majesty, who had inherited his father's abhorrence of tobacco, forbade the importation of the plant into any port except London, and interdicted its cultivation throughout the country. Like many other decrees of a similar character, the restriction of the foreign trade to the capital was devised to extort money from Bristol merchants for licenses to import into this city, and there is evidence in the State Papers that several such licenses were applied for, though their cost is not stated. The edict naturally led to an extensive system of smuggling on the coasts of the Bristol and English Channels, and in 1639 the Crown found it advisable to permit importations into Bristol and three other harbours.

Another shift for wringing money from the public was devised in the summer of 1631, and the case of Bristol indicates what went on throughout the kingdom. On June 29th a royal commission was addressed to the Bishop of Bristol, the Mayor (John Tomlinson), and others, directing them to summon such inhabitants as, by their wealth, could be forced under the royal prerogative to take up the title of knights, and to fix the fines that should be paid by those refusing the "honour." The intention of the Government had become known to the Corporation some weeks earlier, and Mr. Tomlinson (Master, 1628) and other wealthy aldermen had hastened to offer their services privately, for the purpose of getting themselves appointed as commissioners. In addition to these voluntary victims no less than forty-four persons in the city were declared qualified for knighthood by the amount of their incomes, and as all of them shunned the proffered dignity, they were assessed according to their

assumed means. The following gentlemen, each of whom had been or became Masters, Wardens, or Treasurers of the Society, were amongst the sufferers:—Alexander James headed the list, being fined £41 6s. 8*d.*; Richard Holworthy paid £23 6s. 8*d.*; Abel Kitchin and Henry Gibbes, £8 13s. 4*d.* each; William Jones, £14; Walter Ellis and Francis Creswick, £13 6s. 8*d.* each; Edward Peters, £12; John Locke and William Wyatt, £11 each. William Colston (father of Edward), having just begun business, was let off for £6 13s. 4*d.* The total sum netted by the process was £626, the Mayor and his rich aldermanic brethren coolly assessing themselves at the modest lump sum of £78. The royal mandate required the whole of the fines to be brought in within ten days of the hearing.

The year 1631 did not close before another blow had been dealt to local trade. Bristol had enjoyed a great repute for its soap for four hundred years, and that article had become an important branch of commerce. In December, 1631, however, a patent was granted by the Crown to a number of courtiers and Londoners, conferring on them the sole right to manufacture soap from home materials, and a royal charter empowered them to destroy the vats and demolish the buildings of persons invading their privilege. Threatened with ruin, the Bristol firms, on payment of a large sum, obtained a license from the monopolists to manufacture the insignificant quantity of 600 tons yearly. But in May, 1635, the Privy Council issued an order forbidding Bristolians from exporting soap to any place save Wales and the western counties, and imposing an additional duty of £4 per ton on the quantity made, thus practically paralysing both manufacturers and merchants. In May, 1637, twelve Bristol soapmakers were lying in a London

prison for non-payment of the extra tax levied by the Crown. In the following year the King decreed that all the Bristol soaperies save four should be shut up. These brief citations from the State Papers give but an inadequate conception of the disastrous effects of the royal policy on Bristol interests. Adams, the ablest local annalist of the age, and a witness of the persecution, whose zealous loyalty renders his evidence unimpeachable, records that about thirty Bristol soapmakers "were served up to London, where against their wills they were retained long, with great expenses, imprisoned, and were fined in about £20,000, and were bound to more inconveniences before they could be discharged." (Seyer, ii. 293.)

In July, 1634, the merchants and shipowners of the city made a vigorous remonstrance to Lord Holland, Lord Chief Justice in Eyre over the royal forests south of Trent, against the wholesale destruction of timber in the Forest of Dean by the lessees of the patentee to whom the King had granted excessive privileges. The Bristolians asserted that one half of the goodly Forest had been destroyed within about twenty years, causing the price of timber to advance upwards of 50 per cent., and rendering shipbuilding at Bristol impracticable. Before wood became scarce, ships of from 100 to 200 tons were yearly launched in the Avon, whereas, during the previous nine years, only one ship of 100 tons had been built, and shipwrights were unemployed. Merchants were thus constrained to buy Dutch-built ships, but as such vessels were liable to confiscation if they entered Spanish ports, and as Bristol commerce was chiefly with Spain, local merchants were unable to trade. These complaints were urged on behalf of the Society by Alderman Barker and others,

at a Court held by Lord Holland, at Gloucester, when some remarkable evidence was given. It was shown that the Earl of Pembroke, after procuring a grant from the King to take yearly 10,000 cords of "complement" wood, and such trees as fell during storms in the Forest, for the maintenance of local iron works, had sublet part of the grant to Sir Basil Brooker and another man, who had wilfully destroyed vast quantities of the best timber. After a slight effort to defend their conduct, the sub-lessees submitted to the Court's mercy, and the jury amerced them in a penalty of £57,000—only one-twelfth of the fine imposed by the laws of the Forest. Sir John Winter, another of Lord Pembroke's lessees, had carried off 67,000 cords of timber within six years, though his lease limited him to 15,000 cords. Having pleaded guilty, he was fined £20,230. A third culprit, named Gibbons, was convicted of having cut down 4,000 oak-trees and 2,000 beeches, besides committing other great destructions, and was fined £9,000. The above depositions have been found in the British Museum. As the Earl of Pembroke was a favourite of Charles the First, he probably succeeded in procuring the pardon of his lessees.

The next Government requisition is historically famous. On November 6th, 1634, the King addressed a mandate to the corporations of Bristol, Gloucester, Bridgwater, and Minehead, and to the sheriffs of Gloucestershire and Somerset, requiring them to set forth a ship of 800 tons, with 260 men, equipped for half a year's service. The demand was afterwards commuted into a money payment of £6,500, of which £2,166 13s. 4d. were imposed upon Bristol. Although it was generally believed that the object of the Court was to render the King permanently independent of Parliamentary control, the money was by

some means contributed before March 14th, 1635. (The sum levied on Liverpool was £15.) Rejoicing in the success of the scheme, the Privy Council issued another Ship-money warrant in August, 1635, the impost being then converted into a general tax payable over the whole kingdom, instead of, as previously, on the maritime counties exclusively. The amount demanded from Bristol was £2,000, but after many prayers for an abatement, and the payment of large bribes to officials, the Privy Council reduced the charge to £1,200, which, as the Corporation represented, was, with the previous charge, equal to the unparalleled burden of eighteen Parliamentary subsidies. The money having been wrung from the citizens, the Government sent down a third writ in October, 1636, demanding a ship of 100 tons or a money payment of £1,000, afterwards commuted to £800, which were paid within a twelvemonth. The fourth writ, for a ship of 80 tons, or £800, was received in 1637, but the inhabitants, as will presently be shown, were groaning under other oppressions, and were nearly exhausted. The collection being delayed, the Privy Council sent an angry letter to the Mayor in May, 1638, rebuking him for negligence, charging him with disloyalty, and summoning him to Whitehall to answer for his contempt of the King's will. In great alarm, the Corporation sent up a deputation to appease their lordships, and as £400 were at once paid in, and the remainder was being collected, the Mayor was discharged. The Government found it prudent to mitigate their next demand, in November, 1638, only £250 being asked for, of which £200 were paid in the following June. The sixth and last of these arbitrary exactions was called for in November, 1639, when £800 were required, but the charge was subsequently reduced to £640 provided prompt payment were made, the full

amount being required in the event of delay. In July, 1640, the Corporation informed the Privy Council that they had remitted all they could collect (amount not stated); that more could be extracted only by distraints; that they had already made some distresses, but nobody would buy the goods; and that £700 had just been levied on the citizens for the maintenance and clothing of soldiers. Strange to say, the whole story of these imposts is ignored by local historians; the civic Audit-books for the three years ending Michaelmas, 1639, have disappeared; and though the mercantile body must have been amongst the chief victims, the records of the Society contain no allusion to the subject. Practically the whole of the above details have been obtained from the Minutes of the Privy Council and documents in the Record Office. So far as can be made out, the Corporation contributed about one-sixth of each imposition.

It will have been observed that the King's claims for Ship-money were concurrent with his Majesty's exactions on the Bristol merchants in the shape of exorbitant wine duties, with the stoppage of the Bristol tobacco trade, and with the crushing persecution of the soapmakers. As if these oppressions were not enough, another device was resorted to by the Court for the purpose of raising money. On November 30th, 1637, a commission, of which a Court parasite, Lord Mohun, and "two men of mean quality"—as they were termed by the Town Clerk—proved to be the acting members, was appointed under a royal warrant. This document stated that the King had been credibly informed that the magistrates, merchants, and others of Bristol had unlawfully levied very great sums of money on merchandise imported and exported, and ordered the commissioners to discover the offenders, and to ascertain what sums so obtained were due to the

King in order that they might be recovered. On what grounds any part of unlawfully levied money could be rightfully claimed by the Crown the commission omitted to explain. The case, indeed, was so bad that the commissioners carefully concealed the object of the inquiry. At the first sitting of the inquisitors, the Town Clerk requested that the powers of the commission should be disclosed, but his application was insolently refused. The city swarmed with pursuivants and other mercenaries, who broke into houses in search of papers and browbeat merchants, traders, shopmen, clerks, and porters, dragging many of them before the commissioners. The latter in their turn drew up affidavits incriminating local authorities, tendered the documents to the persons brought up, and when the men refused to swear to what they declared to be untruths, committed them to prison. During the hearings, which lasted for several weeks, the "mean men" insulted the merchants, denounced Mr. Long, the Master of the Society, as an abettor of frauds, and committed Mr. Arundell, one of the Wardens, together with the Town Clerk, for alleged contempt. (Letter of the Mayor and Aldermen, State Papers.) The charge of illegally levying money entirely broke down. The simple fact was that the Corporation and their agents, the Society, following a long-established custom, had increased the Wharfage dues, and possibly other local imposts, to assist in discharging the King's demands for Ship-money. Foiled in this direction, the commissioners fell upon other classes with great severity. The soapmakers, as has been shown, had purchased a license to manufacture a small quantity of soap; the brewers had obtained a similar license to export a limited quantity of beer; and the Society, as will presently be stated, held restricted licenses for the exportation of calf-skins and Welsh butter. The

commissioners, who acted as prosecutors as well as judges, declared that all these licenses had been fraudulently exceeded, and discreditable means were employed for extracting evidence from the partners, friends, customers, and servants of the accused persons in support of the charges. The Privy Council in the meanwhile countenanced these manœuvres by summoning merchants and others to London, and forcing them to give details as to their business transactions. At length a party of four aldermen and several members of the Society made their way to the royal presence, and prayed the King "on their knees" to take their distress into consideration. But Charles, who had taken much interest in the persecution from the outset, and had personally approved of the policy of the Privy Council, coldly replied that the inquiry could not be suspended; but that the petitioners might, if they thought fit, prefer a Bill against the commissioners in the Star Chamber—a tribunal whose obsequiousness to the Court and sympathy with royal instruments precluded any hope of redress. As there are no further papers respecting the commission to be found in the Record Office, it may be surmised that the Government at length recognised the fruitlessness of the inquiry, and ordered its discontinuance.

It is necessary to revert to the reign of James the First to explain the origin of another monopoly. In 1605 the King granted a charter to some London merchants, styled "The Merchants of England of the Levant Seas," but commonly known as the Turkey Company, conferring upon them, in perpetuity, an exclusive right of trading with the Turkish dominions and the fruit islands lying off Greece. The profits of this commerce being estimated soon afterwards at "three to one," Bristol merchants became desirous of adventuring in this direction; and

in 1618, having petitioned the Privy Council, and pleaded the liberties granted in their charters, the members of the Society, after spending about £70 in gratuities at Whitehall, obtained leave to import yearly 200 tons of currants from Zante and Cephalonia, on paying an acknowledgment of 6s. 8d. per ton to the Turkey Company. Two Bristol ships were accordingly sent out in the same year, and the results were so satisfactory that in 1619 two vessels, of 100 and 80 tons respectively, carried out cargoes and money to the value of £5,400, and returned in the following year after a prosperous voyage. No further incident is mentioned until 1632, when the Turkey Company applied for the arrears of the acknowledgment—which they seem to have wholly overlooked—and issued a new set of rules for regulating the trade. The Society, in reply, stated that they would buy from the Company's agents, as desired, if the price were not higher than that of the Greeks, but objected to other restrictions as inconvenient to local merchants, whose share of the trade was so small that their traffic could not injure the Company, or lower prices. As to the acknowledgment, it would be impossible to collect thirteen years' arrears, as many importers were dead, but the dues should be paid in future, whenever demanded. (Book of Trade.) Perhaps in revenge for this resistance, the Turkey Company, in 1633, sent a cargo of currants into Bristol, in violation of the Privy Council's order that neither party should trespass on the other's preserves, leading to a fresh protest from the Society.

It may be as well to complete the story of the Levant trade. At the date of the Restoration the commerce between Bristol and Eastern Europe had largely increased in despite of frequent interference by the London monopolists. The latter, in 1665, doubled the imposition

on currants and oil imported into the Avon, and sought by increased taxation to oust the Society from the trade, the Customs officers being bribed to assist in the scheme. Several members of the Hall were summoned before the Privy Council to answer the complaints of their opponents, and the Society were so alarmed that a committee was appointed to defend the accused, "or to make the best composition they can with the Company," which was to be left free to deal with such Bristolians as were non-members as it thought fit. The dispute being still unsettled in 1666, a remittance of £100 was sent to Sir John Knight, M.P., "for the better managing" of the matter. Counsel were thereupon engaged to defend the Society before the Privy Council, and the issue is recorded in the minutes of that body on May 23rd:—"After a full hearing of the dispute between the Levant Company and the merchants of Bristol trading to Zante, Ordered by the King in Council, that henceforth no imposition be demanded by the Levant Company from any Bristol merchant trading to Venice or Zante for the goods of those places only." Local rejoicing over this victory was, however, premature. As the Privy Council books show, the Turkey Company entered a caveat against the above order, and in the State Papers for 1669 is a report of a committee appointed by the Government to reconsider the protests of the Londoners against the infraction of their charter. No doubt through a secret understanding, another London clique, the Hamburg Company, raised a simultaneous lament over the intrusion of Bristolians in the trade of Southern Germany, a region which they contended was exclusively reserved to themselves. As was usual on such occasions, both the confederacies declared they would be ruined unless their monopolies were preserved; though oddly enough each Company

expressed its willingness to admit Bristolians as members on payment of small fines. The Privy Council held several meetings to discuss the subject, and as the Society's minutes are mysteriously reticent, there was probably much secret negotiating at Court. Eventually, the rights of the Society under their charters were again recognised, and the Levant Company were compelled to abandon the field. The Hamburg Company's claims appear to have been previously withdrawn.

When almost every branch of trade, manufactures, and commerce was restrained and harassed by the monopolies conceded by the Crown to Court favourites and London confederacies, it is not surprising that Bristol merchants, shut out from many regions, should have sought to better their position by participating in a system that enriched their rivals. The exportation of leather was prohibited by statute, but in 1614, according to an entry in the Hall's Book of Trade, James the First granted the Society, represented by five of its wealthiest members, Francis Knight, John Whitson, Matthew Haviland, Robert Aldworth, and Abel Kitchin, liberty to export annually, for forty years, 1,000 dickers (120,000) of tanned calf-skins, paying the Crown a yearly acknowledgment of 5s. per dicker, or £250; and the grantees, ship captains, and others engaged in the trade were exempted from the penalties imposed by Act of Parliament. Although this entry bears every appearance of genuineness, it is irreconcilable with documents in the State Papers and in the "Book of Trade" itself. The above patent was probably revoked for reasons now unknown; at all events the patent that actually came into operation, conceding precisely the same privileges, was granted a year later to one William Lewis, who conceded his privilege to the merchants in consideration

of a yearly rent. Another patent of the same kind was granted by the King to a man named Maxwell. In 1640 the Privy Council were besieged with complaints respecting the working of these monopolies, it being asserted that sole leather had greatly advanced in price owing to the craft of the patentees, who, under colour of their licenses, illegally exported hides of the best sort. (Privy Council Minutes.) After a temporary suspension, however, the trade was allowed to continue. But in December, 1641, many monopolies were threatened by the House of Commons, and the Society, alarmed at the prospect, addressed a letter to the members for the city, representing the urgency of maintaining Lewis's patent in the interests of local trade. Some of the arguments are rather amusing:—

The revocation will take away half the trade of the city, to the undoing of many families and the decay of shipping, the commodity being the principal one exported hence. The skins are a superfluity in this kingdom, the lighter kind serving only shoemakers to deceive poor and ignorant chapmen, who pay for the shadow instead of the substance, the leather not being durable. [The quality of foreigner's shoes was clearly unworthy of consideration.] The prohibition will also entail a loss of £9,000 a-year in the Customs. If the intention be only to damme Mr. Lewis's patent, and to suffer Maxwell's to continue, we entreat you to consider the tyranny we shall be under by increasing the rate, by limiting the quantity, and by the Turkish dealings of a rapacious Moore that will be here his agent, the wounds of whose Tallents (talons?) in most of us remains to this day uncured. It would be better to underprop Lewis's patent than to suffer a sluice to open that will let in such a deluge of evils. Nevertheless, if it be possible to reassume Lewis's patent into the city or Society's hands, it would prove a singular benefit. . . . If this be too difficult, and if there is a prospect that both patents will be revoked, you are to consider whether the plan should be opposed, as the trade of Bristol would probably be maintained with as much vivacity as before. (!)

Parliament took neither of these courses, but simply inserted calf-skins in the tariff of Customs as exportable

articles. A license to export them was also granted to the Bristol merchants in 1645, and again in 1648. The subject drops out of sight until 1653, when the Society petitioned the House of Commons, setting forth the vexations they had suffered through the repeated prosecutions of one Measy, who based his suits on the ancient Acts prohibiting exports of leather. They had licenses to export, and had paid the Customs duty, yet by this man's proceedings they were reduced to great straits, and were not only likely to be undone, but the whole commerce of the city to be ruined, unless relieved. The House at once ordered Measy's suit in the Court of Exchequer to be discontinued. (Commons Journals.) He, however, resumed the action, in 1655, and gained a judgment *nisi*, when, on the petition of the Society, the Council of State ordered the Court to quash the prosecution. (State Papers.) Measy in his turn petitioned in 1656, alleging that he and Hugh Lewis (the obnoxious deputy Customs Searcher, and the heir of the original calf-skin patentee) had been prosecuting the Bristol merchants for divers years for their illegal exports, and had spent £1,000 in law costs, whereby both plaintiffs were ruined. He added that the merchants, boasting of their purses, had succeeded in ousting from office Lewis, who had died in misery, leaving a large family. If the Council would allow the suit to be prosecuted, the revenue would benefit by £20,000. The Government, however, again ordered the action to be stayed. Having the statute law on his side, Measy forthwith petitioned again. In this appeal he asserted that Lewis had begun to sue the merchants for exporting in excess of their license in 1643; that when the king's troops captured Bristol in that year the merchants, out of spite, denounced Lewis to Lord Hopton as a traitor, on which he was

plundered by the soldiers; and that when Parliament recovered the city, two years later, the same merchants again denounced him as a delinquent to the victors, through which he was deprived of his office. The Society moreover refused to pay him the rent reserved by his license after 1647 or 1648, and he died without a penny. The petitioner, having freely lent £500 to Parliament, begged that the law might have its course. In reply he was ordered to drop the prosecution; but this he refused to do, and six months later he reiterated his supplication to the Protector, only to receive a final rebuff. (State Papers.) The Society, in 1655, being entreated for help by Lewis's distressed widow, voted her a sum "not exceeding £100," provided she surrendered her rights under the patent, and renounced her claim to the heavy arrears of rent. Four years later, an additional sum of £50 was granted for the relief of Lewis's numerous children, "in full of all demands." Immediately after the Restoration (Sir) John Knight, M.P., was requested to apply for the revival of the patent on the extraordinary plea that it was taken from the Society when it had twelve years to run! A petition to the same effect was presented to Charles the Second, but the Hall records are significantly silent as to the response.

The Society had a considerable interest in another monopoly. About 1617, James the First granted to two Welshmen a patent permitting them, for twenty-one years, in despite of statute law, to export 6,000 kilderkins of butter from the counties of Monmouth and Glamorgan, on payment to the Crown of £300 per annum. The patent was soon afterwards purchased by a London merchant named Henley, who immediately attempted to exclude Bristolians from one of their usual trades, "as if," indignantly wrote the Society in

1621 to the members of Parliament for the city, "God had no sons to whom He gave the benefit of the earth but in London." The royal prerogative then over-riding the law, the Society found themselves compelled to submit to Henley's terms, and purchased from him, in 1619, the right to ship 2,400 kilderkins annually, paying £400 in cash, and undertaking to pay yearly £120 to the King and £240 to the patentee. Though this bargain may have been satisfactory to those concerned in it, the farmers and landed gentry on the opposite side of the Severn, being deprived of an open market for their produce, and seeing great profits made by the monopolists, naturally felt aggrieved, and instructed their representatives to seek relief in the House of Commons. The Society, apprehensive of the consequences, thereupon sent up instructions to the members for Bristol, containing the passage quoted above. The letter further asserts that the Welsh gentry were seeking to attack the patent because their servants could not, as formerly, be employed in "buying and stealing (*sic*) butter duty free"; whilst their allegation that the exports occasioned great dearth and high prices was "merely fabulous; for the Society will maintain that the price has not exceeded 3*d.* per lb. in the chief Welsh markets and 4*d.* in Bristol . . . notwithstanding the extraordinary drought of the [past] year, which has been done by our care and respect in supplying the market."* The writers go on

* This remark throws a flood of light on the butter transactions of the Corporation, which were then of regular occurrence. As a matter of fact, the Society took no direct part in "supplying the market"; and the action of the Corporation towards that end shows how complete was the ascendancy of the mercantile interest in the civic body. In times of dearth, the Common Council rarely took any step to reduce the price of bread, but, after the purchase of the Welsh patent, its anxiety to provide the community with cheap butter was unremitting even when there was no scarcity at all. Thus in the civic Audit-book for 1624-5 is the following entry:—"Paid for 61 kint. Butter for the provision of the city next year, some at 2½*d.* and the rest at 2¾*d.* per lb.—£87 16*s.* 11*d.*" The receipts for 1625-6 include:—"Received for 61½ kints butter sold to the poor, £81 14*s.* 11*d.*" A little loss was usual, and was clearly deemed unimportant provided the commonalty were kept in good humour, and the Society reaped its profits.

to affirm that the Glamorganshire complainants had contemptuously ignored the patent, and themselves transported more butter, without any payment to the Crown, than the patentees had done, for which they ought to be punished. They finally come to the real object they wish to attain, and instruct their representatives to offer the King an additional rent of £100 a year, provided he would transfer the entire monopoly to themselves. (Book of Trade.) The Welsh complaint, however, obtained sympathy in Parliament. A Bill to throw open the butter trade was introduced on March 25, 1621, and though opposed by Alderman Whitson on behalf of the Society, went through all its stages in both Houses; but the King, acting on his favourite principles, and scenting additional profits, refused the Royal Assent. (Journals of both Houses.)

Before the subject turns up again, a fresh butter patent had been granted by Charles the First to Sir Henry Hungatt, who had transferred his monopoly to the Society, in consideration of a rent of £700 a year. In the spring of 1639, the King prohibited the exportation of butter owing to a national dearth, occasioning a dispute between Hungatt and his assignees, the former demanding his full rent, whilst the Society, alleging that only 200 kilderkins out of the fixed 6,000 had been shipped, and that nearly 1,000 kilderkins were perishing in their stores, complained that Hungatt had made no effort to prevent the export of English butter, as it was his duty to do, and that their foreign trade was ruined by vast shipments from Ireland. With a view to an amicable settlement, the Society deputed to London one of their members, William Yeamans, one of those engaged in the tragic plot of 1643, of which his brother Robert and his friend, George Bowcher, were the victims. The Society's letter

to Hungatt, carried up by their delegate, requests the knight "to consider his (Yeamans') particular case. He has paid part of the fine of £300, and has been sued both in the Exchequer and Star Chamber for the same thing, though the pardon ought to be as available to him as to others." The obscurity of this statement has been cleared up by research in the State Papers. It appears that the Government discovered in 1636—probably through the information of Dowell, the old enemy of the merchants—that the Society during the previous eleven years had been exporting butter largely in excess of their license. A commission was thereupon issued to Dowell and others, and the Society, being unable to rebut the charges, had been fined £300 for the offences of certain members, whose cases were then dismissed. Yeamans was one of those implicated, but the commissioners would not absolve him with the others, and he was still being prosecuted when his interview with Hungatt took place, but was subsequently pardoned by the King. Some arrangement was arrived at with the patentee, for the Society continued the trade for some years, and Measy's pertinacious litigation in reference to the calf-skins patent extended also to the butter monopoly, which appears to have come to an end during the Protectorate.

A final negotiation with the Crown for a special privilege was commenced in November, 1672, when the Society sought to procure the wine licenses for the city and the districts four miles around it, providing that the grant could be obtained for £600. The reason for taking this step is candidly stated in the Hall's resolution:—"Should the Vintners farm them they would . . . hold the merchants to their own humours as to prices, &c." Colonel John Romsey, Collector of Customs (afterwards concerned in the Rye House plot), was solicited to treat

with the Government, but he was either unwilling or perfunctory, and Sir John Knight was employed to press the claim. The Vintners, however, obtained a renewal of the privilege, and a second attempt to oust them, in 1683, was equally unsuccessful.

Turning to the legitimate business of the Society during the seventeenth century, precedence is due to the adventure set on foot in 1602-3 by Aldermen Aldworth and Whitson, and other members of the Society, for the exploration of "Northern Virginia"—the New England of later generations. A fund of about £1,000 having been raised, a little vessel named the *Speedwell*, of 50 tons burden, and a diminutive companion styled the *Discoverer*, of 20 tons, were properly equipped and placed under the command of a young but skilful Bristol mariner, Martin Pring, who sailed from Kingroad on March 23rd, 1603, and reached his destination early in June. It may be observed that there was not at that time a single English settlement on any part of the American continent. Pring remained about two months in the Bay of Massachusetts, lying for some time in a harbour to which he gave the name of Whitson, but which subsequently became memorable as the Plymouth at which the Pilgrim Fathers landed seventeen years later. Having made a close survey of the neighbouring coast, and loaded his ships with sassafras, then a valuable medicinal drug, Pring set sail homewards, and reached Bristol on October 2nd. His glowing account of the new country was published in the well-known work entitled "Purchas's Pilgrims."

Richard Hakluyt, one of the prebendaries of Bristol Cathedral, and still famous as a geographer, appears to have been the chief promoter of the enterprise.

In April, 1606, mainly through the representations of Sir Ferdinando Gorges, of Wraxall, James the First granted a charter authorising the foundation of two colonies in "Virginia," as nearly all North America was then called; the northern settlement being confided to Gorges and Chief Justice Popham, backed by several west-country merchants. (The American historian, Bancroft, observes that the above letters patent constituted "the first colonial charter under which the English were planted" in the New World.) Popham, who, as has been already stated, had been Recorder of Bristol, made urgent appeals for aid to his friends in the city; and a subscription list was opened at the Council House; but only about a dozen members of the Society were induced to co-operate, and their help was but limited. Thomas James, then Mayor, undertook to contribute £13 6s. 8d. annually for five years, and the Sheriff, John Guy, promised a similar amount. The other subscriptions varied from £12 10s. to 50s. per annum. A sufficient sum was, however, raised to equip a Bristol ship, of which Thomas Hannam was commander, and Pring was navigator. There is no known account of the voyage, except a brief note by Gorges that Pring returned with "the most exact discovery of that coast that ever came to my hands." Two more ships sailed from Plymouth in 1607, when attempts were made to establish a settlement, but the emigrants returned to England in the following year. Notwithstanding this failure, Pring's reports as to the resources of the regions he had visited kindled a spirit of adventure, and in response to an application made to the Privy Council by a number of London and Bristol merchants, the King, in 1610, granted a patent authorising the plantation of a settlement in Newfoundland. A few courtiers, amongst whom the great name of Bacon stands

conspicuous, were joined with the mercantile patentees. The members of the Society who took part in the movement included John Guy, Matthew Haviland, Thomas Aldworth, Richard Holworthy, John Langton, Humphry Hooke, Philip Guy, William Meredith and John Doughty. The first named was appointed Governor of the incorporation, and showed himself devoted to the enterprise. Three ships having been equipped with an ample supply of provisions, live cattle, poultry, &c., the Governor, with his brother Philip, his brother-in-law William Colston, and thirty-nine emigrants, set sail from Kingroad in May, 1610, and reached the island in twenty-three days. The party forthwith set about the erection of a fort and stockade, dwellings and storehouses, and Guy built himself a mansion, called Sea Forest House. In 1611 he returned to England to promote the extension of the colony, leaving his brother deputy-governor, but set out again in 1612, accompanied by a clergyman and several more emigrants. After his final return to Bristol, William Colston became deputy-governor. The settlement, however, was not permanently successful. By his will, dated in 1626, Mr. Guy left the Sea Forest estate to his four sons, then minors, but all trace of the settlement disappears after 1628.

In the meantime another local effort had been made in the same direction and with similar objects. A provokingly brief note in one of the books in the Hall states that during the Mastership of Alderman Barker (1617-8), "divers merchants of this Society did set forward the plantation of land in Newfoundland called Bristol Hope," merely adding that the district had been acquired from the adventurers of whom Guy was Governor. Scarcely anything more is known about it, and the project was doubtless abandoned like its fore-runner after a brief trial.

In November, 1620, on the petition of Sir Ferdinando Gorges, King James granted another patent, incorporating what was commonly called the "Council for New England," on which his Majesty graciously conferred the whole of North America from the Atlantic to the Pacific, lying, as regarded its eastern shore, between the mouth of the St. Lawrence and the present city of Philadelphia, with exclusive rights of fishing on the Atlantic coast. From a document in the Colonial State Papers it appears that Walter Sandy—probably the Society's Treasurer in 1645—was concerned in the enterprise; and that the Government were already striving to prevent the emigration of Puritans, for the charter provided that "no fanatics or vicious in religion" should be admitted into the territory. Gorges made repeated overtures, through the Mayor, to the Bristol merchants, proposing that they should form themselves into a joint-stock company, and exercise the privileges of fishing, &c., on paying a share of the profits to the New England Council; but the members of the Society had an invincible repugnance to joint-stock enterprises, and his proposal was "in no wise liked." He subsequently offered to grant a Bristol ship the perpetual privilege of fishing on payment of £10 for each 30 tons burden; following this up by an undertaking to make a free gift of 200 acres of land to every one who adventured £12 10s. in the settlement, and to grant 100 acres more at a quit-rent of 5s. for each member of the emigrant's family. The King further stirred the Mayor and the Lord Lieutenants of the adjoining counties to promote an adventure so advantageous to western trade; but there is no evidence that the mercantile community were moved by the appeal. Sir F. Gorges was allied by marriage with the Smyth

family of Ashton Court, and was residing in 1632 in their Great House at St. Augustine's Back, so long known, at a later date, as Colston's School. In August, 1632, probably through a negotiation with him, Robert Aldworth, a wealthy member of the Society, and his relative Giles Elbridge, also a member, obtained a grant from the Council of New England of a considerable tract of land in America, and were promised 100 additional acres for every immigrant, provided they founded and maintained a colony.

As has been already stated, the records of the Society at this period have disappeared, and those of the Corporation and of the annalists are singularly meagre. Recent research at the Privy Council Office, however, has produced some interesting facts. Under November 22nd, 1639, the following appears in their lordships' Minutes:—

A petition was read from Richard Long [Mayor, M.P., and twice Master], John Taylor [Treasurer, Mayor, and M.P.], and John Gonning [Master and Mayor], owners of the *Mary Rose*, 180 tons, stating that they have for many years adventured to Newfoundland, and carried fish thence to Spain, and returned with wines to England, paying the King great sums of money; and praying license to send the above ship to New England. The Lord Treasurer is thereupon prayed to order the Customs officers in Bristol to suffer the ship to proceed with the passengers therein, on their taking the oaths of allegiance and supremacy [which were obnoxious to extreme Puritans].

An appended schedule states that there were 120 passengers, and that the cargo consisted of meal, shoes, cheese, gunpowder, shot, candles, pewter, soap, nails, wine, vinegar, and one tun of hot waters [gin].

Minutes of a similar character occur in January and April, 1640, when like permits were granted to the owners of four Bristol ships: the *Neptune*, with 125 passengers; the *Fellowship* and the *Charles*, each with 250 passengers;

and the *William and John*, with 60 passengers, raising the total number of emigrants in five months to upwards of 800. Each of the above vessels had also a general cargo, one of them exporting 20 dozen of Monmouth caps, and another 750 gallons of "hot water." From the fact that the States of Massachusetts and Rhode Island have each a county named Bristol, and that the latter State has also a town of that name, it may be presumed that most of the emigrants settled in those localities.

The number of passengers carried away by the above vessels is sufficient to denote that a remarkable development had taken place in the shipping of the port during the previous twenty years. This is another subject upon which there is absolutely no information to be found in any Bristol documents or histories, but on which the minutes of the Privy Council and papers in the Record Office are astonishingly eloquent. In 1619 the mercantile body averred that the commerce of the port was chiefly carried on in Scotch and Flemish ships, and that the city and its merchants were "very poor." But between 1626 and 1628, when the Government granted letters of marque authorising the capture of French and Spanish merchantmen, upwards of sixty privateering ships were fitted out in Bristol, and nearly all the larger vessels belonged to members of the Society. For example, Humphry Browne and others sent out the *George*, of 300 tons; John Barker and partners the *Charles*, of 300, the *Joseph*, of 150, and the *Mary Rose*, of 200 tons; Humphry Hooke and partners, the *Abraham*, of 200, the *Eagle*, of 140, the *James*, of 100, and two of smaller tonnage; Thomas Colston, the *Bristol Merchant*, of 200, and the *Mary*, of 60 tons; John Gunning and Co., the *Lion*, of 220, another of 100, and a third of 50 tons; Giles Elbridge and Co., the *Angel Gabriel*, of 300 tons, and four others varying from 150 to 30 tons;

William Pitt and Co. had three, varying from 200 to 25 tons; C. Driver and Co. had four, from 200 to 40 tons; and W. Ellis had one of 200 and another of 100 tons. Martin Pring was in command of Alderman Barker's ship, the *Charles*, and was notably successful in bringing in prizes, one of which was a Spanish war-ship of about 30 guns. Thomas Nethaway commanded the *Angel Gabriel*, and his gallantry in beating off three Spanish men-of-war (one of twice his armament) is commemorated in a spirit-stirring local ballad. Of all the adventurers, however, Humphry Hooke gleaned the greatest financial harvest, one of his ships, the *Eagle*, having alone brought in prizes in 1630 to the value of £40,000. By the help of these and other windfalls, Hooke, who came here as a boy from Chichester, became very wealthy, and purchased the Kingsweston estate and other extensive properties. The Lord Admiral (Buckingham) claimed one-tenth of the value of all the prizes, and these payments amounted altogether to £20,000.

"A Note of things appertaining to the Society" made in December, 1631, seems to indicate that during the above exciting period some additional provision was made for convivial gatherings. It is somewhat singular that no record exists of the erection of the Hall. In a new feoffment of the Society's property executed in 1610, the estate in the Marsh is described as being for the maintenance of the Society's almshouse. But the Chapel of St. Clement had not been destroyed, and was doubtless used for ordinary meetings. The first definite mention of a Hall occurs during the Mastership of John Doughty (1623-4), in the following terms:—"This year the Hall of the Society was wainscotted, and the Audit dinner was appointed to be held in the Hall." And in 1647, when the surviving feoffees of 1610 executed a new feoffment,

the description of the estate is altered thus:—"All that the Chapel or Hall, heretofore called or known by the name of St. Clement's Chapel, and now called by the name of the Merchants' Hall, and used as their Common Hall for assemblies and meetings of the Company." The accommodation must have been very contracted, but no important alteration was made until the following century.

The inventory of 1631, referred to above, shows the simplicity of the surroundings of even the wealthiest citizens of the age. There was no covering for the floor, no table cutlery, and no drinking vessels. Eighteen "joyned stools" seem to have been provided for present and past officers; ordinary members were seated upon five homely wooden benches; but thirty-eight cushions, new and old, may have made the planks more comfortable. "One long drawing-table board, with two leaves and two trippets" (trestles?), with two shorter tables were covered at ordinary meetings with "carpets of streaked stuff," but at dinners with damask and diaper. A standing cupboard, a sideboard with its "carpet," fourteen dozen trenchers, and six dozen napkins are also mentioned. The walls were decorated with a carving of the royal arms, and coloured emblazonments of the arms of the Prince, the Society, and the city. A pair of brass andirons, "a pair of small creeps of iron to heave up the wood," a tin standish, a box of artificial flowers, and a corslet and head-piece completed the furniture of the apartment. In 1668, when some additions were made to the above inventory, the trenchers and wooden forms were still in use, but thirteen leather chairs had been obtained for the Master, Wardens and Assistants, and two silver tankards with a stock of fresh diaper served to grace the dinner-table. A third inventory of 1697 proves that no change had been made in the old

arrangements—indeed, the number of cushions was reduced to nine. But pictures of five benefactors (Whitson, Kitchin, Long, Vickeris, Jackson, and Browne) adorned the walls: there were also two chests with three locks each, armour and arms for two men, six pewter candlesticks, brass snuffers and pan, an hour glass, a hammer for the Master, a draught of the ship *Monk*, and “the Tree of Knowledge in a frame.”

The conduct in 1630 of one Richard Morgan, a landowner at Pill, in interfering with the navigation of the Avon, doubtless caused much excitement in the Hall; but it would appear that the Society contented themselves with inducing the Corporation to appeal to the Government for redress. The minutes of the Privy Council for June 11, 1630, recite a petition of the Mayor and Aldermen, complaining of Morgan's enormities in endangering shipping by denying the use of trees and posts formerly used for mooring, by forbidding the erection of new posts, and especially by erecting a house at Crockern Pill in front of an ancient tree used for mooring vessels time out of mind. Their lordships thereupon directed a warrant to be sent to Morgan, requiring him to demolish the tenement and to set up the required mooring posts; if he refused, the Mayor and Aldermen were directed to imprison him until he submitted. Morgan, who was a very impracticable man, and had had an impracticable father, appealed against the Council's decision, and obtained a re-hearing in October, but had no reasonable defence to make, and the previous order was reiterated. Further resistance being offered, the Privy Council resolved to depute two impartial dignitaries, the Archbishop of York and the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, to visit the place and report on the facts. Archbishop Harsnett arrived in Bristol some weeks before the learned judge. Both delegates

were received in great state, and each was conducted to Pill by water, the barges being well stored with beef, pies, sweetmeats, cakes, and wine, and plentifully saluted on their way by peals of cannon. The Archbishop's report, the only one preserved, is so racy as to deserve a lengthy summary:—

Makes bold to accompany the petition of the Mayor and citizens with these few (!) lines. Before writing has been down the Channel [river] to the port, with the Sheriffs and divers grave aldermen, and is an eye-witness to all the particulars mentioned in their petition "save only their custom which is *vox populi*." Cannot but wonder at the insolence of M^r Morgan, considering his father attempting the like interruptions in King James's time, when he was sent for and clapped by the heels, and the city has enjoyed the place ever since. The new erecting of a tappehouse is so despitefully done of set purpose to prevent the mooring of ships at the ancient tree as alone deserves sharp demolition for example's sake; for if this bold attempt be not crushed it will be a leading case unto other owners of those trees and soil, and the whole port might be utterly overthrown. Without those trees and posts, no power of man in stress of weather could prevent ships from perishing. The gentleman by this act deserves to be reputed as Varro was in Rome—an enemy not of one city but of all the Republic. "And yet, my lords, this man's impunity hath proceeded to a more pernicious device; for on this his little pill of ground he hath built of late years a sconsce [fort] which doth daily annoy not only the ships but the manners, mind, and spirit of the sea-faring men; a sconsce fortified with eleven great ordinance, that is, strong pothouses or tapphouses set up in a rond, that discharge neither powder nor shot, but [tobacco] smoke and strong beare, which doth so foul and defile the meaner sort with drunkenness, swearing, filthiness, and purloining of their masters' goods as makes *naufragium bonorum et animorum in ipso portu*. This your lordships know to be against the law, not having four acres of land allotted to any new tenement. I am sure it is against good piety and religion, and against the public welfare and honour of the kingdom, and so deserves a total and final eradication. That the little city of Bristol is a fair peale [pearl?] worth the cherishing and preserving I will say no more but this: for an orderly government, care of religion and provision for the poor, increase of navigation, advancement of His Majesty's Customs, ability of citizens to do His

Majesty's service, and conformity to His Majesty's laws both ecclesiastical and temporal, I know no city in the kingdom to be preferred before it, and it deserves neere the worse *quia amant gentem n̄zam* [*nostram*]; the regular clergy in general is nowhere so countenanced and maintained. All which I recommend to your lordships' grave wisdoms."

The obstructive tenement was demolished soon afterwards, the Corporation giving the tenant £30 to erect another house, but the "sconse" was apparently untouched. The civic body, however, had to make disbursements which exemplify the state of the Court under Charles's rule. In order to obtain the Privy Council's order, "gratuities" had to be made to a Gentleman of the Bedchamber, the Clerks of the Council, the Clerks' men, the doorkeepers, the doorkeepers' men, the Lord Treasurer's secretary and his doorkeeper, the porters of the Privy Seal, the Archbishop's secretary, and various lesser underlings. In addition, a fat buck was sent to the Archbishop, and £20 worth of wine and sugar were forwarded to him at York. Six sugar loaves, costing £4 6s. 6d., with £16 worth of wine were also presented to the Chief Justice. Morgan remained just as perverse and intractable as before, and continued to defy the merchants and the civic authorities for upwards of twenty years. See *Annals of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century*.

Some interesting local incidents marked the year 1631; but the Society's copious correspondence in connection with them was published in Seyer's *Memoirs of Bristol* (ii., pp. 278-285), and reproduction seems unnecessary. It may suffice to say that, about the close of 1630, the King became interested in a problem which was then exciting considerable attention, namely, the possibility of finding a direct route to India and China by way of the Arctic seas; and finally resolved to send out a small

vessel to attempt the discovery. His determination by some means became known to the Society, who forthwith resolved to co-operate in the enterprise, and Captain Thomas James, an able Bristol navigator, was selected to command a ship fitly provided for the expedition. As the King's approval was indispensable, the Mayor, John Tomlinson (Master, 1627-8) and other leading merchants despatched Captain James to Court, where, in a personal interview, the King expressed his cordial approval of the Society's proposal, and promised them an equal share of the advantages expected to be derived from the discovery. The local adventurers, of whom the Mayor, Humphry Hooke, Andrew Charleton, Miles Jackson, Thomas Cole, John Barker, Richard Long, John Taylor and Giles Elbridge were the chiefs, thereupon procured a ship of 80 tons burden (equal in size to the King's) and named it the *Henrietta Maria* as a compliment to the Queen. The vessel, with a crew of twenty-two seamen, and a large store of provisions, left Bristol on May 3rd, 1631, and on September 3rd entered a bay in Hudson's Strait, still called James's Bay in honour of its discoverer. A month later the vessel reached a place that was named Charleton, after the Bristolian mentioned above; and in consequence of the danger arising from the packs of ice, it was resolved to sink the vessel for the winter, the crew seeking a miserable shelter on shore. A terribly severe season continued until the following May, when the ship was again floated, and soon after departed for England, arriving in the Avon, in an extremely shattered condition, on October 22nd, 1632. The career of the King's ship, commanded by a man named Fox, had been of an inglorious character, the captain having contented himself with an aimless cruise of six months in regions already explored. James's intrepidity was thus widely recognised,

and he received the cordial congratulations of the King and the nobility at Court. A spirited narrative of his adventures was written by him soon afterwards, and was published in 1633, in which year he was appointed captain of a war-ship that cruised in the Bristol Channel for the suppression of piracy. It is scarcely necessary to add that the members of the Society who fitted out the *Henrietta Maria* reaped a barren harvest from the enterprise.

It will be seen from the Ordinances of 1618 (p. 73) that when disputes as to matters of business arose between members of the Society, the parties concerned were forbidden to appeal to the Law Courts until they had submitted the matter to the Master and Wardens, who generally succeeded in effecting a settlement by arbitration. Two or three examples may here be given:—

the xxi of December a° 1639.

Att this generall Courte the differences depending betweene M^r Thomas Colston and Gittens Lewys of the one parte and M^r Gabriell Sherman and partners of the other parte, is referred vnto the determinacon of M^r John Locke and M^r Alexander James, vnto whose determinacon the saide parties haue submitted and bounde them selves either to other in an assumpsit of one hundred pounds to stand to their award by the Change of a piece of silver either to other, soe as they conclude by the fifteenth of January next.

November the tenth day a° 1641.

And itt is this day agreed That whereas M^r Will^m Colston is conceived to owe some money vpon the butter businesse, Itt is agreed that hee should make choice of twoe men to end itt. Wherevpon hee desired that M^r Will^m FitzHerbert and M^r Will^m Cann might determine itt, whoe are therefore desired to doe the same, And that they would alsoe take into consideracon and determine what else may concerne the same in the busines in the making vpp 25^{li} remaininge to bee paid to Sir Henry Hungate.

Alsoe att this Court the difference betweene M^r Will^m Colston and the owners of the Globe is referred vnto M^r Miles Jackson

and M^r Will^m Cann on the part of the said Will^m Colston, and M^r Alderman Charlton & M^r Alderman Tailer on the parte of the saide owners of the Globe, whoe are desired to determine the same.

The proceedings of the Long Parliament and the great national convulsion that ensued must be dealt with very briefly, for the minutes of the Society furnish no information as to local events. In October, 1640, two eminent merchants, Humphry Hooke (seven times Master) and Richard Long (twice Master) were elected members of Parliament for the city by the Corporation and the freeholders, the free-burgesses being audaciously deprived of the franchise. But in May, 1642, these representatives were expelled by the House of Commons for their alleged connection with monopolies. Sir John Glanville, Recorder, and Alderman Taylor, a member of the Society, were thereupon elected as their successors, but those gentlemen soon ceased to attend the House, perhaps through sympathy with the King, and were in turn "disabled," their places being taken by two zealous Parliamentarians, Richard Aldworth (Warden, 1641) and Luke Hodges. In 1643, when the city was occupied by the troops of Parliament, heavy exactions were levied on the inhabitants for the support of the garrison and for the erection of immense fortifications. How members of the Society were dealt with is illustrated by a little but eloquent document that has luckily been preserved. Governor Fiennes commanded John Goning, jun. (Warden, 1640) son of the Alderman, to forthwith pay in £200, "which sum, in respect of your estate, is below the proportion required of other persons of your quality," with a threat that, on refusal, he would be left to the tender mercies of the necessitous soldiery.

The subsequent plot to seize the city and hand it

over to Prince Rupert led to the execution of its ringleaders, both valued members of the Society, while a few other merchants had to ransom themselves by the sacrifice of their estates. The capture of Bristol by the Royalists, a few months later, proved that Fiennes' whips were tolerable compared with his successors' scorpions. The Corporation, as soon as the conquest had been achieved, hastened to offer Prince Rupert £1,400 to save the inhabitants from pillage; yet the houses of merchants and traders charged with disaffection were ruthlessly sacked. In the hope of preventing a general spoliation, the Corporation next resolved on presenting £10,000 to the King, and a subscription was opened for that purpose, when the chief members of the Society contributed as follows:— Richard Aldworth (Mayor) £300; Alderman Charleton £600; Aldermen Long and John Langton £200 each; Aldermen Gonning and Hooke, John Gonning jun., and Hugh Browne £150 each; several others offered sums varying from £100 to £20. The gift had scarcely been made up, however, before it was announced that Prince Rupert required a large personal gratification, and a second £10,000 had consequently to be raised. The weekly demand for the maintenance of the garrison seems to have been £400 per week; and another enormous weekly rate was levied to strengthen the fortifications.

The only compensation which the members of the Society obtained for these perpetual calls on their purses was the new charter executed by Charles the First in December, 1643, granting them freedom of trade in Russia, Turkey, the Hanse Towns, and Denmark (p. 106). In 1644, when a Mint had been set up in the Castle, writs of Privy Seal were coolly addressed to the wealthier citizens,

requiring loyal subjects to contribute plate for conversion into coin. All these mandates have perished save one, directed to William Wyatt, Treasurer of the Society in 1643, from which it appears that eighty ounces of plate had been extorted from him. A few weeks later the Queen paid a visit to the city, when "a token of love" in the shape of £500, in silver coin, was resolved upon, the corporation contributing £150, and the rest being imposed on the inhabitants as a "benevolence." In the autumn, Prince Rupert returned from the North, when £200 were voted for his entertainment, and the merchants further provided wine for his table to the value of £100, which sums were to be levied on the citizens. In October the Deputy Governor, Lord Hopton, coolly "propounded" that £3,000 should be raised for the Royalist armies, and £1,000 appears to have been wrung from merchants and traders who had been supporters of the Parliament. But when the King demanded £1,500 more in February, 1645, the city was so utterly exhausted that the authorities refused to take action. Nevertheless, when the Prince of Wales arrived in March, a gift of £500 was subscribed for presentation to him, and £400 were raised for the garrison. His Royal Highness next "propounded" to the Aldermen—nearly all members of the Society—his desire for a "loan" of £400, and though he met with no response, it was resolved to collect £200 from the "able inhabitants" towards his housekeeping expenses. The Royal cause was then hastening to ruin. Prince Rupert's last demand upon the civic body, made when the second siege of Bristol was on the eve of success, was for £800 in lieu of free quarters for his newly-arrived troops.

A few days later the town was in the hands of Fairfax and Cromwell, and on October 2nd the Corporation voted £5,000 as a "gratuity" to the "Roundhead" army, and

raised the gift to £6,000 two days later, a vote for the increased sum being supported by Colonel Thomas Colston, a member of the Society who had distinguished himself by his zeal for the Royal cause, and by his construction of a redoubt on Kingsdown called Colston Fort. As the depletion of the citizens' pockets was complete, and the town was being scourged with a terrible visitation of Plague, it is not surprising to find that three months elapsed before the whole of the money was forthcoming. In the meantime, the conduct during the Royalist occupation of leading members of the Corporation—nearly all members of the Society—had been represented to Parliament, and on October 28th the two Houses passed an Ordinance requiring the ejection from the magistracy and Common Council of the Mayor (Francis Creswick), Aldermen Hooke, Long, Wallis, James and Thomas Colston, and Councillors Fitzherbert, Henry Creswick, William Colston, Cale, Bevan, Gregson, and Elbridge. In 1646 some of those gentlemen were required to compound for their "delinquency." Richard Long, a stanch Royalist (twice Master), seems to have been the severest sufferer, being fined £800, or one-tenth of his estate. Alexander James (Master, 1642) was mulcted in £670. Humphry Hooke was at first ordered to pay £800, but he avowed his conversion to Puritanism. Cromwell also certified that he had done a great service secretly just before Rupert's surrender, whereupon he escaped. Thomas Colston and William Bevan petitioned for favourable treatment, having conformed to Parliament, and no fines are recorded against them. John Bowcher, doubtless a brother of the luckless George, was let off for £135. In several other cases the existing documents fail to give the result.

In times so disordered the occurrence of arbitrary acts

of a comparatively trifling character seems to have been regarded with indifference. On May 20th, 1645, the Society resolved that as the city quays were in much need of repair, and as the Hall, being heavily indebted, was unable to bear the charge, the wharfage dues should be doubled, and a tax of fourpence per ton levied on every vessel entering the port until all engagements were cleared off. Similarly, on October 14th, 1654, the Society resolved to build a new quay "from the Lower Slip to Aldworth's Key" [Thunderbolt Street], and the Master and a committee were appointed to impose dues upon all imported goods towards the erection of the new works. It is obvious that those impositions were wholly unwarrantable, for, as regarded the wharfage dues, the Society were simply collecting them by permission of the Corporation "during pleasure," according to a schedule ordained by the Common Council; while the latter body could alone assume the right of placing a new impost on merchandise. Nevertheless, the doubled wharfage dues were certainly enforced, for the Society on one occasion ordered them to be reduced "one-fourth." The tax on imported goods probably aroused resistance, as nothing was done towards the extension of the quay for seven years. On April 11th, 1661, the Hall again resolved "that from henceforth all persons shall pay double wharfage until the charges of procuring the Charter [see p. 107], and building the Key, and making the way to the Hot Well shall be raised." The dubious legality of this resolution appears to have led to a negotiation with the Corporation, but only the result has been preserved. On September 28th, 1661, a lease, of which the following is an abbreviated copy, was duly executed under the common seal of the civic body:—

The Mayor and Commonalty to the Society of Merchants. Whereas the Society has undertaken at its own charge, before the 20th September next, to enlarge and make a new Key, from the Lower Slip of the Key to a place in the Marsh called Aldworth's Dock, in such form as the said Key now is, and also, at its own cost, to make a convenient way for coach or horse, by land, from Rownham Passage to the Hot Well, towards which work the Corporation will pay £100. And whereas the Back and Key, being the usual places for the shipping, lading and discharge of all goods . . . cannot be repaired and maintained without very great charge, which is necessary to be raised and levied of and upon such goods &c. as shall be shipped, laden and discharged into or out of any ship . . . which said dues and duties of wharfage the said Merchants . . . have covenanted and agreed to collect. It is witnessed that the Corporation, in consideration of the intended works and repairs, and of a surrender of a lease of the duties of anchorage, kannage and plankage [see p. 62] of which several years are unexpired, and of the authority formerly given for collection of the duty of wharfage, have demised the said duties, including the dues hitherto collected by the Chamberlain, from the date of this indenture till the end of eighty years. Rent £3 6s. 8d.

The only "due" previously "collected by the Chamberlain" was a sum of £8 a year received from a man who rented one or two cranes on the quays. As a further proof of the influence of the Society in the Corporation, it may be noted that the assent of the Common Council to the above concession of the wharfage dues for eighty years appears to have been coolly dispensed with.

To avoid repeated references to this subject, it may be added that in 1690, when fifty-one years of the above lease were unexpired, the Corporation accepted its surrender, and granted a fresh demise for eighty years, in consideration of £200, at a rent of £6 6s. 8d. The new lease recited, as a further consideration, that the Society had at great cost procured the assent of the Crown to the inclusion, in the free quays of the port, of the quay recently made by them near Aldworth's Dock, and had also undertaken to

make another new quay 462 feet long, from that dock to Hobbs's yard in the Marsh, and to build one or more cranes thereon. Permission was also granted to remove a Market-house and other buildings near Aldworth's Dock, in order to widen the quay. In September, 1712, when this lease had run only twenty-two years, another bargain was made between the two bodies, whereby the Corporation, in consideration of the Society consenting to give up a rope-walk in the Marsh, which obstructed the street improvements then proceeding in that locality, granted a fresh lease of the wharfage and anchorage dues for a term of eighty years at the former rent. The next, and final, lease, executed in 1764, will be referred to in the next chapter.

Amongst the incidents of the second civil war that broke out in 1648, the equipment of Royalist privateers in Ireland to prey upon English commerce caused great local alarm. On September 3rd the Society drew up a petition to the Parliament Committee for the Navy, from which it appears that a previous appeal had been made for the loan of a frigate for the protection of the Bristol Channel against the "Irish rebels," the Society undertaking to man and provision the ship, and that the request had been granted. The Society now state that since the former application "several vessels of great value of this port have been taken by the Irish, to the disabling of merchants who intended to contribute towards the furnishing of the frigate"; and as information had been received that twenty-six sail of ships and frigates at Wexford were preparing "to interrupt our ships from Newfoundland and the Vintages," the Society "pray that our sad condition may be represented to the House of Commons, and assistance afforded." In forwarding this appeal to Alderman Hodges, M.P., and begging for his

support, the writers state that four of the Parliament's frigates had been lying in the Avon some time, "and may linger longer if money be not sent to pay the discontented crews, while the enemy is taking ships almost out of our very Road." Increased activity of the Navy on the Irish coast seems to have brought the grievance to an end.

In February, 1650, the Society received a communication from the East India Company of London, offering to accept "a sum of money" from the Hall "to put into the joint stock to trade with India." The proposal was looked upon with some suspicion. Rumours were current, and were not unfounded, that the monopolists were suffering under financial embarrassments, and the Company's stock had fallen greatly below par. The offer was therefore courteously declined.

The growing reputation of the Hot Well amongst upper-class invalids attracted the attention of the Hall soon after the Restoration, and contributed to bring about one of the most important events in the history of the Society, the purchase of the manor of Clifton. In April, 1661 (Sir) John Knight, M.P. (Master, 1663), was "desired to treat with the Lords of the Hot Well touching the purchasing of the said well, and the waste ground about it, at a certain yearly rent, for 1000 years." This negotiation was fruitless; but the Society's interest in the subject continued, and in July, 1676, it succeeded in acquiring three-fourths of the manor of Clifton from the executor of a defunct owner, and the remaining fourth was afterwards picked up in fragments. Another and much smaller manor in the parish, once the property of the Dean and College of Westbury-on-Trym, and subsequently captured, like St. Clement's Chapel, by Sir Ralph Sadleir, was obtained, also piecemeal, by a trifling outlay in 1686. At that period the population of the parish can hardly

have exceeded 300, most of whom were labourers inhabiting cottages along the riverside. Around the church were a manor house * (to which a wine license had been granted in 1632), one or perhaps two upper-class dwellings, and a few labourers' hovels. All the rest of the area was partly common land and partly cultivated ground divided into about a dozen little farms. Even the manufacture of lime, for which the locality afterwards became famous, had scarcely begun; and the enormous cliffs, of which some acres disappeared in the eighteenth century, then frowned directly over the Avon. Scarcely anything, in fact, differentiated the parish from secluded villages in purely agricultural districts. As to the Hot Well, it is difficult to account for the undoubted fact that it had long attracted wealthy invalids from distant places, a sojourn of the Earl of Pembroke being recorded in 1599. The spring lay exposed on the bank of the river, and, being below high-water mark and surrounded with deep mud, must have been difficult of approach; there were no lodgings for visitors nearer than College Green; and until 1662 (*see* p. 165) the carriage road from Bristol ended at Rownham Ferry. After the visit to the Spa of Queen Catherine in 1677, however, the place became greatly more frequented, and in 1683 two men applied to the Society for leave to hold the spring, doubtless to make the approach accessible, and were permitted to rent it for the modest sum of ten shillings per annum, "during pleasure," a sum increased to 40s. four years later. In 1691 a wall was built around the spring for the purpose of barring out the tidal water and facilitating access, but the results were disappointing. At length, early in 1695,

* The following minute is believed to refer to this mansion:—"Sept. 17, 1700. Ordered that on payment of a fine of £49, a lease for five lives be granted to Whitchurch Phippen of the site or ruins of the great house at Clifton, heretofore burnt down, and since called the Old Castle . . . late in the holding of Mary Hodges. Rent 10s. Heriot 10s. Lessee to expend £350 in building."

Sir Thomas Day, Robert Yate (twice Master), and a few other public-spirited Bristolians entered into negotiations with the Society, who, on April 4th, granted to two of the confederacy, Charles Jones, soapmaker, and Thomas Callowhill, draper, a lease of the well, and the rocks and land adjoining, for a term of ninety years at a rent of £5, reserving to all persons a convenient passage down to the spring, and liberty to take the water without payment. The lessees covenanted to expend £500 within three years in erecting a Pump Room and convenient lodging-houses, also to make walks for sheltering and entertaining visitors, to leave ways for coaches and horses to pass to Durdham Down, and to refrain from throwing rock into the river. The immense success of this enterprise is sufficiently told by the annalists of the following century.

During the Commonwealth the ancient civic ordinances forbidding "foreigners," meaning non-freemen, to carry on trade or commerce had been suspended, several old soldiers having, by the Protector's orders, been allowed to engage in business. The old system was revived, however, soon after the Restoration. In November, 1662, the Society appointed a man, at a yearly salary of £10, "to search out those who shall buy and sell strangers' goods contrary to the privileges of the city, and to inform the Sheriffs of his proceedings, to the end that such goods may be seized as foreign bought and foreign sold." The civic officials having shown laxity in fulfilling their duties, the Society urgently prayed the Common Council to remedy the evil, and the latter body in February, 1667, took vigorous action. A ship belonging to strangers (probably Londoners) had arrived with a cargo of sugar and molasses, and the goods, instead of being removed to the Back Hall, as prescribed by the Ordinances, were sold by a London man, and put on

board a vessel bound for Swansea. The aldermanic justices thereupon decided that the merchandise was "foreign bought and foreign sold," and ordered the Sheriffs to seize the cargo, undertaking to defend them at the expense of the city if an action were brought against them. Later in the year, a freeman was detected in "colouring" (dealing in) strangers' goods, whereupon his shop was "shut down," and the bellman was ordered to proclaim his iniquity up and down the streets; but his disfranchisement was removed on payment of a fine of £15.

Many other cases of a similar character are recorded in the corporate minute books down to 1680, when the zeal of the officials happened to outrun discretion. A parcel of hops valued at £17 was seized on the usual ground, but the owner proved that he was a free-burgess and that the transaction was legitimate. The Corporation nevertheless retained the goods for three years, by which time the hops were spoilt by damp, when the owner demanded their full value, and threatened an action at law. No defence being possible, the money was paid; the Chamberlain "was feign to sell" the seized merchandise for £2 1s.; and raiding upon strangers was quietly dropped until 1696, when, moved by the second Sir John Knight's* vehement invectives against "foreigners," the old Ordinances were revived. In the last year of the century, a number of intruders were offered the alterna-

* Many inaccurate statements in reference to the two Sir John Knights have appeared in local works. In 1676, and for a few subsequent years, there were four John Knights on the Society's roll of members. The senior of these men was John, younger son of George Knight (Mayor, 1639). He was admitted by right of apprenticeship in 1639, became Mayor and M.P., and was knighted in 1663, in which year he was elected Master. His son John was admitted by right of birth, and was distinguished as "esquire" after his father had acquired a title. Sir John died in 1683, and his son in 1684. John Knight, sugar baker (often styled "junior"), owner and occupier of the Great House, afterwards Colston's School, was a grandson of Francis Knight (Mayor, 1594 and 1613), and was admitted as a redemptioner in 1650 on payment of £5. He was elected Master in 1666, and Mayor in 1670, and died in 1679. His son John, who was admitted by right of birth, was Warden, and also Sheriff, in 1681-2, was knighted in 1682 for his vindictive persecution of Dissenters, and was subsequently Mayor and M.P. He died in 1718.

tive of paying a fine for admission to the freedom or of having their premises "shut down," when upwards of £160 was wrung from the victims, a merchant being mulcted in £35. This was the last effort made to maintain the old custom. In 1703, when all the civic Ordinances underwent revision, those levelled at strangers were significantly ordered "to be left out."

In the time of James the First, the Society, like their sovereign, had an antipathy to tobacco, and their deputy, Mr. Guy, M.P., gravely informed the Privy Council in 1621 that one of the causes of the existing dearth of coin was "the extraordinary importation and use" of the baneful plant, which, according to the Wiltshire antiquary, Aubrey, then sold by retail for its weight in silver. Mr. Guy's statement must have seemed extraordinary to the merchants of the next generation, when many members of the Society had established a large and lucrative tobacco trade with Virginia. (Pipes and tobacco had then become established institutions at the Council House, and although in 1722 smoking in the Hall was forbidden "during business," that limited interdiction was rescinded so late as 1788.)

The Society, however, for obvious reasons, were strongly opposed to the cultivation of the plant in England, which, although contrary to law, became common during the Commonwealth, especially in Gloucestershire, but was again forbidden by an Act of the first Parliament of Charles the Second. In February, 1662, the Society petitioned the King to enforce the statute, and ordered a charge of 3s. per hogshead on Virginia tobacco to be exclusively applied to the suppression of the domestic industry. This fund proving insufficient, upwards of £300 was subscribed in the Hall to pursue the destruction of the plantations in the

neighbouring districts. Sir Humphry Hooke, grandson of the merchant of the same name, was then Sheriff of Gloucestershire, and the money was confided to his under-sheriff, but the results were so unsatisfactory that the Society afterwards requested Sir Humphry to render an account of the expenditure. In March, 1666, the Privy Council, in a letter to the Lord Lieutenant, stated that, from information received, the extent of land then under tobacco culture in Gloucestershire was greater than in any previous year; and other documents in the Record Office assert that there were many hundred offenders, whose proceedings were winked at by the gentry, and even by the county justices, as half the profits were claimed by those worthies in the shape of rent. The militia were sometimes summoned, and were assisted by troops of cavalry in destroying the plantations; but the cultivation continued for many years. So late as 1692, according to a petition to the House of Commons, 1,300 roods of land under tobacco had been discovered near Bristol, and several prominent citizens were said to be concerned in this enormity. Home culture was shortly afterwards suppressed by the superior machinery of the Revolution Government.

As Sir Humphry Hooke, of Kingsweston, has just been mentioned, it may be stated that in November, 1668, the Society voted him £5 towards repairing "the compasse upon Pen Pole Hill; the rest to be made good at his charge." This ancient structure, the object of which has puzzled many antiquaries, still occupies its original position.

The first mention of an entertainment to a distinguished visitor occurs in the Society's account books in 1673, when a banquet to the Marquis of Worcester, Lord Lieutenant, including gunpowder and cannon-firing,

cost upwards of £90. Another entertainment to the same nobleman was given in 1681, but the outlay was only £18 4s. In September, 1682, the Marquis, who a few weeks later was created Duke of Beaufort, again arrived in the city, ostensibly to review the militia, but really to manipulate the Common Council in the interests of the Government; and his command on behalf of the Crown for the election of a "trustworthy" mayor was immediately obeyed. His lordship, together with his son, Lord Herbert, was "treated to a collation" by the Society on his arrival, at a cost of £22 18s. The Duke's treatment of the city during the reign of James the Second was not conducive to further courtesies of this character.

The violent political troubles of the period were marked in the Society's records by the expulsion of a member—the only case known. The person so dealt with was John Rowe, the civic Swordbearer, who was disfranchised in October, 1683, for his suspected complicity in the "Rye House Plot."

The record of the death, on November 21, 1681, of William Colston suggests a few remarks respecting a family identified with the commerce of Bristol for several centuries, and whose name is destined to be held in honour so long as Bristol exists. The statement in Garrard's *Life of Edward Colston* that the family came to the city about 1400 is inaccurate. The name occurs three-quarters of a century earlier in deeds relating to property in Redcliff Street, and one Thomas Colston had attained such a standing in the Common Council as to be appointed one of the Bailiffs (Treasurers) in 1387. The Colstons suffered much during the Civil War for their adherence to the Royal cause, and William, its head in 1660, obtained some acknowledgment, as has been

already stated, by the appointment, in reversion, of his youthful son, Richard, as Consul at Marseilles. The office did not become vacant for several years, and Richard, in the meantime, settled at Cadiz. Another son, named after his father, resided at Lisbon, where he was murdered by an Englishman in 1675. (Privy Council Minutes.) Both of those sons doubtless acted as agents for their father, who, as the Society's Wharfage Books show, was one of the largest importers of wine and oil from the Peninsula, besides trading extensively in Levant fruit. None of his numerous sons are mentioned in the Society's books until the year of his death, when Thomas, then aged 41, returned to Bristol, apparently to manage his sick father's business; but he was not admitted into the Society until June, 1682.

In little more than two years, Thomas followed his father to the grave, and his death led to the reappearance in the city of his brother Edward, who, so far as can be discovered, had been absent for more than forty years. Much of the early life of this remarkable man remains a mystery. That he received his education in London is known on his own authority. But it is strange that he should not have been apprenticed until he was within a week of attaining his eighteenth year (27th October, 1654, to Humfrey Allington, a London mercer), that he should have served a term of eight years, and that he should not have applied for admission into the London Mercers' Company until 1673, when he was nearly 37 years of age. (Books, Mercers' Company.) On returning to his native city, he was admitted into the Society on December 17th, 1683, by right of birth; but he appears to have only twice attended a Hall, there being on other occasions a note attached to his name in the roll of members:—"at London," or "lives

at London." For a few years he imported cargoes here in the ships that had been freighted, or probably owned, by his father and brother—the *Fortune* and the *Zante*. On one occasion the former brought in a cargo of 4,500 pantiles, but the imports were generally wine, oil, and raisins, as before. In December, 1686, he had a dispute with the wharfage collector. His father, like all other importers of the period, had paid a due on oil of 1s. 2d. per ton. But the collector noted as follows:—

1686 December 22. Edward Colston, in *Fortune*.

24 ton shumack... ..	16s.
14 tons $\frac{1}{2}$ of oyle, for which he would pay but 8d. per ton, which I acquainted the Master with, & when the hall meates the s ^d M ^r . Colston is to reconcile it with them ...	9s. 8d.

The minutes are silent on the subject, and Mr. Colston does not appear to have objected to the charge again. His importations were not large in the two following years, and were then discontinued. As is well known, he levied a distress upon the Corporation in 1687 for the recovery of a loan of £2,000; and he was doubtless much discontented with the corporate revolution ordered by James the Second in the following year, when many prominent Tory Churchmen were ejected and replaced by Dissenters. He soon afterwards relinquished business and retired to Mortlake, and his visits to Bristol were thenceforth few and brief, the earliest clearly recorded being in 1700, when his mother's long life was near its close. His conveyance, in 1696, to the Society, as trustees, of his newly-erected almshouse on St. Michael's Hill will be referred to in Chapter VI. In the same year, the philanthropist, Sir Thomas Day, and two other persons were joint owners of the fine mansion in St. Peter's Churchyard, occupied as a sugar refinery; but whether he had continued a partner in the business to that time is

a matter of conjecture. The house was at that date converted into a mint, and, after the extensive coinage operations had been completed, it was acquired by the newly-founded Corporation of the Poor. Mr. Colston attended two meetings of that body in the autumn of 1700, and made a donation of £100 (afterwards doubled) towards clearing off its liabilities. The story of his great School, in which his confidence in the Society is so remarkably exemplified, will be dealt with hereafter.

It is not a little strange that scarcely an allusion to the Society's Almshouse occurs in the records from the reign of Elizabeth until the announcement was made of Mr. Colston's benefaction in 1695. In tendering the thanks of the Hall for that liberal offer, the Master (Samuel Price) informed the donor that the executors of Mr. Richard Jones (of Stowey, Somerset) had resolved "to follow your good example." A deed in the Hall shows that the executors paid in £1,000 in the following year, on the Society covenanting to build rooms for six additional almsfolk, and Mr. Colston's gift of land was doubtless estimated as of similar value. To enlarge the site, the Corporation, in June, 1696, granted to the Society that portion of the old Town Wall lying immediately behind the Hall and Almshouse, 140 feet in length, and the work of entirely reconstructing the latter being forthwith begun, was completed in 1699, when the members of the Society entered into a subscription to assist in defraying the outlay incurred, which included the purchase of a small house, costing £100. The amount raised was £619. On March 7th, 1700, the weekly stipend of the almswomen was increased from 1s. 6d. to 2s., and seven additional inmates were admitted on the same day "into the new Almshouse of the old establishment."

CHAPTER IV.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

AFTER the accession of William the Third, the chief interest of the Society's minute books in a historical point of view rests on the illustrations they offer of the working of the "Mercantile System," on which, for many subsequent generations, in spite of the teaching of Adam Smith, the prosperity of the country was generally imagined to depend. In dealing with questions affected by this system, however, the Society, with a lively regard for local interests, occasionally advocated views which thorough-going disciples of the theory condemned as heterodox. The most progressive ideas of the age of William the Third were set forth in the first work ever printed at a permanent Bristol press—"An Essay on the State of England in relation to its Trade,"—written in 1695 by a distinguished member of the Society, John Cary (Warden, 1683), the promoter of the Incorporation of the Poor. Mr. Cary, like all his contemporaries, was of opinion that, if we bought more from another nation than we sold to it, we were acting like a man living on his capital, and that the prosperity of the country was best furthered by "protecting" home industries from the competition of foreigners, and by compelling the colonies to traffic solely with the mother country. The trade of Ireland, he maintained, was destructive to English interests, which could be safeguarded only by reducing the sister island to the status of a Crown colony, prohibiting the

competition of Irish cloth in the home and foreign markets, stopping the exportation of Irish wool to the Continent, and forbidding the importation into Ireland of any foreign or colonial produce except what was purchased and shipped from England—a policy which Parliament soon after adopted and carried into effect with deplorable results. Turning from Ireland to Africa, and more especially to the traffic in slaves, the author became enthusiastic, declaring that trade to be “of the most advantage to this Kingdom of any we drive, and as it were all profit; the first cost being little more than small matters of our own manufactures, for which we have in return gold, [elephants’] teeth, wax, and negroes, the last whereof is much better than the first, being indeed the best traffic the Kingdom hath.” On the other hand, Mr. Cary advocated the stimulating of domestic manufactures by freeing raw materials from Customs’ duties, and by abolishing the Excise duties on glass and other articles—grievances that were not totally abolished until about 150 years after his death. He also strongly deprecated the trading monopolies that were then greatly cherished by London merchants, pleading for the concession of free commerce with China, India, Africa, and in short with all countries. And he even urged the free admission into this country of Irish meat and butter, a proposal then regarded as monstrous by the English landed interest. Though the writer’s views on the whole were far in advance of the time, the following pages will show that they were practically adopted by the Society.

In 1696 an attempt was made by an influential clique in London, styled the Royal African Company, to obtain a revival by Act of Parliament of a monopoly of trade with Africa, granted to them by Charles the

Second in 1674, but abolished by the Bill of Rights at the Revolution. The Merchant Venturers of Bristol, justly indignant at the violation of their chartered rights, had carried on a surreptitious traffic between the west coast of Africa and the English plantations in America even whilst the monopoly was in existence; and as, on its abrogation in 1689, this branch of local commerce developed by leaps and bounds, the manœuvres of the Londoners to recover their former privilege naturally aroused a vigorous opposition. In a petition of the local mercantile body to the House of Commons, it was asserted that the prosperity of the West India planters depended upon a plentiful supply of negroes (the annual shipment of the African Company had been limited to 3,000 slaves), and that the deficiency could be provided only by private enterprise. The clothiers and weavers of the city, in another petition, expatiated on the importance of their exports to the Slave Coast—which in fact were insignificant—and predicted disastrous consequences if that market were closed. Similar appeals were made by other ports, and the West India interest in Parliament was naturally in favour of a free trade in slaves. After a struggle at Westminster, an Act was passed in 1698, leaving the trade entirely open, but requiring non-members of the Company to contribute towards the maintenance of the fortified stations on the African coast.

A fresh impetus was thus given to profitable branches of local commerce, and the African fleet belonging to Bristol increased in about ten years to sixty vessels. (In a local pamphlet published about 1750, a copy of which is in the British Museum, the writer states with much complacency that in the first nine years of open trade the merchants of Bristol and Liverpool despatched no less than

160,950 negroes to the English plantations.) Enraged at the ever-increasing competition, the African Company opened another legislative campaign in 1705, with the object of driving their rivals from the field; and though the Society, in conjunction with the Corporation, were successful in defeating the attack, the conflict was renewed by the Londoners year after year, entailing a heavy expenditure on the Hall and the Common Council in the defence of local rights. In a petition to the House of Commons in 1713, whilst the struggle was still raging, the Corporation contended that the subsistence of Bristolians chiefly depended on this trade, which gave employment to great numbers of seamen, shipwrights, weavers, metal workers, and other artisans, a large part of whose manufactures were exchanged for negroes; whilst a similar petition from the Society affirmed that many of their ships were suitable only for the African trade, and that they would be ruined by exclusion from it. After three more defeats in successive Sessions, the would-be monopolists temporarily quitted the field. But in 1720 their demands were revived, and strenuously advocated by their allies, the South Sea Company, then at the summit of a scandalous career; and a large outlay was incurred in Bristol in baffling this formidable attack.

In 1725 the African Company renewed the offensive on their own account, offering the Government a loan of a million sterling if their monopoly were restored; and though the temptation was rejected, the claimants pressed their case energetically, but vainly, in six succeeding Sessions of Parliament. A long truce then ensued, during which the activity of Bristol enterprise made much further progress, though as the trade was solely in the hands of individual merchants or firms, scarcely any reference to it occurs in the books of the Society. In one of the deed

boxes in the Hall, however, is a bundle of loose papers throwing a strange light on the proceedings of some captains in the Royal Navy commanding ships of war stationed on the African coast. It appears from these documents, which are chiefly affidavits of the masters and sailors of Bristol slave ships, that in the year 1737, whilst the deponents were trying to procure cargoes on that coast, the officers and crews of three royal vessels, the *Diamond*, *Greenwich*, and *Spence*, lying there ostensibly for the protection of trade, were actively engaged in the purchase of negroes, gold dust, and elephants' teeth, each of the ships being provided for trafficking with large stores of cotton goods, spirituous liquors, gunpowder, and other merchandise, which were offered considerably below the usual prices, while £32 per head were given for slaves, or £4 above the ordinary rate. In consequence of this competition the merchant captains were unable to obtain cargoes except at an outlay involving their employers in heavy loss. One affidavit states that the *Greenwich* sailed for Barbadoes with 200 negroes, and another that the *Spence*, a small war sloop, carried off between fifty and sixty more. The disclosures caused much excitement in mercantile circles, and the Society co-operated with their friends at Liverpool in forwarding a strong remonstrance to the Admiralty, which apparently succeeded in its object.

Returning to the African Company, it appears that in 1747 the Londoners, after making a fruitless attempt to induce the Bristol firms to enter into their Company, began another determined effort in Parliament to secure the trade exclusively for themselves. The chief argument advanced for a policy of undisguised selfishness was that traffic on the Slave Coast could not be protected against foreigners unless a large number of additional forts were built and

garrisoned; that the Government grant for that purpose (£10,000 a year) was wholly inadequate; and that the charge could be sustained only by a Company enjoying exclusive privileges. The truth was that the Company was in a state of great financial embarrassment, and was unable to raise fresh capital whilst the trade remained open. The Corporation of Bristol and the Society lost no time in defending local interests. The Common Council, in a petition to the House of Commons, alleged that the trade from this port to the West Indies and America by way of Africa was "the principal and most considerable branch belonging to the city, and that since such trade has been free and open it has greatly increased, and his Majesty's plantations thereby much better supplied with negroes, and larger quantities of the manufactures of this kingdom exported."

Defeated in the Sessions of 1747 and 1748, the African Company became convinced of the hopelessness of their policy, and the Bill they promoted in 1749 was based on the principle of an open trade. From some cause this measure failed to pass, and the Society drew up a number of amendments in anticipation of its re-introduction in the following year, the most important of these proposals being that trading by joint-stock should be abolished, and that a new Company should be formed, the management of which should be vested in a committee of nine members, to be appointed in three equal parts by the merchants of London, Bristol, and Liverpool respectively, Parliament granting a sufficient yearly sum for the maintenance of the forts. These propositions were approved by the merchants of Liverpool, and though obstinately resisted for a time in London were eventually inserted in a new Bill, which received the Royal Assent in 1750, thus terminating a costly struggle for free trade waged for

nearly three-quarters of a century. (The Corporation and the Society, who were the promoters of the Bill, spent upwards of £1,000 in carrying it through the Legislature, but about half the outlay was afterwards refunded by the new Company and the Liverpool merchants.)

The preamble of the Act recited that the African trade, being "very advantageous, and necessary for supplying the Plantations with a sufficient number of negroes at reasonable rates, ought for that reason to be free and open to all his Majesty's subjects." The Royal Company was therefore dissolved, and the forts and stations were vested in a new corporation styled the Company of Merchants trading to Africa, admission to which was open to all merchants on the payment of £2 each. This was the only capital possessed by the new concern, and the payments thus made throw some light on the extent of the trade in the three leading ports. A list of members was drawn up yearly previous to the election of the committee men, and the roll printed in Bristol in June, 1755, gives the names of all entitled to vote. At that date 237 members resided in this city, 147 in London, and 89 in Liverpool. The number of merchants who continued to trade without entering the Company cannot be ascertained, but was probably inconsiderable. Schemes for upsetting the new organisation, and procuring a joint-stock monopoly from Parliament, were started by London merchants in 1779 and 1791, but were defeated without much trouble.

Another subject occasioning much debate in relation to the Slave Trade arose out of the frequent Acts passed by the Colonial legislatures imposing a poll duty on the negroes imported into the plantations. The first State which adopted a measure of this character was Virginia,

in 1724, and the example was soon afterwards followed by the Assemblies of Jamaica and South Carolina, to the great irritation of English merchants. The appeals of the Society and other bodies to the Government to rescind the imposts were at first successful, but the Colonial authorities persisted in their claim to fix local taxation, which was eventually sanctioned. In 1775, Mr. Burke, then M.P. for Bristol, apprised the Master by letter that the Assembly of Jamaica (where the import tax was already considerable) had just imposed "a very great duty" on negroes brought to the island above 30 years of age; whereupon a strong protest against the Act was addressed to the Government; but the result is not recorded.

In times of scarcity the Ministry were accustomed to forbid the exportation of English corn, which in normal seasons was encouraged by a bounty, and was long an important branch of commerce. When an embargo on shipments was ordered in 1762, the officers of Customs held that it extended to vessels bound for Africa containing stocks of pease and beans—the only food given to slaves during transportation—and the Society, declaring that this would cause "a great stagnation of trade," besides being "a great hardship to ships carrying corn to Ireland," made urgent applications to the Treasury for relief. Similarly, on the revolt of the American colonies in 1774, the export of arms and ammunition was forbidden, upon which the Society represented to the Board of Trade that the prohibition would be calamitous to traffic on the Slave Coast, and prayed for its exemption.

All these difficulties sank into insignificance, however, in 1788, when, upon some revolting disclosures being made respecting the treatment of slaves during their passage across the Atlantic, a Bill was brought into

Parliament to prevent overcrowding and other cruelties. The average number of human beings yearly torn from their homes had then reached the appalling total of about 74,000; and Sir John Picton, in his *History of Liverpool*, states that that town alone was making £300,000 per annum by the traffic. The measure was resolutely opposed by the merchants and shipowners whom it affected, who were heard by counsel in Parliament; and evidence against it was given by a number of witnesses, including several despatched by the Society. Mr. Brickdale, M.P. for Bristol, seconded the motion for the rejection of the Bill, but, after a protracted conflict, the measure became law.

The prolonged debates on the above measure had served merely to intensify public feeling, and an agitation speedily arose for the total abolition of the trade. The first provincial committee formed to promote this object was instituted in Bristol in 1788, Mr. Joseph Harford (Master, 1796) being chairman; and this body, in conjunction with kindred organisations, made preparations for bringing the subject before Parliament in the following year. The Society thereupon invited all local merchants interested in the trade to co-operate in resisting the attack, and on April 13th, 1789, at a crowded meeting in the Hall, Mr. William Miles presiding, an influential committee was appointed to defend the traffic, "on which the welfare of the West India islands and the commerce and revenue of the kingdom so essentially depend." Amongst the members of this committee were Alderman Daubeney (Master, 1784), Alderman Brice (Master, 1786), Alderman Miles (Warden, 1789), Sir James Laroche (Master, 1782), John Gordon (Master, 1804), Richard Bright (Master, 1792), John Fisher Weare (Warden, 1778), Richard Vaughan (Master, 1809), Samuel Span (Master, 1777),

Robert Bush, Thomas Daniel, Evan Baillie, Robert Claxton, John Pinney, Philip Protheroe, John Cave, and many other leading members of the Corporation. The views of this body were shortly afterwards enunciated in the House of Commons by Mr. Cruger, M.P., who contended that, if the traffic were to be abolished, which he strongly deprecated, compensation to the extent of about seventy millions sterling should be awarded to the injured merchants. A resolution advocating the suppression of the traffic was withdrawn, owing to the overwhelming majority prepared to reject it; but the regulating Act of the previous Session was renewed and made more efficient, the Society vainly petitioning against its restrictions. The trade was not abolished until nearly twenty years afterwards, but the number of Bristol ships rapidly declined at an early period, and the conduct of the ship captains who continued to frequent the slaving ports had a powerful influence in rendering the commerce unpopular. In 1791, whilst Lord Sheffield, M.P. for Bristol, was denying the right of Parliament to suppress the traffic, six English ships—of which three, the *Thomas*, the *Wasp* and the *Recovery*, belonged to Bristol—bombarded the town of Calabar for several hours, to compel the native slavedealers to sell at the price fixed by the captains, a great many innocent blacks being killed and wounded during the cannonade. In denouncing this outrage in the House of Commons, Mr. Wilberforce stated that the facts were perfectly known in Bristol and Liverpool, where the act of the captains was deemed so meritorious that they had been furnished with new appointments.

With regard to the West India products brought to England by the slave ships in their triangular voyages, it is somewhat edifying to find that the recent policy of

continental nations in reference to bounties on exported sugar was once in high favour amongst ourselves. In 1733 the Society cordially approved of certain proposals made by the merchants of London, the most important of which were that a bounty should be paid by the Government on every ton of British plantation sugar exported to other countries, that an additional bounty of £2 per ton should be payable on all refined sugar shipped in the same way, and that British plantation rum should be admitted for home consumption at a lower duty than that imposed on foreign spirits. The Government acceded to the request for a further bounty on refined sugar exported, so that it could be purchased abroad at a lower price than was charged in England; French brandies were taxed at a much higher rate than was levied on West India rum; and the whole of the duty on raw sugar was remitted to exporters to the Continent, again placing foreigners in a better position than home consumers.

In 1739 the West India planters sought Parliamentary permission to export their sugar direct to foreign ports, but the request was condemned as highly injurious by the Society, who sent a deputation to Westminster to organise resistance, and its efforts were successful. In 1759 the Society appealed to Parliament for an increase of the bounty on refined sugar with a view to paralyse foreign competition. War then absorbing all the resources of the State, the prayer was unheeded; but in 1765, when the import duty on raw sugar was £6 6s. per ton, the bounty on exported refined sugar was raised to £14 10s. per ton. Nevertheless, in 1766, the Bristol sugar refiners informed the Society that if the manufactures of their foreign rivals were admitted for domestic consumption they would be utterly ruined, and the Hall

at once petitioned Parliament to entirely prohibit such imports, and to levy a duty of £12 per ton on foreign raw sugar. The bounty system reached its highest point in 1781, when the export boon to English refiners, who still paid only £6 6s. per ton duty on the raw material, was increased to £26 per ton, or nearly three-pence per pound. This bounty was still in force when Rees's *Encyclopædia* was published in 1819; but the duty on raw sugar had then been largely increased.

Early in the reign of George the Second the merchants of Bristol, like those of other ports, raised a loud clamour against Walpole's Administration for what was styled its weakness and timidity in tolerating Spanish "depredations" on English shipping. The facts bearing on the matter now seem very simple. English merchants of that time vehemently contended that trade with our colonies should be exclusively reserved to themselves, and that smuggling there by foreigners could not be too rigorously punished. But the adoption of an identical policy by Spain was regarded as a monstrous infraction of British rights. An enormous clandestine traffic with the Spanish colonies was carried on by Bristolians and Londoners, and when their ships and cargoes were confiscated by the Spanish war-cruisers guarding the islands, as was frequently the case, the owners denounced the Government at home for submitting to such "outrages," and Walpole's opponents in the House of Commons of course were delighted to re-echo their cries. In 1731 the merchants of Bristol forwarded a petition to Westminster, complaining of the harassing interruptions to trade and heavy losses to which they were subjected; and the Society paid the expenses of a number of witnesses who gave evidence before the Commons in support of

the allegations. The Government promised to procure satisfaction, but the *tu quoque* defence of Spain was in fact unanswerable.

The subject temporarily dropt out of sight in 1733, when Walpole, alleging that, through smuggling and frauds in the Customs' system, not one-seventh of the produce of the tobacco duty reached the Exchequer, proposed to place the trade under Excise supervision. The Bill aroused an unparalleled tempest of indignation in mercantile circles; the Society sent a deputation up to London to co-operate in the opposition; the Minister, deserted by the representatives of sea-port boroughs, was compelled to withdraw the scheme; and his defeat was hailed in Bristol with exuberant rejoicings.

Returning to the Spanish grievance, it appears that the profits of the illicit traffic so much exceeded its losses as to encourage its development, while the exasperated demands for war by those who suffered won sympathy from a nation weary of the monotony of a long and prosperous peace. In 1739, while the Society were co-operating heartily with the London merchants in besieging Parliament for satisfaction, the country was roused to madness by the story of a knavish ship captain, named Jenkins, respecting the alleged loss of an ear through Spanish barbarity. And in the following Session the Hall sent up to the Commons a narrative of the sufferings of the captain of the Bristol ship *Sarah*, belonging to Mr. Richard Farr (Warden, 1748) and others, which vessel with its cargo, to the value of £9,000, had been captured and confiscated by the Spaniards for having on board a smuggled "stick of logwood." War was proclaimed in October, 1739, amidst great demonstrations of joy; but Walpole's prediction that bell-ringing would be

followed by hand-wringing proved only too accurate. The Hall's expenses in the above agitation amounted to £495, and £81 were spent in defeating the Excise Bill.

In some directions the Society manifested free trade proclivities. Though their attempts to break down the monopoly of the East India Company were always fruitless, they succeeded in maintaining an open trade with the Turkish dominions and the Levant, defeated various efforts made in London to obtain abnormal privileges for that port, and agitated for the imposition of a low duty on foreign corn in seasons of scarcity. The Hall also disapproved of the import duties levied at American ports in 1764, condemned the Stamp Tax imposed on the colonists in the following year, and conferred the freedom of the Society on the Marquis of Rockingham and his colleagues, who carried the Act which annulled that memorable blunder. But their estimate of colonial rights in regard to trade and industry was of a narrower character. In 1750, when iron was extremely dear (in 1728 the Society paid £32 per ton for wrought-iron moorings at Hungroad), a proposal that American raw iron should be allowed to enter this country met with much local support, and the Corporation and the Hall disbursed about £350 each in obtaining legislative sanction to such importations. But the statute provided, at the request of its promoters, that not only should no wrought iron be admitted from the colonies, but that the settlers should be prohibited from forging it for use amongst themselves. In 1766, some merchants in London favoured a scheme for permitting the colonists to export sugar direct to the Continent, but the Society peremptorily rejected the proposal. Not only, they contended, should such sugar

be continued to be landed in England, to prevent the "oversetting" of English refiners, but the ships conveying it should be compelled to call at an English port on their return voyages, in order to stop the illicit purchases that the Americans were making of continental manufacturers "to the total ruin" of British industries. As a further security, the Hall declared that if foreign raw materials were allowed, as was proposed, to enter Dominica free from duty, the import of foreign manufactures must be rigorously prohibited, "to protect the home producer from injury."

In 1773, on the eve of the great disruption, the Society petitioned the House of Commons to reject a Bill authorising a Mr. Quincy to manufacture steel in one of the American Colonies for exportation to England. The harsh policy of the Government, or rather of the King, induced the Hall for a time to support a policy of conciliation, then being eloquently advocated by Mr. Burke, the city's distinguished representative; but in 1777 the Society had become a convert to coercion, which was manifested by sending a congratulatory address to the King on the success of his arms, by rejecting by a large majority a motion advocating a conciliatory policy, and by presenting the freedom of the Society to the Prime Minister, Lord North, and his leading colleagues in token of approbation and sympathy.

The Colonies being regarded chiefly as profitable outlets for the English manufactures that enjoyed a monopoly in their markets, whilst their claim to manage their own affairs was almost always resented, it is not surprising that Ireland should have been considered by many English merchants as a dangerous foreign rival rather than as a portion of the Empire. Strange as it now appears, the Irish were prohibited from importing

foreign commodities and from exporting the produce of their own country, unless the goods were first landed in England to secure a profit for English shippers. In some branches of manufacture, notably cloth, glass, soap, and candles, Irish exportations were absolutely forbidden, in order that they might not compete with English industries. In 1703 the Irish Parliament petitioned Queen Anne that the linens of the country might be sent direct to the Colonies, instead of being forwarded to England for transshipment, whereupon the Society directed the members of Parliament for Bristol to vigorously resist a proposal that "would be very prejudicial to the nation, but particularly to this city." In 1731 the Irish prayed that sugar might be allowed to enter their ports direct from the plantations, but the Society was on the alert, and the appeal, like its forerunner, was rejected. In 1733 the Hall, in conjunction with the West India merchants of London, petitioned Parliament to prohibit the importation of foreign sugar into Ireland under any conditions whatsoever. In 1750 a Bill passed the House of Commons permitting the entry into Yarmouth of Irish coarse cloth and woollen yarn, whereupon the Society petitioned the Upper House to reject a measure which "would be greatly disadvantageous to this kingdom." In 1765 the Irish Parliament proposed to follow the English example by imposing taxes on imported manufactures, for the "protection" of domestic industries, but the scheme was denounced by the Society as a manifest design "to encourage the culture and manufactures of Ireland," which was clearly deemed outrageous, and Mr. Nugent, M.P. (an Irishman), was desired to oppose it "with all his might."

The only favour that local merchants were disposed to concede to the sister island was a relaxation, in times

of scarcity, of the laws passed by the English landed interest prohibiting Irish meat and butter from entering this country. These laws were rigorously enforced in ordinary seasons, and smuggling, which was very profitable owing to the low prices prevailing in Ireland, was punished by the confiscation and sale (for export) of the provisions—one-half of the proceeds in Bristol being distributed amongst the poor of St. Stephen's parish, where the seizures were generally made. Irish butter, however, was needed in the manufacture of baize, then an important local industry; and the Society applied to the Government for leave to import butter that had previously been made uneatable by the admixture of dirt.

At a later date, the hopeless condition of American affairs, and the urgent need of allaying Irish discontent, brought about a change in the sentiments of the House of Commons. In April, 1778, Earl Nugent, the former member for Bristol, introduced resolutions, with the approval of the Government, dealing with the laws regulating Irish trade and commerce; the chief concessions being that Irish goods (cloth still excepted) might be exported direct to the colonies, that colonial products, except tobacco and indigo, might be sent to Ireland direct, and that the export to foreign countries of Irish glass ware, and to England of cotton yarn, should no longer be forbidden. The resolutions were favourably received by the House, and were especially applauded by Mr. Burke. On the other hand, the indignation of English merchants, manufacturers, and tradesmen was even more furious than that aroused by Walpole's Excise scheme, and nowhere did the storm rage more fiercely than at Bristol. The Society, like the Corporation, resolved that the grant to Ireland of freedom of trade with the colonies would be

“destructive to that great system of commerce, manufactures, and revenue hitherto successfully pursued.” Deputations were sent up to London to organise resistance in the lobby of St. Stephen’s; and a circular letter was forwarded from the Hall to every city and borough in the kingdom, appealing for active co-operation in defeating so “calamitous” a policy. Lord North characteristically bent before the tempest. All the vital concessions were gradually withdrawn, and before the end of the Session scarcely a vestige was left of the scheme save some clauses favouring Irish linens.

Early in 1779 a fresh agitation was provoked by the introduction of a Bill permitting the Irish to import their own sugar, and Lord North delighted local merchants by procuring its rejection. But in a few months the easy-going Premier found himself beset with perils on every hand. Two West India islands had been lost, and others were in danger; the French were masters of the English Channel; American privateers were threatening the northern ports; and the Irish, with an army of 100,000 volunteers, showed a determination to follow the example of the revolted colonies unless their grievances were redressed. At a Hall held on December 21st, letters were read from the city members reporting Lord North’s humiliating surrender. The Irish were to be free to trade, not only with the colonies and plantations, but with foreign nations, on the same terms as Englishmen; the restrictions on their glass trade were to be abolished; and, hardest sacrifice of all, their woollen manufactures were to be freed from all restraints. The Society, like the Premier, submitted to the inevitable. It was resolved that no exception could be taken to the Minister’s propositions, and the Bill to carry them out was practically unopposed.

A few days after Lord Nugent’s resolutions had been

laid before the House of Commons in 1778, Mr. Burke sent a copy of them to the Master, in a letter warmly advocating their approval by the Society; and followed this up, a month later, by an argumentative reply to the remonstrance addressed to him by the Master (the latter has unfortunately perished). The great statesman's defence of the policy he adopted seems to be well worthy of preservation in these pages, and is given below *in extenso*. That it was wholly ineffectual in allaying the wrath of the mercantile community is proved by the proceedings of the Society, briefly recorded above, of which, as Mr. John Noble, the leader of the local Whigs, assured Burke, every Bristol merchant approved. The unpopularity and enforced retirement of Mr. Burke, at the election for Bristol two years later, may be safely attributed to his resistance to local sentiments on this burning question.

Mr. Burke to the Master [Samuel Span].

April 9, 1778. I have the honour to transmit copies of some resolutions reported from the Committee [of the House of Commons] on the trade of Ireland. They have been supported by Administration and by several independent members. It is found absolutely necessary to improve the portion of this Empire which is left, so as to enable every part to contribute in some degree to the strength and welfare of the whole. Our late misfortunes have taught us the danger and mischief of a restrictive, coercive, and partial policy. The trade in some degree opened by the resolutions is necessary, not so much for any benefit thereby derived to Ireland, as to satisfy and unite the minds of men at this juncture by the sense of a common interest in the common defence. If nothing of this kind should be done I apprehend very serious consequences. Ireland may probably in some future time come to participate of the benefits which we derive from the West India trade. But Ireland, being a country of the same nature with this, can never be beneficial to this kingdom but by pursuing several, if not all, of the objects of commerce and manufacture which are cultivated here. The world, I apprehend, is large enough for us all, and we are not to conclude

that what is gained to one part is lost, of course, to the other. The prosperity arising from an enlarged and liberal system improves all its objects, and the *participation* of a trade with flourishing countries is much better than the *monopoly* of want and penury. These opinions, I am satisfied, will be relished by the clear understandings of the merchants of Bristol, who will discern that a great Empire cannot at this time be supported upon a narrow and restrictive scheme either of commerce or government. I have the honour to be, with great esteem and regard, &c.

The Same to the Same.

May 12, 1778. I am honoured with your answer to the letter which I wrote in explanation of my conduct on the commercial regulations now before the House. You may be assured that nothing could give me a more sincere pleasure than to obey the commands of the Society when I am not morally certain that I should do them a serious injury by my compliance with their wishes. No pains have been omitted to make an amicable adjustment of a business whose very principle is the concord of the British dominions. The gentlemen of Ireland who attend to the matter have been found very moderate and practicable, and have given up some points for the present which in justice ought to have been granted to them.

As to those Members of the British Parliament whom you speak of as advocates for the Bills and as interested persons, who have nothing in view but the improvement of their extensive estates in Ireland, I really do not directly know to whom you allude. Many Members of Parliament have considerable estates in Ireland; but whether the enlargement of these be their motive for the vote they give is more than I can tell; nor am I very solicitous to know; as it is much more easy for me, and much more my business, to judge of the arguments they use than of the motives on which they act. As to the rest, I take it that the interest which a party has in a cause, though it disables him to be a witness, does not at all lessen the favour with which he ought to be heard as an advocate. The desire of improving one's private fortune by the general improvement of a country I have always considered as praiseworthy rather than blamable; and in particular I cannot comprehend how the wish of increasing an Irish fortune, the whole product of which is spent in England, can be objected to by any of the people of this kingdom. But indeed, Sir, the greatest part of the great majority of last Thursday have their whole fortunes in Great Britain, for whose sake, primarily, it is that they wish to remove the injurious restrictions laid upon trade by antient Acts of Parliament. This last is

a fact in which I cannot be mistaken. With regard to my opinions, I may be wrong in them; but be sure that my error arises neither from ill will or obstinacy, or a want for the highest regard for the sentiments of those from whom I have the misfortune to differ; and when I take the liberty of stating my Notions to you at large, it is not for the sake of entering into any controversy, but solely to acquit myself of any intentional fault. I have the honour, &c.

It may be added that Mr. Burke's colleague in the House of Commons, Henry Cruger, who was an American by birth, and had been a vehement advocate of the cause of the colonies, was a pertinacious opponent of any relaxation in the laws which crippled Irish trade. He was rewarded for his exertions by being elected Master by the Society and Mayor by the Corporation in 1781.

The need, in time of war, of armed ships for the protection of commerce always caused the Society to lend a favourable ear to the requests of the Admiralty for assistance in procuring seamen for the Navy. A few examples may be given of its proceedings. At a meeting in June, 1705, the Hall resolved that, as the Government had appointed a man-of-war, then building, for the security of Bristol trade, and as money was required to raise a crew for the ship, a loan of £200 should be made to the Admiralty for that purpose. And in the following month, Mr. Abraham Elton (Treasurer, 1705-8), and other owners of a merchant ship, lent the vessel gratis to the Society to harbour the enlisted sailors, the Hall undertaking to make good any damages and to engage a superintendent. Seamen were rarely obtained in so satisfactory a manner. In December, 1758, complaint was made to the Society by several masters of ships, returned from Jamaica, of the impressment of their seamen seventy or eighty leagues west of Scilly by two men-of-war, whereby one vessel was totally lost and others much delayed in reaching

port. The Master was consequently directed to represent the facts to the Admiralty; but Mr. Nugent, M.P., wrote to the Hall a few weeks later, begging that the complaint might not be pressed; and the whole country being then in ecstasies of joy at the glorious successes of British arms under the guidance of the first William Pitt, the Society not only allowed the matter to drop, but took an extraordinary step to assist the Naval authorities. The Admiralty having offered two frigates to act as convoys to Bristol fleets bound westward, the Hall undertook to provide them with crews, and hired a ship at £60 per month in which to lodge the men. The importance of a not very reputable class, the occupiers of low public-houses, generally known as "crimps," comes to light in the minutes bearing on this transaction. The crimps, it is stated, did not think it worth their while to inveigle the required sailors unless they were assured that the bounty ostensibly offered to the seamen for enlisting would be pocketed by themselves. The Hall does not appear to have thought their conduct unreasonable, for it resolved that each sailor enrolled should be required to sign an order, directing that the bounty to which he was entitled should be paid by the Society to his crimp! The same remarkable course was pursued during the perilous crisis of 1779. The Society having then subscribed £1,000 to augment the Army and Navy, the committee appointed to administer the fund decided that, as the Government bounty then paid for able seamen—£11 3s. per head—was sufficiently large, the Hall's money would be most effectually employed in paying "crimpage to landlords," who, if they secured the bounty also, as is not improbable, must have reaped an ample harvest from the misfortunes of the country. Upwards of £300 appears to have been

disbursed in this way by the Treasurer. The system of forcible impressment was regarded throughout the century as a necessary evil, and several of the "Regulating Captains," who superintended the operations of the local press-gangs, received presents of plate from the Society for the efficient performance of their duties.

It is clear, however, that the system was redolent of abuses, being often made use of to gratify private malice. In 1779 a country squire at Pill, to whom the estates of the famous Morgans had descended, having had his dignity offended by some of the pilots, induced the Regulating Captain to impress six of them "by way of example," and the Society had to take active measures to obtain their liberation. (The same worthy, it may be added, attempted in 1790 to regulate the motions of shipping in the port, arrogantly forbidding the pilots to take charge of vessels on Sundays, and finished the century, in 1800, by obstructing the pipes laid by the Society for providing the village and shipping with water).

It is almost needless to observe that the patriotism and loyalty of the Society were never lacking in those seasons of warfare and peril which were only too numerous in the eighteenth century. In September, 1728, a massive piece of plate was voted to Samuel Pitts, master of the Bristol ship *Kirtlington*, for remarkably gallant conduct. The vessel, which carried twelve small guns, with a crew of seventeen men, was returning with a cargo from Jamaica, when she was attacked by a Spanish rover carrying 180 desperadoes. After an hour's engagement at close quarters, the overpowering fire of the enemy drove the Englishmen below, and their ship was boarded by about fifty Spaniards; but Pitts succeeded in rallying his men, and, it was asserted, killed the whole of the invaders, and forced the pirate ship to take flight. The

account of the action further adds that Pitts had only four or five men wounded, and brought home his ship and cargo with flying colours. (The Society's handsome testimonial to him was purchased by the Corporation in 1821, and now decorates the Mansion House.)

In 1731 a movement was started in London for the erection of a statue of William the Third; but when a site for the monument was solicited from the Common Council, that body, in which a combination of Jacobites and of the faction led by Lord Bolingbroke had gained predominance, refused even to receive the petition. The incident aroused much indignation throughout the country, and notably amongst the merchants of Bristol, a large majority of whom were Whigs; and steps were forthwith taken to prove the attachment of the city to the Revolution settlement. A memorial was addressed to the Corporation expressing the willingness of the numerous signatories to erect a statue at their own charge to the memory of "our great and glorious Deliverer," if a suitable site were granted; and the Chamber not only assented to the request, but unanimously voted a donation of £500 to the subscription list. A few days later, when the subject was discussed by the Hall, Mr. Thomas Freke, a gentleman suspected of Jacobite sympathies, sought to disconcert his political opponents by proposing that the Society should contribute £1,000 towards erecting a statue of the reigning sovereign; but the transparent device was swept aside by moving the "previous question," and a vote of £300 towards the original project was carried by a large majority of the sixty-four members present. The liberal donations of the two public bodies had a marked effect in cooling the zeal of those who had brought the subject forward. Instead of fulfilling their pledge to bear the

entire charge, their subscriptions did not meet one-fourth of the outlay; and in 1736, when Jacobite manifestations were still common, the Corporation voted a further sum of £500, to which the Society added £200, to meet the claims of the sculptor, Rysbrach.

In March, 1744, the menaces of the French Government to send an invading army into England in support of the Pretender gave the Hall a new opportunity for displaying its devotion to the reigning family. An address was drawn up for presentation to the King, offering the Society's "sincerest professions of duty, zeal and affection at this time, when the Disturbers of Europe are directing their pernicious schemes against your Majesty's dominions in favour of an Abjured Popish Pretender," and giving assurances that the Hall would, with unshaken loyalty, support the Throne, and use the utmost endeavours in defence of the King's person and Government and the Protestant Succession against all enemies whatsoever.

War broke out immediately afterwards, and to safeguard local ships from French privateers, which swarmed in and near the Bristol Channel, the merchants of the city forthwith equipped a number of well-armed cruisers, ninety gentlemen subscribing £100 each towards the cost. Amongst the finest of these vessels were the *Boscawen*, of 30 guns, the *Bristol*, of 38 guns, the *Leviathan*, of 28 guns, and the *Southwell*, of 24 guns, having aggregate crews of 1,050 men. Many others were sent out soon afterwards, and, in the first few months of the war, a surprising number of valuable French prizes were captured, exciting much riotous exultation amongst the fortunate crews after the division of the booty. But the defeat of General Cope by the Highland rebels in September, 1745, gave a prodigious shock to the complacency of the country. On October 5th, in compliance with a summons issued by the

Earl of Berkeley, Lord Lieutenant, who had hurried to the city, the principal merchants waited upon his lordship at the Hall, to consider the best means of raising a body of troops for the defence of the Crown. Four days later a general meeting was held in the Guildhall, when a letter was read from the Duke of Newcastle, expressing the King's satisfaction at the ardour and loyalty of the citizens, and authorising the Mayor to enroll a body of volunteers. There not being time to convene a Hall, the Standing Committee, on October 10th, desired the Master to subscribe £5,000 in support of the movement. A number of leading members of the Society contributed sums varying from £500 to £100; the Corporation voted £10,000 independent of large personal subscriptions, and on the 14th the Mayor informed the Duke of Newcastle that nearly £30,000 had been already promised, and that fresh donations were still flowing in. (The amount raised in Liverpool was £6,000.) The working classes also manifested much enthusiasm, and Lord Berkeley was soon at the head of a new regiment. The national peril, which all but broke the Bank of England, practically came to an end early in December, when the Pretender ingloriously retreated from Derby; and only a trivial fraction of the Bristol patriotic fund was actually disbursed.

In the spring of 1756 war was again declared against France, and immediate measures were taken by the members of the Society and other local merchants and capitalists for the fitting out of privateers. The zeal displayed on this occasion produced a fleet of war-ships far exceeding anything attempted in previous wars, and indicated the vast development attained by local commerce. Within little more than a twelvemonth nearly forty ships had been equipped in the Avon, and sent

to sea; and upwards of twenty more were added in the two subsequent years. Twenty-six of these privateers carried from thirty-six to twenty guns, and were manned by about 4,000 sailors and volunteers. Owing to the destruction of the Custom House records, it is unfortunately impossible to give the names of individual owners. As in the previous conflict, many good prizes were captured in the early period of the war; but the preponderance of English cruisers became ultimately so great that few of the enemy's merchantmen dared put to sea, and most of the Bristol adventurers sustained heavy losses. An incident that excited great exultation occurred in October, 1758. A royal frigate, the *Antelope*, of fifty-eight guns, was lying in Kingroad, and the commander, Captain Saumarez, had come up to a fashionable ball at the Hotwells, when news arrived that the *Belliqueux*, a French war-ship of sixty-four guns, had taken shelter in distress near Lundy Island. Saumarez set sail within a few hours, captured the enemy after a slight resistance, and brought her up, with her crew of 470 men, to this port, for which gallant action the Society presented him with an elegant piece of plate.

During the conflict then proceeding, the Admiralty placed a ship of war, and sometimes two, in the port for the purpose of convoying the local West India fleets on their outward and homeward voyages, and gave the Society authority to direct the naval commanders as to the date, direction, and duration of each cruise. The Hall minutes show that this remarkable devolution of power on the part of the Government, which denotes the vast importance of Bristol commerce at that period, was largely taken advantage of; and the Society made many handsome gifts to captains who had shown gallantry and

zeal in fulfilling its orders. As an example of these voyages, the following extracts are given from a letter of Captain Taylor Penny, of H.M.S. *Looe*, to the Master (William Hart), dated "Cork, 2 June, 1761":—

SIR. I take the earliest opportunity to acquaint you that I parted from the Convoy in the following manner, viz^t, on the 18th ulto. the John and Hopewell, westward of Cape Clear 253 Leagues: on the 19th at noon, the Rialto, Harford, Ann, Sterling, Amy, Brislington, and Black Prince Westw^d of Cape Clear 274 Leagues: and on the 22nd all the rest of the Convoy, being 11 sail, Westw^d of Cape Clear 307 Leagues. No accident happened to any of the Convoy whilst under my care, and were all well at parting with a fair wind.

I am also to acquaint you that on the 13th ulto. Cape Clear then bearing N.E.B.N. 160 leagues, I saw a sail about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11 a.m. to which I gave Chase, and about $\frac{1}{4}$ past four p.m. came within Musquet Shot of her. She then hoisted French Colours and began to fire. I received three broad sides from her before I could bring my Guns to bear, she keeping all her sails on her; at $\frac{1}{2}$ past I came close alongside of her; she then engaged me about ten minutes; and then struck. She is the Jupiter of Bayonne of Twenty-two Guns, and 185 men, and a very fine Frigate. The reason of my coming in here is to land my Prisoners. When done shall proceed on the remainder of my Cruize without a moment's loss of time, after which shall call off here and take under my Convoy all ships bound to Bristol conformable to your request. I am, &c.

In 1778, during the American war, twenty-one Bristol vessels were engaged in privateering, but they were of much inferior strength to their forerunners of 1758, and with only two or three exceptions the outlay upon them vastly exceeded the receipts. The opening of the revolutionary war, in 1793, found the city labouring under an extraordinary mania for the erection of gigantic terraces and crescents in various localities, and caused a financial collapse unparalleled in local annals. Mercantile interests doubtless suffered severely in the crash, and the newspapers do not record the fitting out of a single privateer. Following the example of the Corporation,

however, the Society devoted large sums to increasing the Government bounty offered to sailors on joining the Navy, and voted £200 towards raising "the Bristol Loyal Regiment," which was added to the Line. In 1797 two corps of "Bristol Volunteers," cavalry and infantry, came into existence, and nearly every member of the Society capable of bearing arms immediately joined the organisation. On February 20th, 1798, at perhaps the gloomiest period in national history, the Society resolved: "That at this important crisis, when our commerce, prosperity, independence, and very existence as a nation are at stake, it is the duty of all, and particularly of a Society enjoying the privileges of English merchants, to exert their utmost power to defeat the destructive designs of our enemies. That the Society regret that, through the lowness of their finances, it will not be in their power to come forward to the extent of their wishes; and that £600, as the gift of the Society, be given towards the Voluntary Subscription for the defence of the kingdom."

The Subscription thus referred to was formally opened at a great gathering of the citizens held on February 23rd in the Guildhall, when the Mayor, Mr. Thomas Daniel (Master, 1805) recalled the memorable effort made in 1745. The finances of the Corporation, like those of the Society, were not in a flourishing condition, and the civic donation was only £1,000; but the ardour of the inhabitants generally more than compensated for the corporate shortcomings, and the aggregate amount contributed within six weeks was £31,300, the whole of which was forwarded to the Government. The sum greatly exceeded that subscribed in any other provincial town.

The Ministry did not display much gratitude for this pecuniary help. On April 21st the Society were invited to consider a letter received by the Mayor from the

Admiralty, recommending that all the serviceable long-boats in the harbour should be armed with cannon, and stationed as gunboats in Kingroad; but neither men, arms, nor ammunition were offered by the Government, which had refused to station a single cruiser in the Bristol Channel, or to erect a few beacons on the coast to guard against an only too probable surprise, or to fortify any point between Lundy Island and Bristol. The Hall, in concert with the Corporation, supplied two or three small gunboats, which the Pill pilots volunteered to man, but their services were fortunately never required. Soon afterwards the Society lent a pile engine to a Government official, who set about the construction of some batteries at Avonmouth, and renovated the little fort at Portishead.

Turning to subjects relating to the improvement of the port and of the navigation of the Bristol Channel, many of the Society's minutes may still be read with interest. So early as 1610 the Hall had employed the famous seaman, Martin Pring, to survey the Channel, and further operations of the same kind were ordered in subsequent years. In 1702 the desirability of establishing a lighthouse on the Flat Holm was discussed by the Hall; and in 1733 it was resolved to apply to the Trinity House for permission to undertake the work at the expense of the Society. This design having been frustrated, a Mr. Crisp offered, in 1737, to erect a beacon, at an outlay of £800, under the direction of the Hall, engaging to keep up a large coal-fire nightly throughout the year, in consideration of receiving a passing toll. (This primitive arrangement continued until 1820, at which time the profits of the lessee were stated to exceed £4,000 per annum.) Early in the eighteenth century, owing to the extremely tortuous course of the Avon near St. Vincent's Rocks, vessels exceeding about 150 tons

burden rarely ascended the river further than Hungroad, and in 1728 the Society expended nearly £700 on additional moorings there. They also spent a large sum in the following year in removing rocks in that locality, and made numerous grants from time to time for improving the harbour for pilots at Pill, and for providing a supply of water there, as well for the inhabitants as for shipping. In 1767 the Hall went so far afield as to vote £100 towards making a safe entrance to the harbour at Barry Island.

A matter of much greater importance, however, was the question of providing increased accommodation for the commerce of Bristol itself; and the efforts of the Society in this direction, pursued in despite of much local inertness, discouragement, and even hostility, were dictated by a foresight much in advance of the age, and are amongst the most estimable incidents in its history.

So early as 1755, a committee of the Corporation, when reporting on the duties of the Water Bailiff, asserted that "no human prudence could prevent the growing danger to ships, without provision be made for further room . . . by the want of which they daily sustain considerable damage." The Common Council's unwillingness to deal with the subject is evidenced by the fact that it was not until three years later that it was resolved to advertise for plans for converting part of the Avon or the From into a wet dock. Although such designs were doubtless received, they were silently shelved, and a committee previously appointed to consider the subject never presented a report. The great development of commerce after the Seven Years' War having increased the overcrowding of the harbour, while the inertia of the Corporation was obviously fostering the growth of the still infant port of Liverpool, a meeting of merchants was

held in July, 1764, when it was resolved that an efficient scheme for keeping vessels permanently afloat would be highly beneficial to the city, and that a subscription of £30,000 should be raised to carry it out. The proceedings seem to have quickened the determination of the civic rulers to defeat the advocates of progress. Following out a design that had been some time under consideration, the Corporation, in the following September, granted the Society, whose lease of the Wharfage Dues had then twenty-eight years to run, a new lease of those dues for ninety-nine years, at a rent of £10 a year, in consideration of the Hall undertaking to construct a new quay at the Grove, and a little quay, 130 feet long, at St. Augustine's Back, whereby some additional berths would be provided for shipping. On this arrangement becoming known, many wealthy citizens refused their support to the dock scheme, the subscription for which had reached barely a third of the required amount, and the despondency of its promoters is testified by the following resolution, passed at a meeting of the Hall on September 20th:—

“A scheme for making the Quays and part of the Avon a wet dock having been under the consideration of several merchants, who intended to attempt the same by subscription, but are at a stand from doubts as to its being practicable, Ordered, That this Society will concur with the Corporation, and contribute to the expense of surveys by able engineers, in order to ascertain whether the scheme can be executed.”

A grant of one hundred guineas towards enabling the promoters to obtain the necessary surveys was voted at the next meeting of the Hall, whereupon Mr. Smeaton, the celebrated engineer, was directed to furnish a plan, which was produced in January, 1765. Mr. Smeaton proposed that the From branch of the harbour should

be converted into a floating dock, by placing a dam across its mouth, and that it should be connected with the Avon by means of a canal through Canons' Marsh. The cost of the works was estimated at £25,000, exclusive of compensation for the land required for the canal. Strange as it now appears, the engineer's proposal took away the breath of the improvement party. Mr. Barrett, who was a witness of its effects, briefly notes in his *History* that the estimated outlay "was so great as to quash the enterprise." (The promoters were so mean spirited as to decline to defray the balance of Mr. Smeaton's charges and other expenses. In 1776, Mr. Thomas Symons, a public-spirited attorney, who had been employed by them, appealed to the Corporation to be recouped the sums he had personally advanced to the engineer and others on behalf of his clients, amounting to nearly £230. The Council voted him £130. The balance appears to have been paid by the Society.)

In January, 1767, Mr. William Champion, an enterprising local engineer, propounded a plan of a much more ambitious character than that of Smeaton, proposing that lock gates should be constructed across the Avon opposite Red Clift House, and the two rivers converted into a floating harbour capable of containing a thousand ships, the cost being estimated at £30,000. The opponents of improvement thereupon employed an engineer named Mylne to throw cold water on the scheme, and as the critic positively asserted that £60,000 would scarcely suffice to carry it out, capitalists held aloof, and the matter went to sleep again for nearly a generation, to the immense profit of Liverpool.

Two or three years before laying the above plan before the public, Mr. Champion had begun the construction of two docks for repairing ships on the right bank

of the Avon, near Rownham. The adventure proved disastrous to its projector, and the works, with some adjoining property, were purchased in 1770 by the Society, who resolved upon enlarging and deepening the larger dock to make it available for the reception of inward-bound vessels laden with inflammable naval stores and timber, which were then allowed to encumber the public quays. Extensive and costly improvements having been effected, an Act was obtained in 1776 "to remove the danger of fire amongst the ships in the port of Bristol," empowering the Society to make further enlargements of the dock, and to build warehouses for storing dangerous materials, and prohibiting the landing of tar, deals, &c., except there or at private wharves. It being desirable that the premises should be within civic jurisdiction, the statute further enacted that the strip of the parish of Clifton lying to the south-west of Hotwell Road, "from a little brook anciently called Woodwell Lake" (but then running in an underground culvert) to Rownham Ferry, should be separated from Gloucestershire and included within the city bounds. The undertaking involved a capital expenditure of many thousand pounds, which the slender income of the Society was ill calculated to bear, and which accounts for the "lowness of finances" acknowledged in the resolution of 1798 (*see* page 205). Large disbursements had moreover to be made from time to time for the removal from the dock of the enormous accumulations of mud deposited by the tides of the river. A local pamphlet published in 1790 asserted that "the great dock is capable of containing thirty-six of the largest ships belonging to the port . . . and it has never yet been completely filled."

The next minute of the Society in reference to the Floating Harbour is dated November 20th, 1786:—

“Mr. William Miles having submitted to the Hall that it would be of great public utility if the present quays were converted into floating docks, Ordered, That the [Standing] Committee do consider any scheme suggested for effectuating the same.” The Committee, a few days later, sent a communication to Mr. Smeaton, desiring him to recommend an able engineer to make surveys and estimates, and that gentleman replied by nominating two capable men—Mr. Joseph Nickalls and Mr. William Jessop. The Hall having voted £200 for preliminary expenses, the Committee invited Mr. Nickalls to Bristol, and that gentleman, after making a careful survey of the Avon and the harbour, produced a thoroughly original design in the autumn of 1787. His report pointed out the irremediable defect of any scheme for a dock constructed at or above Rownham, namely, the impossibility of its being reached by the larger class of vessels entering the port (by which he meant ships of about 400 tons burden) except at spring tides, owing to a gradual rise of about ten feet in the bed of the Avon between Black Rock and Rownham. In his opinion, the only way to overcome this difficulty was to construct locks for a floating harbour near Black Rock, to which ships of heavy tonnage—then often detained for more than a week at Kingroad—could ascend at the lowest tides, the depth of water there being nearly forty feet, while the navigation of the most tortuous portions of the Avon would be rendered easy. The cost of a dam at the place pointed out would, he added, be inconsiderable, the bed and banks of the river being of solid rock, and no purchases of land would be necessary. Mr. Nickalls apparently estimated the total outlay at about £25,000.

Some members of the Society, however, had been induced to favour a scheme for making the Hall's floating

dock available as an entrance into the proposed harbour, whilst others advocated a dock at Canons' Marsh. Further advice being considered desirable, Mr. Jessop was requested to present a report, and, as was to be expected, that gentleman discountenanced the scheme of his professional colleague, and propounded a plan of his own, embracing the erection of a dam at Mardyke, and a cutting through Rownham Meads to carry off flood water, the outlay being estimated at £32,000.

The Society now thought it advisable to consult Mr. Smeaton, who came down to study the problem on the spot, and the natural result was the production of a third plan, and the condemnation of those already made, especially that of Nickalls, who, at the Society's request, produced another in 1790, providing a lock at Rownham. The details of Smeaton's scheme are not preserved in the Hall, but may be inferred from what follows. After prolonged consideration and many debates, the Standing Committee, in February, 1791, reported to the Hall that the best site for a weir would be a little below Red Clift House, and that a cutting to deal with flood water should be made through Rownham Meads, the outlay being estimated by Mr. Smeaton at about £74,500, and by Jessop at about £52,000, but those sums did not include purchases of land or compensation for property injuriously affected.

Having brought the matter to this point, and thoroughly considered it in all its bearings, the Society, in October, 1791, passed a series of resolutions which members of the Hall may still read with satisfaction:—

Resolved, That the harbour is by nature inferior to that of many British ports, and that local shipowners are not on equal footing with those of other ports, either as regards security of ships whilst in port, or as to ease and expedition in discharging and loading. That from the same cause the ships of strangers and

the charterers of such ships are under similar inconveniences. That the losses sustained by these causes amount to a very large sum annually. That the prosperity of the port must largely depend on its goodness and security, and that the wealth and affluence of the city are closely connected with this prosperity. That the existing great inconveniences may be remedied without impediment to trade, or injury to health or property, by erecting a dam across the Avon at the Red Cliff, and by cutting a canal, with locks and sluices, in Rownham Meads, agreeably to the plans of M^r Smeaton and M^r Jessop, and by adopting such of M^r Nickalls' provisions as shall be deemed expedient. That there is every reason to believe that the whole expense of executing this improvement, and of indemnifying those whose property may be injured, will not be greater than the advantages acquired by it will much more than counterbalance. That such annual revenue should be provided as not only to pay the interest of the money laid out and the charges of management, but also to create a sinking fund for the discharge of the debt in a moderate number of years, and to provide for repairs and improvements; and that such adequate revenue will be produced by a toll over the proposed bridge over the Dam, and by a tax on shipping not exceeding the dock rates paid at Liverpool, calculating only on the present trade of the port, which the improvement will doubtless considerably increase. That the improvement should be executed for the sole benefit of the public by commissioners or trustees, and that no individual or body of men should derive any emolument therefrom. That the Merchants' Society having, at a large expense, with the sole view of benefitting the public, provided the plans and estimates, they conceive they have completed all that was incumbent upon them as a separate body; but that they conceive it to be their duty to co-operate with the Corporation and citizens in carrying this great improvement into effect, and offer their best services and endeavours towards that end.

In pursuance of these resolutions, Ordered, That the Standing Committee communicate the result of their labours to the Corporation, requesting them to unite in the undertaking, and be empowered to confer with a committee of the Corporation, or any other body of men, in the conduct of the business.

The Treasurer is directed to pay the sums now due to Messrs. Smeaton, Nickalls and Jessop.

On receiving a copy of the above resolutions, the Common Council showed a temporary inclination to abandon the apathetic policy that had been so long

pursued. A special meeting was held to consider the subject, and a committee was appointed to report, and did so in December, admitting the correctness of the Society's statements as to the shortcomings of the port and the serious evils that resulted from them, and approving of the Hall's proposals for a floating harbour. After a long delay, some members of the Chamber were appointed to confer with a committee of the Society with a view to further action, and this joint body recommended, in September, 1793, that a Parliamentary Bill should be prepared for the following Session. Encouraged at the prospect, the Hall immediately resolved that "the Society should contribute to so desirable an object to the utmost of its ability, should the Corporation be inclined to co-operate." But the energy of the civic rulers had already evaporated, and there is no further mention of the proposed Bill. Somewhat curiously, the Society, in the following November, desired Mr. Jessop to report on the desirability of constructing a dam near Cook's Folly, thus reverting to Nickalls' first and very economical design; but his reply is not to be found, and the whole question drops out of sight for seven years.

At a Hall held on July 29th, 1800, the minutes state that "the resolutions of the Society, adopted in October, 1791, . . . were read and approved, and the Committee were authorised to confer with the Corporation, and to take such steps for bringing forward the business again as they think necessary." Judging from the minutes of the Common Council, this proposal did not receive even the courtesy of an acknowledgment. The Society up to that date had disbursed over £1,000 in procuring plans and estimates from the engineers it had employed. The later history of the Float will be given in the ensuing chapter.

Owing to the demise of the Hot Well to a body of

Bristolians, as described in page 169, the minutes of the Society afford no information respecting the Spring during the period of its greatest celebrity. The only references to it for more than eighty years consist of complaints and remonstrances against the frequent attempts of the sub-lessees to debar the citizens and neighbouring Cliftonians from the privilege reserved by the lease of drinking and carrying away the water free from charge. The Society, on one occasion, indicted a tenant for his extortions, and apparently obtained his conviction at Gloucester assizes.

Possibly with a view to the entertainment of the fashionable visitors, though also with the desire of providing some amusement for Bristol, where play-acting was forbidden, the Society permitted the erection in 1729 of a little theatre on part of its estate near Jacob's Wells, which was a popular resort for nearly forty years. A play bill for August, 1754, announced that the next performance would be patronised by the Duke and Duchess of St. Albans.

The discovery of another spring of a similar thermal character to the Hot Well occurred at an earlier date. In 1702 the Society were informed that a new Hot Well had been found by the side of the Avon, near Oakham Slade—the then name of the ravine descending from Durdham Down. But the discovery seems to have excited little attention, and the spring is not mentioned again for twenty-seven years, when a motion that it should be let to a tenant was negatived, and the place was ordered to be made convenient for providing vessels with water. Proposals, however, were soon after made to the Hall, and in 1730 the spring was leased to two men for a term of fifty years, at an annual rent of £100—an enormous sum in view of the fact that no building existed within a mile of the spot, and that the only approach to

it was by rugged foot tracks. (The towing-path along the bank of the river was not laid out until 1765.) But mineral waters were then in universal repute, and the humble cottages that sprang up at the new Spa seem to have attracted many sober-minded invalids desirous of shunning the bustle and fashionable vagaries for which the old Hot Well had become famous. In 1746, however, the lessees, then insolvent, and owing several years' rent, surrendered the property, which remained unoccupied until 1750, when a new lease for twenty-one years was granted to John Dolman, at a rent of £24.

Dolman, who combined the avocations of a basket maker and a dissenting preacher, eventually blossoming into a beneficed clergyman, published in 1755 a dismal lucubration entitled *Contemplations amongst Vincent's Rocks*, in which he expatiated on the surprising recovery from incipient consumption of the celebrated John Wesley, after a three week's course of the water in the previous year. Dolman's admission that the only human objects usually visible from his premises were the remains of two murderers, gibbeted on Durdham Down, indicates the extreme solitude of the locality. Nothing more is recorded of the Well until 1778, when Dolman's successor had died, leaving two years' rent in arrear, and the Pump Room semi-ruinous. No one being adventurous enough to take his place, the Hall determined, in 1784, to let it in conjunction with the Old Well. A last doleful notice of the place occurs in 1795, when it was reported that a tenant had held it for five years and a half at £5 per annum, but that no more than six guineas had been extracted from him throughout his occupation. The spring, however, became a subject of lively interest to the Society in the following century.

Returning to the original Hot Well, it appears that on

the expiration of the long lease, in 1785, the Hall resolved upon making extensive improvements in the Pump Room and adjoining buildings, and eventually expended nearly £3,000 on the property, exclusive of the Colonnade, which was built by private enterprise. A lessee on the Society's terms—£600 a year—not being found, Mr. Thomas Perkins (Master, 1780,) was appointed manager on behalf of the Hall, and was allotted one-third of the receipts for his remuneration. The Society soon afterwards unconsciously struck the first fatal blow at the popularity of the Spa as a fashionable sojourn by imposing a charge of five shillings per week on each person drinking the water. The former subscription, practically voluntary, had not exceeded a guinea for the season. The price of the water despatched to distant places in bottles appears to have been also largely increased. A very extensive export business was done in this way, and Mr. Perkins had two warehouses in London, another at Liverpool, and a fourth at Rotterdam. His supervision ended in 1790, the net yearly receipts having never exceeded about £550.

One Samuel Powell then took a lease of the premises, at a rent of no less than £945; and forthwith increased the subscription demanded from visitors, and the prices charged for the bottled water. He even carried his policy so far as to shut up the pump that had been previously open free to Bristolians, and to refuse them a supply except on payment of his terms; but the Common Council resolved on vindicating the public rights, and his rapacity was defeated. Before the end of three years, however, he was unable to meet his engagements, and in 1795 the Society again took possession, and appointed him as manager at a weekly salary. The result of the first year's working of this arrangement proved highly lucrative, £613 being received

from subscribers, and £647 from the sale of "2,727 dozen of bottles and a few jars," showing that the wholesale price of the water was about 4s. 8d. per dozen bottles. After deducting expenses, the net balance was £917. The enhanced charges, however, had given mortal offence to many habitual visitors, the majority of whom had flocked to Clifton in pursuit of pleasure rather than of health, and the revenue steadily declined—a process which was accelerated by repeated additions to the price of exported water, which was advanced at last to about 7s. per dozen—whilst no proportionable reduction was practicable in the working expenses. In the last four years of the century the profits averaged £636 per annum. In the ten years ending 1810 they had fallen to an average of £407. The credit balance was only £73 in 1816, and in 1820 the receipts did not cover the expenses. The subsequent efforts of the Hall to revive the popularity of the Well will be narrated in a future page.

The Society heartily co-operated with the Corporation whenever that body promoted works of public improvement in the city. Thus, when the erection of an Exchange for the transaction of mercantile business was determined upon in 1739, the Hall made a donation of £2,000 towards the undertaking, and bore half the expense of obtaining the necessary Act of Parliament. In 1775 a grant of £800 was voted to assist in sweeping away a number of hovels standing on the bank of the Fromm between the end of Denmark Street and the Drawbridge; and in 1776 a gift of 200 guineas was made towards the removal of the ancient City Gate at the end of Small Street, and the improvement of King Street. In 1784, when Christ Church was about to be re-built, the Society promised £500 to the fund, on condition that the upper part of Broad Street, which Mr. Seyer noted in

one of his MSS. was then only 14 feet wide, should be made at least $22\frac{1}{2}$ feet in width, or four feet more than was proposed by the vestry; and this improvement was accordingly accomplished. In 1777 the Hall expended a large sum in widening Marsh Street. And in 1772 and 1795, when the vestry of St. Stephen's demolished a quantity of old tenements blocking up the thoroughfares near the church, donations amounting to £400 were made in aid of the operations. In 1747 a project was started for the erection of a Hospital for decayed seamen, when the Society and the Corporation offered £500 each, the Council also providing a site on Brandon Hill; but the design was ultimately abandoned, and the money appears to have been given to the local Merchant Seamen's Fund. Numberless gifts were made for amending the roads around the city, and the aggregate votes towards widening and improving Hotwell Road alone must have exceeded £1,000. Benefactions to charitable movements were too numerous to be detailed. In times of dearth the Society occasionally imported several thousand bushels of foreign grain, which were re-sold at or below cost price; and money was often distributed amongst the poor of distressed localities. Bounties were also offered for the importation of fish. All through the century, relief was rendered to those pilots at Pill who sustained personal injuries or lost their boats in their perilous avocation. About £600 were forwarded to sufferers from disastrous fires at Blandford, Tiverton, Crediton, Honiton, Barbadoes, and Antigua. Benefactions were made towards the ransom of mariners captured and held as slaves by Algerine pirates, and towards the succour of disbanded troops, and of soldiers and sailors wounded in battle. Besides a large subscription to the Infirmary, a special grant of twenty guineas per annum was provided for a

chaplain to that institution; and help was rendered to the establishment of county hospitals at Gloucester and Taunton. The Bristol Library was liberally supported, and a donation was made towards establishing lending libraries in Wales. Votes for the building or restoration of parish churches and parsonages were passed for All Saints', St. Stephen's, St. Nicholas', St. Werburgh's, St. Michael's, Christ Church, Clifton, Stapleton, St. George's, Portishead, and Locking, together with the French Protestant Chapel in Orchard Street, and a Protestant Church at Rotterdam. Following an example of the Corporation, the Hall made many presents of wine to persons who had rendered services to mercantile interests. In 1717 a pipe of sherry was presented to each of the members of Parliament for the city. The gift became an annual one, regardless of party considerations, and was continued until 1836. When subjects of interest to the Hall were pending in the House of Commons, as "Bristol Milk" was known to be an attractive delicacy, an additional pipe or butt was occasionally confided to the city members, to be disposed of "at their discretion." An honorarium of the like kind was voted for some years to three members of the Society—Mr. A. Elton, Mr. (Sir) J. Laroche, and Mr. Combe—who at different periods held seats in the Commons for distant boroughs. And in 1774 it became an established custom to present a hogshead of wine yearly to the Treasurer, who received no pecuniary recompense for his services. (The latter gift was doubled in 1838 and the three following years, owing to the increasing duties of the office.)

Having now disposed of the leading local questions in which the Society were concerned during the eighteenth century, this chapter may be concluded by some remarks on their internal affairs. The scanty accommodation of

the original Hall (St. Clement's Chapel) has been already noted. In February, 1701, the Standing Committee were empowered to make such alterations as they might think desirable, and workmen were accordingly employed for some months, during which meetings were held in St. George's Chapel, in the Guildhall. The improvements effected, however, were inconsiderable; but it may be noted that the opportunity was taken to remove the old wooden benches, and to introduce chairs for the use of ordinary members. It was also resolved that all the pictures in the Hall should be "made of an equal length with Alderman Jackson's." Perhaps this Procrustean order could not be carried out as regarded John Whitson's portrait, for it was soon afterwards given to the Red Maids School. The amended accommodation proving unsatisfactory, a thorough reconstruction, involving the demolition of several small adjoining tenements, was resolved upon in 1719, and two new apartments, the "Great Room" and the "Withdrawing Room," were completed in that year. In 1720 it was resolved that "a handsome way should be made at the entrance of our Hall," necessitating the destruction of more old houses clustered round the building, and £1,000 were laid out on the embellishments, besides £1,200 spent in purchasing property. In the two following years the King Street frontage appears to have been rebuilt, and ornamental iron gates and railings were placed at the entrance, the price of the metalwork being no less than eightpence per pound. In 1738 it was determined to remove another old tenement in order to make a "dry passage" into the building, together with a servants' hall. In 1788 the Hall was ordered to undergo another reconstruction, which extended over several years, and involved an outlay of £6,000, including £542 for chandeliers and lamps. The

erection of the present Committee Room and Treasurers' offices took place in the following century.

Previous to 1701, and for some years afterwards, the fine for admission to the Hall imposed on a merchant not eligible for the freedom by birth or apprenticeship, was generally £25 or £30. In 1691 an exceptional fine of £40 had been imposed on Sir John Duddleston, but the baronet, in despite of a still popular fiction, was the most extensive local importer of tobacco, and his relief from the duties on non-freemen was correspondingly large. There is no record of any one having been refused admission on the customary terms, except in 1711, during the High Church excitement of Queen Anne's reign, when Charles Harford, a prosperous merchant, was rejected, "he being a professed Quaker," it being further ordained that no Quaker should be admitted on any terms (but this Ordinance was repealed in 1720). No alteration was made in the fine on "Redemptioners," as they were called, until 1713, when the minimum admission fee was fixed at £50, increased in 1725 to £100, and in 1730 to £200. The last-named sum put an end to applications for admission. In February, 1738, the charge was reduced to £100 for the especial behoof of eleven gentlemen then admitted; immediately after which ceremony it was ordained that the future fine should be raised to £250. This sum proved also prohibitory, and no candidate offered himself for twenty-seven years, causing a diminution in the roll of members, the accessions by birth and apprenticeship being less numerous than the removals by death. In 1765 the resolution of 1738 was rescinded, and the fine settled at £150, it being further ordained that admission should be granted only to "meer merchants"—not merchants trading to St. Kits, as is absurdly alleged in the *Life of Edward Colston*, but

merchants trading oversea. In consequence, it may be presumed, of the numerous applicants for admission at the reduced terms (sixteen in all) the fine was again increased in September, 1768, to £200, at which sum it remained during the rest of the century. The number of Redemptioners from 1701 to 1800 was eighty, but the roll of members had nevertheless greatly shrunk during that period, whilst the customary attendance at the Halls had remarkably declined. In the period ending 1725, the members present at the annual elections, when the Master took the chair at eight o'clock in the morning, rarely fell below sixty, and sometimes reached about eighty; while the attendance at ordinary Halls was always considerable. On the 10th November, 1800, when the proceedings opened at ten o'clock, the number present was only twenty, then become an average. Long before that date many Halls were held at which the attendance was less than a dozen. Attempts to remedy the falling off were occasionally devised, but they were evidently half-hearted. Thus, in February, 1748, two members were fined 3s. 4d. each for non-attendance, though the actual number of absentees on that occasion was seventy-nine. At the annual meeting in 1759, at which only nineteen gentlemen were present, it was ordered that the fine for non-attendance should be actually levied; yet it is clear that the resolution was treated as waste paper. In 1764, when a Hall seems to have been specially convened to present the freedom to George Grenville, a Prime Minister only too famous in history, political feeling was so slightly excited that only fourteen members obeyed the summons; and in 1777, at the extreme crisis of the American conflict, when party passions were violently inflamed, the Hall which adopted a congratulatory address to the King mustered only thirty-one members.

The sons and apprentices of members were generally admitted as a matter of course, and paid merely nominal fees. The names of some of the apprentices denote the wide reputation of the Society in the early years of the century. Amongst them were two sons of Sir George Hoskins, a Herefordshire baronet, a son of the Hon. H. F. Thynne, a son of Sir Herbert Croft, Bart., of Herefordshire, and a son of Sir John Stapylton, Bart., of Boroughbridge, Yorkshire. The Society generally took measures to assure themselves that the servitudes were of a *bond-fide* character. In 1720, Matthew, son of Sir John Hawkins (Warden, 1712), applied for admission as having been an apprentice to his father, but upon objection being raised that he had not lived with Sir John during the asserted apprenticeship, his petition was rejected. In 1730 it was reported that a son of Edward Fry, then Mayor (past Treasurer and Warden), had been a mariner during the whole term of his apprenticeship to his father, when it was resolved that he should not be admitted. (In neither case was the candidate eligible by birth, as each had been born before his father became a member.) The enrolments of three other indentures were cancelled on the same day, because two of the youths concerned were serving as sailors, and the other was acting as an attorney in London. In 1765 a standing order was made, under which no apprentice was to be admitted unless he had paid an apprentice fee of £300, or was a near relative of his master, and this Ordinance was enforced on two or three occasions.

In addition to the ordinary members of the Hall, the Society from time to time created many honorary freemen, including members of the Royal Family visiting the city, eminent noblemen and statesmen,

distinguished admirals, local members of Parliament, and persons who had rendered services to the Society. A chronological list is appended. In the cases of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and Edward, Duke of York, the father and brother of George the Third, the certificates of freedom were presented in gold boxes.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1705 Edward Colston, jun. | 1766 H. S. Conway, Sec. State. |
| 1707 Francis Colston. | W. Dowdeswell, |
| 1711 Capt. John Paul. | Ch. of the Exchequer. |
| 1712 2 ^d Duke of Beaufort. | Sir W. Meredith, |
| 1727 John Scrope, M.P. | Lord of the Admiralty. |
| 1738 H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. | Sir G. Saville. |
| 1742 Rt. Hon. Edw. Southwell. | W. Pitt (Earl of Chatham). |
| Serj. Foster, Recorder. | Sir W. Draper, K.B. |
| 1749 William Wansey. | George Prescott. |
| 1750 Earl of Halifax, } Lords of | 1768 M. Brickdale, M.P. |
| Lord Dupplin, } Trade. | Sir C. K. Tynte, M.P. |
| F. Fane, } | R. H. Coxe, M.P. |
| 1755 Lord Ducie, Ld. Lieut. | Ed. Southwell, M.P. |
| Robert Nugent, M.P. | (Lord de Clifford). |
| Adm. Lord Anson. | 1769 Duke of Kingston. |
| 1757 Thos. Fane, Hall Clerk | 1771 5 th Duke of Beaufort. |
| (Earl of Westmorland). | 1775 Edmund Burke, M.P. |
| 1759 Lord Chedworth. | Lord North, Premier. |
| Hon. J. Spencer | Earl of Berkeley, Ld. Lieut. |
| (Earl Spencer). | 1777 Earl of Suffolk, Sec. State. |
| (Sir) Jarrit Smith, M.P. | Earl of Sandwich, First |
| 1762 H.R.H. the Duke of York. | Lord of the Admiralty. |
| Norborne Berkeley | 1778 Earl of Sussex (Bristol |
| (Lord Botetourt). | freeman by marriage). |
| 1763 C. Townshend, Ld. of Trade. | 1782 Admiral Rodney. |
| 1764 G. Grenville, Premier. | Admiral Lord Hood. |
| 1765 Earl Poulet. | Admiral Sir F. Drake. |
| Lord Hilsborough, | John Purrier. |
| Ld. of Trade. | 1789 Lord Chanc. Thurlow. |
| Lord Burghersh | Wm. Pitt, Premier. |
| (Fane's son). | Lord Camden. |
| 1766 Marq. of Rockingham, | 1790 Marq. Worcester, M.P. |
| Premier. | Lord Sheffield, M.P. |
| Duke of Grafton, | 1796 C. Bragge (Bathurst), M.P. |
| Sec. of State. | 1797 Admiral Lord Duncan. |

Questions as to the annual festivities of the Society first occur in the minutes of 1720. Up to that time, the members, after enjoying a substantial dinner in the Hall on Charter Day, were accustomed to conduct the new Master to his residence, where he was expected to provide them with a "treat," or "evening entertainment," to wind up the day's proceedings. The convivial habits of the age being borne in mind, it is not surprising that this arrangement was regarded by fervent devotees of Bacchus as involving an unprofitable waste of time. It was at all events resolved that future Masters should pay the Society ten guineas each in lieu of the treat, and that the evening potation should thenceforth take place in the Hall at a convenient interval after the early dinner. It was further determined that each Master should have liberty to invite the wives of the members to partake of the annual banquet. This innovation, though doubtless satisfactory to the Benedicts of the Society, soon excited the envy of bachelors, and in 1724 a motion was made that each unmarried member should be allowed to introduce a lady on the same occasion. The discontented minority were, however, defeated. In 1727 they reventilated their grievances, asking that liberty should at least be granted them to bring their sisters, or the daughters of other members, to supper; but in this also they were unsuccessful. That domestic harmony did not prevail whilst the ostracised young ladies were kept out in the cold is significantly indicated by the Hall's resolution in October, 1730, which suppressed lady guests altogether. Household tempests appear to have followed; and in the following year the married majority, in restoring their mates to their places at the dinner table, conceded to widowers and bachelors the privilege of bringing their own daughters or sisters to supper. And in 1732 the

younger members were allowed to be accompanied by the daughters of their senior colleagues, which was of course the object at which the ingenuous philanderers had been driving from the outset. The concord thus established continued until 1744, when, for some unexplained reason, the usual dinner was abolished, and orders were given for a supper and ball, to which the ladies already qualified to enter the Hall were to receive invitations. The Treasurer at this period was so reticent in regard to the character and objects of his disbursements that the expenditure on these festivities cannot be discovered. Something must have occurred, however, to cause dissatisfaction, for the Hall, in the following year, refused its sanction both to a dinner and a supper. Nevertheless, balls on a grander scale than before, to which some of the neighbouring county gentry were invited, took place in the three years ending in 1748, when they also were discontinued so far as the Society were concerned. Their admirers were thus driven to maintain them by private subscription, and the Hall was several times granted for such entertainments, dinners and suppers in the meanwhile being entirely suspended. In 1761 a motion to revive the banquet was defeated by the casting-vote of the Master; a proposal for a ball was also negatived; and both subjects thenceforth disappear from the minutes.

There being abundant evidence of the exuberant outlay of the Corporation on feasts and entertainments during the period just dealt with, the frugality of the Hall is not unworthy of note. But the tastes and habits of the age could not be wholly suppressed. At the annual audit of the Society's accounts, it had long been usual to provide a dinner for the gentlemen who devoted much time and labour to the examination

of the accounts. The number of auditors rarely exceeded eight, and the cost of the repast, down to 1745, amounted to only about £12. But after the annual Hall dinner was abolished, the cost of the auditors' feast developed prodigiously. It reached about £25 in 1753, and £36 in 1754; and in 1759, when there was a turtle costing £26, and a Gargantuan wine bill, the total rose to £99. Large outlays followed in succeeding years, until at length, in 1767, the entertainment cost the Hall nearly £139, a sum far exceeding the cost of entertaining the entire Society forty years earlier. The minutes are silent on the subject, but it is significant that the item for the audit dinner thenceforth disappears from the accounts.

As might be expected in a numerous confederacy, the general prosperity of the Society, especially during the first three-quarters of the century, did not prevent the occurrence of many of those personal reverses that are unavoidable in all branches of human enterprise, and particularly imperil the career of an adventurous merchant. Whenever a member, or the family of a deceased member, was overcome by misfortune, the Hall appears to have lent a sympathetic ear to an appeal for relief. One of the earliest pensions to an impoverished member was conceded in 1717 to Sir John Knight (Warden, 1681), of somewhat dubious reputation, who was voted an annuity of £20 "during pleasure and no longer." (He died a few months afterwards.) Four gentlemen who had served the office of Master were amongst the subsequent applicants, and it became customary to grant an additional sum on such occasions. No less than thirty-nine pensions to members or to their widows or children were conceded during the century.

Until the opening of the Assembly Rooms in Prince's Street in 1754, the Society's Hall was the only place in the city conveniently adapted for public banquets and entertainments. The Corporation, being destitute of any accommodation of this kind until the opening of the Mansion House in 1786, held their civic feasts in the Hall, by virtue of a covenant inserted in the Wharfage leases of 1712 and 1764. Applications to make use of it for dinners and public meetings were frequently made by other persons, and were rarely refused. In 1702 it was granted in a single resolution to the Presidents of the Bristol, the Gloucestershire, and the Somerset Feasts, then held annually. From a paper found among Mr. Seyer's MSS., it appears that winter balls were established in the Hall about 1737, and, as has been already stated, many private dances took place there at a later period. In 1777 the Hall was granted for "the Anchor entertainment," and that Society held eleven dinners there in the twelve following years. In 1775 and 1780 similar favours were granted to the Dolphin Society.

The Clerks of the Society during the period under review may be briefly recorded. In 1701, on the death of Francis Yeamans, the office was conferred upon Henry Fane, a gentleman of noble descent, who was in his turn succeeded by his son, Thomas Fane, in 1726. The latter, who acquired a fortune as a lawyer, also enjoyed the valuable sinecure office of Customer Inwards at Bristol, was for some years a member of Parliament, became heir-presumptive to the Earldom of Westmorland, and is mentioned as having on one occasion visited the city in great state, riding in a coach and six. In 1757, in view of his approaching elevation to the House of Lords, he resigned his Clerkship, which was conferred upon his legal

partner, Samuel Worrall, who had long performed the duties. Mr. Worrall, who was also the chief of the Bristol Stamp Office, became a partner in a local banking firm in 1766, and through his lucrative practice as a lawyer, and various profitable speculations in land (commemorated in one case by the name of Worrall Road, Clifton), he amassed considerable wealth. In 1786 the Society summarily dismissed him from office, ostensibly for having used disrespectful language respecting Mr. George Daubeny, and refusing to apologise. Mr. Daubeny had lost his seat as member for Bristol a few months previously, to the extreme exasperation of his adherents, while Worrall had been an active opponent. The vacancy was filled by the appointment of Mr. Jeremiah Osborne, who died in April, 1798, when his son John, who owing to his father's illness had been appointed joint clerk in 1796, succeeded to the office.

Although the Society had established a school "for the children of mariners" previous to 1595, it is rarely mentioned in the minute books. The schoolmaster, in 1708, was dismissed for keeping a public-house, and a successor was appointed at the former salary of £2, with a small house, which served as well for school as for dwelling. In 1723, an old kitchen under the Hall was fitted up and long used for both those purposes. The school, which is styled the "Writing School," was considered in so satisfactory a condition in 1752 that the salary of the master was raised to £5, and the stipend was increased to £10 in 1764, when fifty pupils were in attendance. Long previous to that date, however, namely in 1733, the Society had established another school for the special teaching of mathematics and navigation, having come into possession of two sums, amounting together to £480, which had been bequeathed

for that purpose by a Lady Holworthy and Captain John Price. The teacher in this school received a salary of £20, but the two institutions, though independent of each other for several years, were eventually amalgamated. In spite of the free instruction offered to young sailors, the navigation department was frequently almost wholly deserted.

CHAPTER V.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

THE energetic but fruitless exertions of the Hall during the eighteenth century to promote the improvement of the harbour have been summarily sketched in the previous chapter. The subject was revived by the Standing Committee in July, 1801, when the Clerk was directed to inquire, through the Mayor, why the Corporation had not appointed a committee to consider "the scheme for damming the river," which, from the wording of the resolution, seems to have been previously promised. In March, 1802, the Standing Committee produced a lengthy report, from which it appears that the Corporation and the Society had referred plans for docks by various engineers to Mr. Jessop, whose first design for a floating harbour was described at page 212. Jessop, as was to be expected, disapproved of the plans of his rivals, and brought forward a new project conceived by himself, limiting the proposed Float to that portion of the Avon (twenty-two acres) extending from Rownham to the bottom of Prince's Street, but including the From branch (six acres), together with a dock of nine acres in Canons' Marsh, and an entrance basin of six acres at Rownham. These works, including a "New Cut"—destined to convey the river Avon from Prince's Street downwards, so as to give access to the Grove and Back without entering the Float—would, in the projector's opinion, "meet every demand for extension that may probably be expected for a century to come." "If all

the sewers in the town were to discharge into the harbour . . . the most experienced chemist could not detect it," but, to mitigate prejudices, he provided for making a sewer of the length of half a mile. The total cost of the design was estimated at £150,840, exclusive of the purchase of eighty-five acres of land. The Committee went on to report that they and their corporate colleagues were unanimously of opinion that Jessop's plan was the most eligible yet produced, and suggested that the necessary funds should be obtained by raising £150,000 by shares and £50,000 by loans, the interest on the whole to be guaranteed by imposing a tonnage due on shipping, and a rate on household property in the city. Although the proposed share capital was speedily subscribed, many supporters of improvement objected to an arrangement which would allow merchants to escape dock tolls by sending their ships to the Grove and Back, and insisted that the entire harbour should be embraced in the scheme. The Standing Committee consequently reported in August that Jessop had been again consulted, and appended his enlarged proposal, by which the intended new course of the Avon was to commence near Temple Meads, where a dam was to be constructed across the river. The whole of the old bed of the stream within the city, nearly two miles in length, might thus be converted into a Float, seventy acres in area exclusive of the entrance basin; and a dock in Canons' Marsh was now considered unnecessary. Provision had also been made for intercepting most of the sewage discharged into the river above Bristol Bridge, "from whence almost all the brewers and distillers are supplied" (!), by a sewer emptying into the Avon at Totterdown. A "Feeder" would also be needed to replenish the Float. The

estimated outlay was thus increased to £212,470, exclusive of the purchase of 170 acres of land, and of the mills at Hanham and Conham injured by the damming of the river. The Committee concluded by recommending the adoption of the plan, which they believed could be completed for £300,000, and suggested that the subscribers to the previous project should be invited to sanction its enlargement, and to increase their subscriptions. The Hall confirmed the report, and instructed the Committee to apply to Parliament for the requisite powers, the Corporation having apparently declined all responsibility. Subscriptions amounting to £250,000 having been promised, a Bill was introduced into Parliament in 1803 under the Society's auspices. The consent of the Common Council to its promotion is stated to have been given by a majority of a single vote; and on the measure being brought before a committee of the House of Commons, many merchants and shipowners, including the influential names of Bright, Gibbs, Baillie, Protheroe, King, and Pinney, strongly condemned the proposal for placing the entire harbour in the hands of a private company, contending that their vessels did not require dock accommodation. Other citizens asserted that the proposed rate on property of sixpence in the pound was as unjustifiable as it was unprecedented. The Bill, however, passed both Houses—an audacious clause levying dues on shipping trading to Newport being first excised—and received the Royal Assent.

Under its provisions the Bristol Dock Company came into existence, the twenty-seven directors of which were nominated in equal parts by the Corporation, the Society, and the shareholders. The capital was fixed at £300,000, and the Act stipulated that the two corporate bodies

should have no interest in the dividends. The ceremony of turning the "first sod" took place on May 1st, 1804; but financial difficulties were encountered at an early date. The authorised loan of £50,000 could not be raised, and £14,500 of the share capital proving irrecoverable, the shareholders had to make up both these deficiencies. This was but the beginning of pecuniary embarrassments. The cost of every detail of the scheme proved to have been grossly underestimated. The two basins, at Rownham and Trim Mills, alone cost more than £100,000 in excess of Jessop's figures, although the area of the former was reduced; there was an equally gigantic excess in the outlay for the "New Cut"; the purchases of land involved an unforeseen expenditure of £66,000; and the Feeder cost more than five times the anticipated sum. In short, the original capital of £300,000 defrayed only one-half of the outlay on the undertaking.

To meet the formidable deficit, the directors, in 1807, applied for another Act, empowering them to raise fresh capital on the security of greatly enhanced charges on shipping and goods; but though a majority of the Hall approved of the measure, it was opposed by the Corporation and rejected by the House of Commons. In 1808, however, a Bill deemed less objectionable in its details passed unopposed. The capital of the Company was thus increased to £500,000; and by a third statute, obtained in 1809, the amount was raised to £600,000, half the sum representing loans. On May 1st, 1809, the dock was certified to be completed.

The benefits conferred on commerce by the spacious Floating Harbour were unquestionably extensive. On the other hand, the dues levied on vessels and goods to secure interest on the capital were so onerous that

the charges, aggravated as they were by the exorbitant Town Dues levied by the Corporation, crippled the development of the port by diverting trade to places more liberally managed. As an example, it was stated in 1818 that a large local business might have been transacted in indigo, which was extensively used by the West of England clothiers; but that the dues imposed on it, being seven times greater than those levied at Liverpool, had put a stop to importations. A few years later, when steamboats had begun to ply to Ireland, a little packet of 270 tons burden, sailing weekly to and from Cork, was charged £468 per annum for dock dues and £104 for Mayor's dues; while a ship of 400 tons, making a yearly voyage to the West Indies, paid £15 6s. 8d. in respect of both imposts. With a view to pressing for relief from many grievances, several influential firms co-operated in 1823 in the establishment of a Chamber of Commerce, of which Mr. Joseph Reynolds was the first President. One of the earliest publications of this body was an elaborate paper, drawn up in concert with a committee of the Society, showing the comparative port charges at London, Liverpool, Hull, and Bristol, thus bringing into relief the local excess of taxation. The first table exhibited the amounts payable on the importation of forty-four articles of merchandise, by which it appeared that if the whole were landed at Bristol the charges on shipping and goods would amount to £515,608, whereas the total at Liverpool would be £231,800, at London £210,098, and at Hull £147,587. Another table showed the total Bristol charges on an average year's import of the six principal articles brought into the Avon—tobacco, wine, sugar, wool, coffee, and currants. The aggregate was £10,155, while the charges on a like import into London would have been £6,354,

at Liverpool £6,275, and at Hull £5,051. On some articles the Bristol imports were practically prohibitive. Thus, on five tons of indigo the London dues were £3, whilst at Bristol they were £52; on five tons of cochineal the comparison was £3 2s. 6d. against £74, and on 200 bales of silk £16 against £345. When these statistics were laid before the Common Council early in 1824, with a prayer for consideration, the only result was a resolution condemning the attitude of the Chamber of Commerce as hasty, premature, and animated by hostile feelings. The Society thereupon resolved upon taking independent action, and on March 8th the Hall approved of an emphatic report drawn up by a sub-committee, and ordered a copy to be transmitted to the Corporation as expressive of the sentiments of the Society.

The report stated that after a careful examination of the charges made in other ports, it was the decided opinion of the committee that the languor and comparative decline of Bristol trade were mainly attributable to the Town and Mayor's Dues. The former, from their heavy amount and *ad valorem* assessment, had the effect of depriving the port of all commerce in several articles, an evil that might be expected to extend still further, as the internal communication with other ports was becoming daily cheaper and more convenient. Foreign goods were also brought in coastwise instead of being imported direct, and the export trade of the adjoining counties was unnaturally diverted into other channels. Even the staple commodities of the city formerly exported hence were sent coastwise for shipment at London and Liverpool. The Mayor's Dues, again, bore most severely on the coasting and Irish trades, and caused traffic to be confined to small and least profitable vessels. In view of those very serious evils, it was of the greatest importance that the dues should be materially reduced, being objectionable in principle, and exactions for which no equivalent was rendered. And being levied on Foreigners—all non-freemen being considered Foreigners—they became doubly oppressive, and provoked a resort to other ports. Similar dues were formerly paid at the city gates on goods arriving by land, and "foreigners" were forbidden to trade until admitted as freemen; but these restraints having been long withdrawn, the

existing charges, of similar origin, should be withdrawn also. These facts should be laid before the Corporation, with a recommendation for a material reduction, and also for lessening charges for which no service was performed, such as the fees payable to bailiffs, quay-wardens, and others, which were most oppressively felt. It was believed that such reductions would not, in the end, result in any material reduction of revenue.

The Corporation had been already alarmed by the presentation of a petition to the House of Commons, praying for an inquiry into the causes of the languishing condition of the port, and had resolved on warding off further attacks by introducing a Bill into Parliament, ostensibly for the purpose of enabling it to reduce the civic imposts, but really—its opponents contended—with the object of obtaining statutory sanction for taxation which many citizens held to be illegally imposed. The Bill was laid before the Standing Committee on March 16th, 1824, when the following resolution was adopted:—

The committee, having considered the Corporation Bill, . . . are of opinion that it is objectionable—1st, as giving legislative sanction to dues which are believed to rest solely on prescription; 2^{dly}, as establishing the corporate claim to a larger extent than it has been exercised, since it is well known that for a long period only about two-thirds of the *ad valorem* dues have been actually collected; and 3^{dly}, because the Bill imposes no obligation on the Corporation to reduce the dues. Resolved: “That these objections be submitted to the Corporation, not from any apprehension as to its disposition and intentions, but in order to secure that the relief to trade should not be defeated by future contingencies.” To obtain this end a schedule of the proposed reductions should be appended to the Bill; and if this cannot be done in time for the present Session, the committee would prefer submitting to a delay, rather than the Bill should be pressed forward in its objectionable state.

The Standing Committee transmitted a copy of their report to the Chamber of Commerce, which was organising an opposition to the Bill with the cordial support of the citizens, £3,000 being raised by sub-

scription to carry on the struggle at Westminster. But the document was accompanied by a request that it should not be published, and with an intimation that, as public interests would be best consulted by the Society preserving an independent attitude, it must decline the Chamber's request for co-operation. At a Hall held on April 9th the committee's resolutions were approved and confirmed, and the following motion was adopted:—

It being understood that the Corporation do not intend to take powers to receive more than two-thirds of the twopence in the pound payable as *ad valorem* duty, Ordered: "That the Hall, relying on the good faith of the Corporation, and on the security of their intention to make a considerable reduction in the Town and Mayor's Dues, will relinquish its other objections provided the above alteration be introduced into the Bill, and that the Corporation consent to a package rate instead of the *ad valorem* duty; and the Chamber of Commerce is recommended to abandon opposition on the same terms."

The leaders of the Corporation must have shown remarkable alacrity in accepting the terms of the Society, for another Hall was held on the following day, when it was announced that the civic body had assented to all the above proposals. A request of the Chamber of Commerce for a conference on other objectionable features of the Bill was thereupon declined, and it was resolved "that it is highly expedient that the opposition to the Bill should be abandoned." The result seems to have greatly surprised the Chamber of Commerce, which complained that the Society had surrendered the principles it had hitherto contended for; but the Standing Committee replied that the assumption was unfounded; and the Hall, on May 1st, re-echoed this assertion, and resolved that the amended Bill would prove highly beneficial to trade and commerce.

The Chamber of Commerce continuing its opposition to the measure, the Corporation soon afterwards informed the Society that the progress of the Bill had been suspended; and it was in fact withdrawn. It was, however, again brought forward in 1826, accompanied by a schedule showing the intended reductions in the dues; when the Society undertook to promote its success, and sent up petitions in its favour. The Chamber of Commerce and the trading interests, on the other hand, contended that the proffered abatements left the dues excessive as compared with those at other ports, and that the real object of the Bill was to secure a statutory title to illegal exactions for which no equivalent service was rendered. Great local weight was given to these arguments by the fact that they were urged, not merely by the minority of Whigs in the Corporation and the Society, but by many prominent and influential Tory merchants, who were much more zealous in denouncing the corporate policy than were their political opponents. And the defiant attitude of the Common Council served only to deepen the public discontent. To a demand that information should be rendered as to the administration of the large sum derived from taxation, the Corporation, the members of which were self-elected, and refused to publish any accounts whatever, retorted through their Parliamentary counsel that the port dues, as well as all the rest of the civic estates, were their personal property, "as much as any estate belonging to any peer"; that even Parliament had no right to control them in the expenditure of their own money; and that the claim of the people of Bristol to possess any interest in the civic revenue would be resisted to the last extremity. The committee of the House of Commons nevertheless assented to the request of the Chamber of Commerce

for the insertion of a clause in the measure declaring that the Act should not confer a better title to the dues than was previously enjoyed by the Corporation; and though determined efforts were made to delete this provision, it was approved by both Houses. The Bill having received the Royal Assent, the product of the obnoxious civic imposts was reduced from about £5,500 to under £3,000 per annum; and the Society made a simultaneous abatement of 25 per cent. in the crantage dues.

Owing to the wide differences of opinion on the merits of the above Bill existing amongst members of the Society, no allusions to its progress occur in the minutes of the Hall. That the conflict had aroused bitter ill-feeling amongst those who had been concerned in it is only too certain. A Government Commission of inquiry into the collection and management of the Revenue visited the city in November, 1825, when the exasperation existing between the corporate body and the citizens generally was so painfully evident that the chairman of the Commission, Mr. Wallace, tendered his services to promote reconciliation; and suggested, with a view to restoring harmony, that a committee should be appointed representing the views of the Common Council, of the Society, and of the Chamber of Commerce. On this proposal being communicated to the Standing Committee, a resolution was forthwith passed, thanking Mr. Wallace for his intervention, approving of his advice, and recommending it to the Hall, which at once assented to co-operate. The Chamber of Commerce also cordially responded to the overture. But the Common Council, a few days later, informed Mr. Wallace that negotiation was useless, seeing that the differences consisted, on the one hand, of hostile aggression on the rights and property

of the Corporation, and, on the other, of legitimate defence of ancient privileges.

Another movement for increasing the accommodation of the port seems to have been instigated by the introduction of steam vessels, which became numerous in 1824. Four years later, the Chamber of Commerce urged the Government to select Bristol as a mail-packet station for Ireland, and on the postal authorities pointing out that the application could not be entertained unless the packets were enabled to sail at a fixed hour daily, regardless of the state of the tide, the Chamber applied for the Society's support towards the construction of a pier at Avonmouth. For reasons which will be explained hereafter, the relations of the two bodies were then by no means cordial, and the Hall contented itself by replying that when the subject had been first mooted, in 1823, it had suggested a pier at Lamplighters' Hall. On a second application, in 1829, the Standing Committee resolved that the cost of a Channel pier would be very heavy, and the results unproductive, but recommended that if the Corporation and the Dock Company would co-operate with the Chamber, the Hall should depute two of its members to consider a feasible project. No further reference to the subject occurs until 1832, when Mr. Brunel, at the request of local authorities, gave evidence before a Parliamentary Committee on the packet service, and asserted that by the construction of a pier at Portishead the requirements of the Post Office would be fully supplied. By the Society's exertions, other witnesses were sent up to give similar evidence, and to defeat the manœuvres of the Bristol Steampacket Company, who wished to retain the Irish service in their own hands. In the absence of local enterprise, the mails continued to be despatched *via* Holyhead.

In November, 1833, two members of the Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations, during their inquiry at Bristol, intimated their desire to be informed of the nature and constitution of the Society. The Clerk thereupon informed the Standing Committee that in his opinion the Society did not come within the scope of the Commission; for though in its original constitution it partook of a municipal character, having power to make regulations for the government of trade, that character had been long lost, there being no trace of the exercise of such powers for more than a century. The Master and other members nevertheless waited upon the Commissioners, laid the Society's charters before them, and gave information as to the manner of admitting members, and other matters. But when a further request was made for information as to the annual produce of the dues held under the Corporation, the Hall peremptorily refused compliance, declaring that any disclosure of its affairs would be a dereliction of duty and an infringement of the oath of office.

During the investigation into the proceedings of the civic body by the above Commissioners, the effects of the port charges on the prosperity of the city were vividly elucidated. It was shown that, in despite of the reductions effected in the corporate dues, the charges on an average year's import of the six leading articles of local commerce amounted to £9,864, or upwards of 50 per cent. in excess of the duties on the same quantities charged at London and at Liverpool. The results, in the opinion of the Commissioners, were only too evident in the condition of Bristol:—"Far below her former station as the second port of the empire, she now has to sustain a mortifying competition with second-rate ports in her own Channel. . . . Foreign

produce now finds its way to Bristol in coasters from neighbouring ports; sometimes it is brought even from Liverpool or London. If it were not for its Irish trade and the West India monopoly, of which circumstances still enable Bristol to retain its share, it is probable that the floating harbour . . . would soon open only for the reception of a few coasters and fishing vessels." The situation, moreover, was steadily growing more serious. The value of English goods exported from the city, which had been £315,000 in 1822, sank to £205,000 in 1833; the once magnificent fleet of foreign-going ships had shrunk to about thirty sail, whilst the warehouses, once filled with merchandise, so greatly exceeded requirements that their owners could not realise one per cent. yearly on their investments. The depression provoked another agitation against port charges, led by the Chamber of Commerce; and the gravity of the complaints was to some extent recognised in July, 1834, by the Docks Committee, which reduced the dues on certain classes of goods, though still maintaining heavy imposts on sugar, tobacco and wine; while goods brought in coastwise were charged double the rates levied at Liverpool. The pressure placed upon the Corporation had more satisfactory results. One of the last important resolutions of the old Corporation, previous to its extinction in 1835, ordered a large reduction of the Town Dues, which were wholly abolished as regarded exports; but unhappily the latter concession was not made until the local export trade had almost disappeared, the receipts from this source in the previous year having been only £466.

Having considered the above reliefs, the Society, in September, 1834, appointed a sub-committee to consider the wharfage and cranage rates. In March, 1837, this

committee, after holding many conferences with the Corporation, reported that in view of the urgency of the demand for reduced crannage dues, they had made terms for the immediate surrender of the lease. (The use of the cranes was thenceforth made voluntary instead of compulsory, and the charge for user was reduced one-fourth.) In consequence of a pending inquiry into charities, the sub-committee deemed it prudent to defer a reduction of the wharfage dues, but had intimated to the Corporation that the lease might be sold below its value for the sake of benefiting trade. In the meantime, the Society undertook an important work for the improvement of navigation—the partial removal of the “Round Point,” a huge projection on the Clifton shore of the Avon, which was the scene of many shipping disasters. Upwards of £3,000 were expended in removing vast quantities of rock, and the Hall’s exertions were gratefully acknowledged by the Corporation and the Chamber of Commerce.

The launching at Bristol of the first Transatlantic steamship, the *Great Western*, in July, 1837, and the departure of that vessel for New York in the following April, indicated that a spirit of enterprise had at length reawakened amongst the citizens. The adventure was also destined to prove that existing conditions rendered successful enterprise practically hopeless. Although the *Great Western* was only of 1,340 tons measurement, she could not safely make use of the floating harbour, and was compelled to lie at Kingroad; yet the Dock Company demanded payment of the full dues (£106 per voyage), declaring that they had no power to make abatements. These disheartening circumstances led to the appointment of a committee composed of members of the Corporation, of the Society, and of the Steamship Company, and in

accordance with the suggestions of this body the Hall resolved, in June, 1839, that the Float ought to be provided with a larger entrance; that a dock, "not higher than Sea Mills," should be constructed to accommodate large vessels; and that the tonnage dues on ships should be materially reduced. The Dock Company replied with a simple *non possumus*, adding, after further pressure, that the required advantages would be best effected by the purchase of the Company's property. The Hall thereupon resolved, in November, 1839, "that the Society would join heartily with other public bodies in reducing rates and encouraging trade, and would be ready to render its cordial assistance when any plan should be matured." The Society afterwards made two handsome donations towards furthering the objects in view.

A project was started in 1840 for the construction of a pier at Portishead; but though an Act was obtained for that purpose, the scheme failed from want of support. An attempt to obtain a reduction of the Town Dues on the cargoes of the *Great Western* having been unsuccessful, the owners, in February, 1842, resolved that the vessel should sail alternately from Bristol and Liverpool; and as the expenses at the latter port were found to be £200 per voyage below those at the former, the ship was soon afterwards removed entirely to the Mersey. The second steamer built by the Company, the *Great Britain*, being of much increased tonnage, was placed from the outset at Liverpool.

After a lengthy suspension of effort, Mr. Richard P. King (Master, 1851), whilst serving the office of Mayor in 1845, induced the Corporation to renew its endeavours for the emancipation of the port, suggesting the acquirement of the Dock Company's estate. But

at a subsequent meeting of the Council it was reported that the negotiations for that purpose had proved abortive. Although the annual dividends of the Company during the preceding twenty-three years had averaged only £2 2s. 3d. per cent., an offer of a guaranteed dividend of 2½ per cent. had been rejected, the board demanding 3 per cent. The Society appointed a committee in December to consider what steps should be taken to assist the Corporation, and in February, 1846, the Council besought the directors to allow the amount of the dividend to be decided by arbitration. A majority of the board, however, rejected the proposal, and the negotiation collapsed.

As the civic body showed unwillingness to take further action, a meeting of influential merchants and traders was held on September 29th, 1846, under the presidency of an ardent advocate of progress, Mr. Robert Bright, when it was resolved to form a Free Port Association with the object of recovering the control of the harbour. The movement was enthusiastically welcomed by citizens of all ranks, party politics being generally ignored in view of the public good. A committee was soon afterwards nominated by the Council to act in conjunction with Mr. Bright and the delegates appointed by the ratepayers at ward meetings, and this committee, in January, 1847, offered fresh illustrations of the local burdens on commerce. At that date the imposts on the chief imported articles were stated to be 8s. 8d. per ton at Bristol, against 4s. 6d. at Liverpool and 1s. 7½d. at Hull. The Corporation thenceforth took up the question in earnest. After prolonged negotiations with the Company, an agreement was arrived at, and on October 25th the Council, by forty-two votes against four, confirmed the arrangement, by which the dock estate was to be

transferred to the Corporation on the latter taking over the Company's debt, and undertaking to pay a rent-charge of $2\frac{1}{8}$ per cent. on the share capital, guaranteed by a rate of fourpence in the pound on fixed property. (The rent-charge was redeemed in 1883, when the Dock Company was dissolved.)

An Act for carrying out the transfer was passed in June, 1848. A Docks Committee, elected by the Corporation, forthwith prepared a new schedule of dues, abolishing the charges on 530 articles of merchandise, and reducing the burden on vessels by about 50, and on goods by about 20, per cent. The Hall, in the following October, abolished the wharfage dues on goods landed from, or shipped to, Ireland, as well as on all foreign exports, and materially reduced the charge on foreign imports. The new tariff came into effect on November 15th, 1848, and the event was celebrated by a prodigious demonstration of public rejoicing. Mr. Bright was subsequently presented with a beautiful service of plate in acknowledgment of his services to the maritime and commercial interests of the city. The Hall contributed fifty guineas to this testimonial, and conferred upon Mr. Bright the freedom of the Society. In 1857 his portrait was painted as the result of a further public subscription, and the picture now decorates the Hall.

The effect of the transfer of the docks soon manifested itself in the greater activity of commerce. At the end of the first ten years of the new régime the import trade of the city had improved 66 per cent., and the rateable value of the borough, almost stationary under the old system, increased by nearly one-fourth. But the very growth of trade forced into greater prominence the natural disadvantages of the harbour; and the

memorable disaster of the *Demerara* in November, 1851, gave the Avon an evil reputation both at home and abroad. Another serious drawback was the contracted form of the chief entrance to the Float. In 1803 the largest vessels trading to Bristol rarely, if ever, exceeded 500 tons in measurement, whilst the tonnage of a vast majority did not reach half those figures, and the size of the locks had naturally been determined by those conditions. By the middle of the century steamships of 2,000 tons were not uncommon; the *Demerara* was of nearly 3,000 tons; and in 1855 Mr. Brunel had designed a vessel of 22,000 tons, which he confidently predicted would be the model ship of the future.

The necessity of making some provision to meet modern developments gradually began to be recognised as urgent by far-sighted Bristolians; but great differences of opinion prevailed as to the manner in which the difficulty should be overcome. In 1852, Mr. Rendel, the celebrated engineer, submitted a plan for improving the entrance of the river by deepening "the Swash" (a new course of the Avon), and constructing a dock and piers near Avonmouth; but the estimated outlay (£1,500,000) proved fatal to the project. In 1853, two designs were produced for docks and piers at Portishead, and these were followed by a multiplicity of proposals, including, in 1858, the first scheme for building a dam across the mouth of the Avon, by which its entire course from the Severn to the city would be "dockised." In February, 1858, on an application from the Chamber of Commerce, the Standing Committee appointed delegates to confer with the Docks Committee and representatives of the Chamber on the question of providing accommodation for large steamers near the shore of the Severn. The

“joint committee” accordingly met in March, and ultimately resolved (the Master and several other members declining to vote) that either a landing stage, a pier, or a dock, should be provided as early as possible. At a further meeting, in June, it was resolved, by twelve votes against four, that the best solution of the problem would be the “dockisation” of the Avon. In September, at a crowded meeting of the citizens, convened by the Mayor, a resolution was moved by Mr. P. W. Miles, declaring that increased accommodation was absolutely essential. The opponents of progress, styled “the fixed property party,” sought to defeat this motion by a sidewind, and proposed a “rider” to the effect that it would be unjust to raise funds for such an object by imposing any burden on the ratepayers; but the resolution was adopted in its original form, and an influential committee was appointed to confer with the Chamber of Commerce. Nevertheless, at a special meeting of the Council, in November, the fixed property party defeated a motion advocating progress by a majority of twenty-five against twenty-four. In August, 1859, Mr. Howard, the Docks’ Engineer, made an elaborate report to the Council, recommending the dockisation of the Avon, at an estimated cost of £800,000. This and other projects were soon afterwards referred to two eminent engineers, Messrs. Hawkshaw and Page, who reported upon them in October, 1860. Both gentlemen condemned the dockisation scheme, suggested extensive improvements of the Avon, and recommended the construction, when trade had further developed, of docks at Avonmouth. The influence of the fixed property party was still so powerful that the Council contented itself by approving of a dock providing it could be constructed without imposing a charge upon the ratepayers. Even this modest advance was lost in February, 1861, when

Mr. R. P. King brought forward a resolution affirming the inexpediency of constructing a dock involving any liability on the ratepayers, and requiring that the surplus revenue of the Float—on which the progressive party relied for effecting their object—should be extinguished by reducing the dues. An amendment advocating dock extension having been defeated by thirty-one votes against twenty-four, Mr. King's motion was adopted, and the dock dues were forthwith reduced to the extent of about £6,000 a year.

In despite of the hostility of the Corporation, the advocates of progress were not wholly disheartened. In the autumn of 1861, Mr. P. W. Miles, Mr. Robert Bright, Mr. C. J. Thomas, and a few other prominent citizens, produced a prospectus of the Port Railway and Pier Company, having for its object the laying of a railway from the Hotwells to Avonmouth, and the erection of a pier opposite Dunball Island for the use of passenger steamers. An Act authorising the works was obtained in 1862, and as about five acres of the Society's land was required for the railway, the Hall ordered the purchase of shares in the concern to the extent of £1,000. The scheme was obviously a mere stepping-stone to a more comprehensive enterprise, and in 1863 its promoters, supported by Mr. T. T. Taylor (Master, 1872) and others, laid a Bill before Parliament for the construction, by a company, of a dock at Avonmouth. Up to that time the fixed property party had based their repugnance to a Channel dock on the inexpediency of adding fresh burdens on the ratepayers, and had declared that a private undertaking would be unobjectionable. They now, however, revealed the real motive of their action by calling upon the Council to offer a strenuous opposition to the project, declaring it to

be an attempt "to deprive the citizens of their rights and privileges"; and an amendment approving of the scheme was rejected by twenty-eight votes against twenty-five. Owing to the resistance of the Corporation the Bill was thrown out.

It is somewhat surprising to find that whilst Alderman Ford, the leader of the fixed property party, was urging the Council into the course just described, he and his leading supporters were flying in the face of their own arguments by promoting a Bill for providing accommodation for shipping by means of a pier at Portishead, with a railway thence to Bristol. The measure was practically unopposed, and, after it had received the Royal Assent, the Society subscribed for shares in the company formed to carry it out to the value of £1,000. (The Port and Pier undertaking was opened early in 1864, the Portishead railway in April, 1867, and the first section of its pier in June, 1868.) Undeterred by the undermining policy of their opponents, the advocates of the Channel dock revived their Bill in 1864. Subsequent to its previous rejection, the feeling of the citizens in its favour had been unmistakably manifested at the annual municipal elections, and the Parliamentary Committee of the Council, changing its attitude, suggested that it would be unwise to prolong a fruitless dispute. Their report was approved by a large majority. The Society also warmly supported the scheme, resolving to petition in its favour, and the Master was desired to give evidence on its behalf. In spite of an obstinate opposition, the Bill soon after became law.

Owing to the effects of the great financial panic of 1866, the promoters of the dock were unable to make any progress for some years. On July 31st, 1868, the Hall, on the motion of Mr. J. A. Jones (Master, 1862 and 1863),

resolved that the undertaking was of vital importance to the future of Bristol, and it was therefore determined to subscribe £2,500 towards the company's capital. A few weeks later the Society subscribed £1,500 towards the extension of the pier at Portishead. The promoters of the latter project resolved, in 1870, on supplementing their works with a dock, towards which the Corporation, after refusing assistance to the Avonmouth Company, contributed £100,000. The basin at Avonmouth was opened in February, 1877, and that at Portishead in June, 1879. The minute books of the Society contain no further reference to either of these undertakings, which, after a chequered career, were finally purchased by the Corporation.

Reference may here be conveniently made to some of the Society's transactions with respect to other mercantile subjects. The propensity of the Government to exclude the outports from privileges conceded to London has been noted in previous chapters, and further instances of the same proclivity were not infrequent in the early years of the last century. About 1803, for example, the privilege of warehousing dutiable articles under bond was granted exclusively to the merchants of the capital, and it was not until after numerous appeals had been made by the Society that the Ministry consented to extend the boon to the chief provincial ports. The official practices of earlier days seem to have been still prevalent, for when the just concession was at length obtained in 1808, the Hall found it prudent to vote £100 for distribution "amongst the persons in London who had forwarded the business." With respect to imports of coffee, again, the privilege of roasting the berry was confined, until 1808, to London, and much trouble had to be undergone before the grievance was remedied. Even then the

Government insisted that the process should be left entirely in official hands; an exorbitant charge was made by their servants; and the removal of the coffee from and to the grocers' premises could not be effected without a double application for Excise "permits." For some years the importation of silk was confined exclusively to London. But the greatest injustice under which Bristol and other ports suffered was the monopoly of trade to the Far East, enjoyed by the East India Company, and long stoutly defended by the Government. On the appeals of the Society and similar bodies, the trade to India was at length thrown open in 1813, but it was not until twenty years later that the outports were permitted to deal with China. In April, 1835, Messrs. Acraman, Bush, Castle, and Co. brought a large cargo of tea to Bristol direct from Canton, and extensive warehouses were built by the firm expressly for continuing the trade, which was, however, ultimately dropped as unprofitable.

The regulation of pilotage, vested in the Society by the Corporation, needed constant supervision and entailed considerable expense. Accidents were naturally of frequent occurrence, and whilst complaints of negligence were carefully investigated, the Hall invariably voted relief to pilots who had suffered personal injury, or whose boats had been lost or damaged in stormy weather. This branch of business was largely extended in 1807 by the passing of an Act placing the whole of the pilots in the Bristol Channel from Barnstaple to Gloucester under the supervision of the Corporation, or really of the Society. The development of trade in South Wales and other causes gradually aroused an agitation against this arrangement, and, in despite of the opposition of the corporate body and the Society, an Act was passed in 1861, by which the ports of Gloucester,

Newport, and Cardiff were placed on an independent footing. In the same year the Society relinquished the regulation of the Bristol pilots, and the Corporation, in accepting the surrender, expressed its grateful sense of the liberal and effective manner in which the Society had performed an arduous duty for 250 years.

In 1843 a Government Bill was introduced into Parliament requiring seamen seeking to become masters or mates of vessels to undergo an examination as to their competency. The measure was strongly disapproved by many shipowners, and the Society desired the members for Bristol to oppose it as a wholly unnecessary interference with private rights. The feeling against the Bill was so widely prevalent that it made no progress for several years, during which the Government's offers to place local examinations under the management of the Society were more than once rejected. In 1850, when the Bill at last became law, the Hall's objections to the measure had so far diminished that the first Local Marine Board included four members of the Society. At the very outset, however, the new body discovered that the Board of Trade had refused to place Bristol on an equal footing with London and Liverpool; but the Master and Wardens were despatched to the capital to make an earnest remonstrance, and the grievance was soon afterwards remedied. In 1855 the Corporation requested the Society to undertake the examination of masters and mates applying for pilotage certificates, to which the Hall assented, and the arrangement continued until 1861.

Reference has been already made to the assistance rendered to the Chamber of Commerce by the Society at an early stage of the agitation for an abatement of the Town and Mayor's Dues. After a remission was secured, however, the relations of the Hall with the

Chamber became antagonistic through the claims made by the latter in 1827 for a reduction of the wharfage dues, which were alleged to be levied upon various merchants who, possessing private wharves, suffered from a burden from which they reaped no benefit. The Society, who were warmly supported by the old Corporation, made no reduction in the dues until more than twenty years later, at which period the Chamber had been temporarily absorbed in the Free Port Association. On its revival in 1851, the Society consented to an arrangement (rescinded in 1857) under which the Master for the time being became President and the Wardens Vice-presidents of the Chamber *ex-officio*. A subscription of £100 per annum was also voted to the new institution, and the Hall was granted for its annual meetings.

The Society's lease of the wharfage dues would have expired at Michaelmas, 1863; but in 1859, in view of demands for increased shed accommodation on the quays and other improvements, the Corporation suggested the desirability of a surrender of the lease on equitable terms. After prolonged negotiations, the Standing Committee, in February, 1861, formulated terms for surrendering the lease on the following 1st July, which were confirmed by the Hall and accepted by the Corporation. Under this agreement the Society received one-third of the net receipts from the dues for the unexpired period of the lease, less the average cost of repairing the quays and other usual charges, the Society also contributing, as a free gift, £2,000 towards erecting the proposed sheds.

The first reference to railroad projects in the minute books is dated December 8th, 1832, when the Standing Committee appointed three of their body to confer with

committees of the Corporation, the Dock Company, and the Gloucestershire Railway Company (who had a colliery line to Coalpit Heath), "it being thought that the subject of a railroad from Bristol to London was worthy of consideration." On the subsequent recommendation of the delegates, the Hall resolved to co-operate with the other public bodies in obtaining plans, and subscribed 200 guineas towards that object. Surveys were soon afterwards made by Mr. Brunel and Mr. Townsend, who estimated the cost of the undertaking at £2,800,000. The first directorate of the Great Western Railway Company was nominated in equal parts by the shareholders in London and Bristol, and included the following gentlemen, who then were, or afterwards became, members of the Society:—Robert Bright, who subscribed for shares to the value of £25,900; Peter Maze (£23,000), John Cave (£17,900), George Gibbs (£14,000), Frederick Ricketts (£10,000), and Henry Bush (£8,000). The Society subscribed £1,000, and granted the use of the Hall for several meetings of the company. Lord Granville Somerset, the first chairman of the board, was presented with the freedom of the Hall. Movements for the construction of lines to Exeter and Gloucester were started subsequently, and numerous meetings for their promotion took place in the Hall. The Society's subscriptions to the Avonmouth and Portishead railways have been already noticed.

Some reference may here be made to a notable bequest confided to the Society for an important public object by a liberal-hearted Bristolian. In 1753 Mr. William Vick, a wealthy wine merchant, often but erroneously styled an alderman, devised the sum of £1,000, subject to life interests, in trust to the Society, directing that the money should be invested, and the

interest suffered to accumulate until the capital reached £10,000, when the money was to be devoted to the erection of a bridge over the gorge of the Avon at St. Vincent's Rocks. The bequest did not reach the Society until 1779, when the fund, with some accrued interest, was taken over, and the subsequent yearly profits were invested as they arose. The Chamber of Commerce having applied for information on the subject, the Standing Committee, in August, 1829, after pointing out that the sum contemplated by the donor would not be attained until 1834, and would then be manifestly inadequate to carry out its object, recommended that a plan for a bridge should be procured, and a scheme for raising subscriptions submitted to the public, prior to applying for Parliamentary sanction. A plan by a Mr. Mylne seems to have been immediately forthcoming, for the Committee, a few days later, recommended the appointment of the Master, the Mayor, and several members of the Society as a committee charged with obtaining an Act and promoting the design. Inquiries were first made by this body as to the feasibility of building a stone bridge, the cost of which was estimated at £60,000. But Telford's achievement at Menai Strait in 1827 had doubtless impressed Bristolians, and the Society ordered the preparation of a Bill for powers to erect a similar suspension bridge. In the meantime, premiums were offered to engineers for the best design, which were gained by two gentlemen named Hawkes and Hazledine. Their plans, with others drawn by Mr. Telford, Mr. Brunel, and Mr. Rendel, were ultimately submitted to the President of the Royal Society, who reported in favour of Mr. Brunel's, the cost of which was estimated at £57,000. The Bridge Bill received the Royal Assent in May, 1830, about which time

the loans and donations promised, in conjunction with Vick's fund (£8,700), amounted to upwards of £32,000, including a loan of £500 and a gift of £250 by the Society. In view of the deficiency of capital, the trustees appointed under the Act proceeded with caution, and operations were suspended until January, 1836, when, at a meeting in Merchants' Hall, it was reported that Mr. Brunel had reduced his estimate, and that, through the promise of £9,000 more from subscribers, the prospective deficit was only about £8,000. The first stone of the Somerset pier was laid by the Marquis of Northampton, President of the British Association, during the visit of that body in August, 1836. The melancholy history of the undertaking during the following fifteen years may be found in local works. Mr. Brunel's revised estimate proved to be about £20,000 below the sum required to finish the design; and in 1851, when £47,400 had been expended, the enterprise was abandoned, leaving two ugly piers as its only monument. It was not until 1860 that a serious attempt was made to revive the undertaking, which was effected by means of a joint stock company, promoted by two eminent engineers, Sir John Hawkshaw and Mr. Barlow, with a share capital of £35,000, towards which the Society subscribed £500. The necessary Act was obtained in 1861, and the bridge was opened on December 8th, 1864.

A few weeks before the last-named event, great dismay was occasioned in the city by an announcement that a neighbouring wealthy landowner was about to dispose of that portion of Leigh Woods adjoining the Suspension Bridge to a speculative London builder, who purposed to destroy the magnificent sylvan scenery, with the view of erecting some 800 tenements, many

of a paltry character, thus converting the romantic site into an eyesore. It being found that the preservation of the woods depended wholly upon the public spirit of the citizens, a company was formed by a few generous-minded persons, and the Society lent their assistance to the movement by taking shares to the value of £2,500. The estate was shortly afterwards purchased for £40,000, and the Master for the time being was appointed a director *ex-officio* of the Leigh Woods' Company. The shareholders have hitherto reaped no return for their generous action save the gratitude of the citizens.

An arrangement of a still more beneficial character to the inhabitants of Bristol had been brought to maturity in 1861, largely through the liberality of the Society. For many years previous to that date the Hall had shown an anxious desire to preserve Clifton Down, and that portion of Durdham Down lying within their manor of Clifton, for the pleasure and recreation of the public. A rumour having become prevalent that the Society intended to enclose this open space, or to dispose of their interest in it to speculators, an emphatic resolution was passed by the Hall in February, 1856, declaring that no such action had ever been contemplated, and that the Society would use their best exertions to maintain for the citizens the free enjoyment of the land. Upwards of 200 acres of Durdham Down, however, belonged to the lords of the manor of Henbury, whose intentions regarding the common were suspected by the legal advisers of the Corporation in May, 1859, to be of a very different character; and the Council shortly afterwards appointed a committee to confer with the respective owners, with a view to vesting the manorial rights in the Corporation, and securing the

permanence of the public's privileges. The Society's recognition of the main object of the civic body was in consonance with the policy it had invariably pursued. Making no demand for pecuniary compensation, the Hall expressed its willingness, whilst retaining its manorial rights, and reserving a fringe of precipitous rocks on the shore of the Avon, to secure to the public an unrestricted access to, and enjoyment of, the surface of the Downs for all future time. The lords of the manor of Henbury, of which three-fourths were held by the owner of Leigh Woods, consented to dispose of their rights over Durdham Down for £15,000. An Act confirming these arrangements, and vesting the management of the entire space in a committee chosen in equal moieties by the Corporation and the Society, was obtained in 1861. The Hall has since voted donations from time to time for planting trees and for other improvements, and in 1866 permission was granted for constructing a temporary engine-house and railway, by which excavations from improvement works in the Avon were made use of for levelling up three extensive quarries which then deformed the Downs.

In 1817, when the popularity of the once fashionable Hot Well had sunk to a very low ebb (*see* page 218) the Hall adopted a suggestion that an effort should be made to revive the renown of the spring by the erection of a more commodious Pump Room. The cost of the improvement was then estimated at only £400, but the design greatly developed under further consideration, and upwards of £4,000 were expended before the new premises were opened in 1822. The results were financially disastrous. The first tenant undertook to pay a rent of £200, and by converting the upper rooms into lodgings he succeeded in doing so for five years.

(At this period the public were deprived of their right of free access to the spring, and the interdiction continued until 1837.) A succession of occupiers followed, all of whom fell into arrears or became insolvent, and the rent by various abatements was reduced to £45 in 1838. A slight revival followed upon the opening of a swimming bath; but the last tenant fell into hopeless embarrassment, and he was forgiven a heavy debt. The Pump Room was finally swept away in 1867, when Hot Well Point was removed by the Corporation in carrying out an extensive scheme for facilitating the navigation of the Avon.

The Society also long possessed two Cold Baths at Jacob's Wells, which must at one period have been in good repute, for £500 were paid in 1793 for a lease of the premises. Scarcely anything is recorded about them; but the two buildings, which had much the appearance of diminutive Dissenting chapels of the old-fashioned type, were standing, though in a ruinous condition, until about thirty years ago.

An improvement of a later date having a slight connection with the Hot Well may here be briefly noted. In September, 1890, Mr. (now Sir) George Newnes applied to the Hall for permission to make an "underground inclined Lift" from near the site of the demolished Pump Room to Prince's Buildings. The Society having acceded to his request under certain conditions, the Clifton Rocks Railway, constructed at a cost of upwards of £30,000, was opened in March, 1893. The chief conditions imposed on Mr. Newnes were that he should establish at Prince's Buildings an extensive Hydro-pathic institution, and erect a Pump Room adjoining for a revived Hot Well Spa. The latter building, of a handsome character, was opened in August, 1894, and

provided a convenient place of reunion for the residents of upper Clifton. The interior reconstruction of three large houses in Prince's Buildings was undertaken by a company formed for the purpose, and the "Clifton Grand Spa Hydro" was opened in March, 1898, by the chairman, Sir George Newnes.

During the slow decline of the famous old Hot Well, the neighbourhood of the "New Hot Well" (*see* page 215) arose into temporary importance. In 1836, when the authorities of the Zoological Gardens applied to the Society for leave to raise water from this source for the use of their grounds, it was reported to the Standing Committee that, in addition to the Well itself, there was a much more copious spring in the same locality, belonging to the Hall, producing several thousand gallons of water per hour. So limited was the then population of "Clifton on the hill" that the Committee conceived this supply to greatly exceed the requirements of the inhabitants, and a sub-committee was directed to consider the practicability of establishing suitable water works. After a lengthy delay, a definite report was produced in August, 1841, in which it was asserted that the two springs, in a dry season, produced 94,000 gallons daily, "being double the quantity required for Clifton"; and that the cost of a pumping engine, mains, a reservoir on Observatory Hill,* and branch pipes, would not exceed £15,000. A few weeks later, Mr. Brunel, then at the summit of his fame, was appointed engineer of the works, and a Bill was prepared for the Session of 1842; but through the opposition threatened by the owners of Sion and Richmond springs,

* In 1767 the Society advanced a man named Walters £200, on his undertaking to build a windmill for grinding corn on "Mount-pelier, otherwise St. Vincent's Mount." The mill, which had been converted into a snuff mill, was accidentally burnt down in 1777, and the ruin figures in many views of the Hot Well. In 1828 the Hall granted the site at a nominal rent to William West, on his undertaking to construct an Observatory, which, says the minute, "would be an object of beauty, and useful for signals to the shipping."

who enjoyed a practical monopoly of the existing water supply of Clifton, the measure was withdrawn. In September, 1844, a committee of the Society again recommended the construction of works, the cost of which was estimated at only £8,000, and as the available daily supply was magnified by an engineer to 396,000 gallons, the Hall resolved, in March, 1845, to carry out Brunel's plans without further delay, an Act being deemed unnecessary. A fantastically-designed engine-house was accordingly raised over the larger spring; an excavation for a reservoir was made near the Observatory; and other operations had been nearly completed; when the formation of the Bristol Water Company, who proposed to apply for statutory powers in 1846, led to further developments. The Society resolved to introduce a rival Bill, claiming exclusive authority to supply Clifton and the adjoining city parishes, and undertaking to provide for the sewerage of those districts. The Water Company sought to avoid a struggle at Westminster by offering to reimburse the Hall for the outlay incurred, providing that the schemes were amalgamated, and invited the Society to become shareholders in the company and to accept a share in the management. This offer having been declined, a contest took place before a Committee of the House of Commons, and, as the Water Company intimated that their Bill would be withdrawn if the area of supply were divided, the Standing Committee recommended the Hall to undertake the provision of the entire city, Mr. Brunel having, characteristically, asserted that the Society's springs would furnish an "ample" supply for the whole population! The Parliamentary Committee, however, rejected the Society's Bill, and approved of the rival scheme, but intimated that the Water Company ought to carry out their previous offer to recoup the Hall for the expenditure

it had incurred. The Company eventually agreed to pay £18,000 to cover the cost of the works, but refused to purchase the springs, the engine-house, and the reservoir.

The foregoing paragraph suggests a brief reference to the history of the parish of Clifton during the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1801 "Clifton on the hill" was an inconsiderable village, and with the exception of York Place and Prince's Buildings, the Society's scanty estate there consisted chiefly of gardens and small dairy farms. The progress of building during the following forty years was exceedingly slow, and so late as 1842, when the showyards of the Royal Agricultural Society occupied the area of the present Triangle and two or three fields immediately in the rear of the Victoria Rooms, a pedestrian from Bristol was practically in open country when he had passed Berkeley Place. Save two small clumps of dwellings and a few cottages, Whiteladies Road, more than a mile in length, was bounded by green fields and nurseries until it reached Black Boy Hill, then inhabited by the poorest class of labourers; Pembroke Road was a narrow lane called Gallows Acre, containing in a distance of over half a mile only a solitary house; and, with trivial exceptions, the wide space to the right and left of those highways was in the hands of gardeners and petty farmers. The attention of the Hall was thus rarely called to the management of an estate so largely rural. An important extension of buildings on the Society's land was at length started in 1847, when "Ferry Close"—which a cautious speculator had refused to purchase for £2,500—began to be gradually converted into Victoria Square, the Society subsidising the first contractor. The example became at once contagious, and the progress made during the following years on the open land of private

individuals was astonishingly rapid, the mason being practically ubiquitous. St. Paul's Road was completed in 1854 by the erection of a church; and Alma Road, with other new thoroughfares, had then been begun. In 1856 a large sum was raised by subscription, the Hall contributing £500, for the purpose of sweeping away a nest of unsightly hovels fronting the Victoria Rooms, and converting the site into an ornamental garden, an improvement which gave a fresh impetus to building operations in that neighbourhood. In 1858 the Society, at a heavy outlay, acquired premises known as Carter's Brewery, near Victoria Square, through which Merchants' Road was afterwards laid out, connecting Queen's Road with Regent's Street, thus obviating the long carriage detour to the Mall by way of Clifton Church. By 1860 almost the whole agricultural area of the parish and the aspect of the older thoroughfares had been transformed; and after the opening of Clifton College, in the following year, the few remaining vacant plots speedily disappeared. One field—Road Close—at the junction of Oakfield and Pembroke Roads long survived the rest, but became Hanbury Road South about 1876. The extent of the Society's estate in upper Clifton being inconsiderable as compared with those of private owners, while properties were greatly intermixed, the task of negotiating with separate individuals for laying out the ground in a satisfactory manner occasionally proved very onerous. It was only through the persistent exertions of the Society that some of the leading thoroughfares obtained their present spacious dimensions.

As regards the internal affairs of the Society, one of the questions that most frequently underwent the consideration of the Hall during the century was that arising

out of the continuous shrinking of the roll of members. In September, 1803, when only about a dozen gentlemen had been admitted by fine during the previous thirty-five years, whilst a much greater number had been removed by death, the Ordinance of 1768, imposing a fine of £200 on each "Redemptioner," was momentarily suspended in order to admit nineteen candidates on payment of £150 each. In February, 1819, it was proposed to admit twenty-two gentlemen on the same terms, but a motion to that effect was disapproved. In October, 1836, when the roll had further largely diminished, a committee was appointed to consider measures for admitting some leading merchants and manufacturers; but no report seems to have been presented. Another committee, charged with the same task, was appointed in 1838; and having soon afterwards reported the desirability of admitting twenty additional members, being freemen of the city and mercantile men, at a fine of £50 each, the Hall suspended the Ordinance on August 24th, and selected the above number out of thirty-one candidates. The old Ordinance was then re-enacted. (One of the gentlemen chosen proved to be disqualified, being a non-freeman.) In February, 1848, when the Standing Committee directed some of its members to consider the qualifications for admission, a suggestion was made that the Hall should be simply recommended to reduce the admission fee to £50, but it was determined to await the report of the sub-committee, which was never produced. In December, 1850, the Standing Committee resolved that it was expedient to admit eighteen new members at a nominal fine. The subject was then being considered by another sub-committee, who brought up a new code of regulations in the following March; but it was apparently disapproved,

and was not inserted in the minutes. In April, 1851, the Standing Committee drew up a new scheme of regulations, abolishing all the previous Ordinances concerning admissions, excepting as regarded existing apprenticeships, and fixing the fine on Redemptioners at £50. At a Hall held on April 12th these regulations were refused confirmation; but another Hall was summoned for the 25th, when all the Ordinances relating to admissions (existing apprenticeships excepted) were repealed, and a Standing Order was enacted to the following effect:—

That no person shall be admitted by purchase on payment of a less sum than £50 and 10s. to the Clerk. That, subject to the conditions which follow, apprentices who duly serve their term and are otherwise qualified, shall be eligible for admission on payment of 4s. 6d. and 10s. to the Clerk. That the term be not less than seven years. That, excepting existing apprentices, no person shall be admitted by virtue of apprenticeship unless he is related to his master in a degree not less distant than first cousin, or pay £25 to the Society and 10s. to the Clerk. Every future indenture to be enrolled, and 6s. 8d. paid to the Clerk. Every one claiming the freedom to give three days' notice to the Clerk. Members' sons to be admitted on the minimum fee fixed for apprentices, provided that each shall have been born after his father's admission. The son of a Redemptioner, or member admitted gratuitously, who shall not have served as apprentice to a member, shall pay 40s. on admission and the Clerk's fee. No son of a member shall be eligible for admission in right of birth unless born after the admission of his father. No person to be admitted unless notice of such proposed admission be given in the summons convening the next Hall.

The number of Redemptioners admitted on payment of £50 each during the following ten years was twenty-three, and forty-two more were elected up to the close of the century. In July, 1872, the Hall requested the Standing Committee again to report on the system of admitting that class of members. From the committee's response in the following January, it appears that the

total number of members on the roll was then seventy-four (as against upwards of one hundred in 1801), of whom twenty had been admitted by right of birth, twenty-four by apprenticeship, and thirty by payment of £50. The committee saw no necessity for altering the regulations, except that the nomination of proposed Redemptioners should be made at one Hall, and their election at the next. A law was then enacted to that effect, and it was followed by another disqualifying a candidate who did not obtain a majority of three-fourths of the members present; and by a third, forbidding a nomination to be received unless with the sanction of the Hall. In July, 1885, the Clerk having expressed his belief that an application to the Privy Council for an alteration of the Society's charter would be assented to, the Standing Committee requested the Master to convene a special Hall to consider the subject, but no such meeting took place. It is probable that the object then in view was to obtain an abrogation of the clause requiring members of the Society to be freemen of the city. In 1895, the Clerk submitted a report on the regulations, doubtless at the request of the Standing Committee, who directed some of its members to consider whether alterations were desirable; but the matter proceeded no further.

With regard to the Order of 1851, imposing a fine of £25 on the admission of an apprentice not closely related to his late master, it may be stated that only two such fines were paid during the following fifty years. The first case, in 1860, appears to have caused some excitement. It was the claim of a prominent citizen (elected Mayor two years later) on the ground that he had just concluded an apprenticeship for seven years to a member of the Society. The candidate was

upwards of 40 years of age, and had been one of the chiefs of an extensive manufacturing firm throughout the period of his alleged servitude to a merchant. There being nothing in the ordinances to invalidate his claim, he was admitted by the Hall; but a bye-law was forthwith passed against "colourable" apprenticeships, future applicants being required to prove that they were indentured before reaching their eighteenth year, and had been employed exclusively in the business of their masters. It may be added in connection with the subject that, in 1822, a gentleman was rejected as unqualified, though the son of a member, on the ground that he was in holy orders. But no objection was raised in 1864 to the admission of an officer in a regiment of the line. Three gentlemen resigned their membership during the century, two without any opposition being offered to their action; but in the third and latest case, the Hall declined to accept the resignation, which was declared to be invalid until authenticated by a legal instrument.

The honorary members admitted during the century were as follows:—

1802 Henry Addington, Premier.	1825 Earl of Liverpool, Premier.
1803 H.R.H. the Duke of Cumberland.	George Canning.
1804 Earl Melville, First Lord, Admiralty.	1834 Lord Granville Somerset.
1805 Admiral Lord Barham. Admiral Lord Collingwood.	1840 7 th Duke of Beaufort.
1816 Lord Melville, First Lord, Admiralty. Duke of Wellington, F.M. Lord Edward Somerset. Lord Fitzroy Somerset.	1842 H.R.H. Duke of Cambridge. 1843 H.R.H. Prince Albert. 1851 P. W. S. Miles, M.P. 1854 8 th Duke of Beaufort. 1855 Robert Bright. 1856 2 nd Lord Raglan. 1866 Duke of Buckingham.

The routine of the previous century in reference to the transaction of ordinary business underwent little

alteration. For nearly two hundred years, in consonance with the terms of the first charter of Charles the First, the members assembled for the annual elections on November 10th, even when that day fell on a Sunday; but an Act of Parliament was passed in 1833 for the relief of many corporations, providing that when a stipulated meeting fell upon a Lord's Day, such gatherings should thenceforth take place either on the preceding or the following day; and the Society's elections in such years have accordingly been held either on Saturday or Monday. In 1807, when a difference of opinion arose in the Hall in reference to the Wharfage Bill of the Corporation, the minority requested that their formal protest against the Hall's decision should be recorded in the minutes; but there being no precedent for such a course, the demand was not complied with. In 1836 a question arose whether the Master was entitled to a casting vote in the appointment of an officer when a division showed an equality of numbers; but no precedent could be discovered, and the Clerk produced a legal decision declaring such a vote invalid. In 1844 the old rule imposing a fine on such members of the Standing Committee as absented themselves from meetings was abandoned as unworkable; and the Treasurer was ordered to disburse £1 12s. 6d. (being half-a-crown per head for the entire committee) for distribution amongst those actually present at the opening of each gathering. The new system had its intended effect, and is still in operation. In February, 1852, a committee was appointed to consider the bye-laws relating to the election of officers. After deliberations extending over nearly three years, the committee reported that the method of electing Masters and Wardens had been pursued uninterruptedly since 1639, and that no alteration seemed desirable. The mode of electing Assistants probably dated from the same

period. Under it, the outgoing Master and four outgoing Assistants nominated by him, were always first chosen, after which the remaining five were chosen by ballot out of ten nominated by the outgoing Master. It was recommended that the election of the ex-Master and of the first four nominated by him should be continued, but that the appointment of the remaining five should be thrown open to the Hall. After the matter had undergone further consideration, the Hall, in August, 1855, passed a new Ordinance, and repealed all previous bye-laws. It was enacted that, as regarded the offices of Master and Wardens, three nominations should be made—one by the outgoing Master, one by the outgoing Wardens and Assistants, and the third by the assembled commonalty; after which those so nominated should be put to the vote for election by a majority of voices. As to the Assistants, it was decreed that the name of the outgoing Master should be first put to the vote, and that, if elected, he should be First Assistant. Each member present was next to hand in a list containing the names of four, or, if the past Master was not elected, five of the Wardens and Assistants then present, and such four or five were to be elected by a plurality of votes. The remaining Assistants were finally to be chosen out of the members actually present. Provision was made for a second poll in case of an equality of votes. Since the passing of the above Ordinance, it has become customary to elect the Senior Warden of each year to the Mastership of the following year, the Junior Warden succeeding in the same manner to the Senior Wardenship. Owing to unavoidable circumstances this system was broken through in 1863, 1867, and 1878, when Mr. J. A. Jones, Mr. R. G. Barrow, and Mr. F. F. Fox were severally selected as Master for a second term. No vacancy in that office

through death occurred during the century, but in November, 1813, the outgoing Master, Mr. W. P. Lunell, fractured a leg whilst on an inspection of the Society's property, and was unable to attend on Charter day; whilst in 1865 Mr. O. C. Lane died only six days after leaving the Chair, and but a few hours after his successor had been sworn in before him.

In 1879 the Society resolved that an ornamental badge of office should be thenceforth worn by the Master on public occasions, and a sum of £250 was voted for that purpose.

The general nature of the Society's proceedings underwent a remarkable change during the progress of the century. At the outset, the Hall had to perform many important public duties of which it was gradually relieved in later years. As lessee of the wharfage, anchorage and cranage dues under the Corporation, who also delegated to the Hall the regulation of pilotage, river navigation, and other cognate matters, the Standing Committee found constant employment in supervising the reparation of the quays, cranes, &c., the removal of obstructions in the Avon, the hearing of numberless complaints relating to the pilots and to careless ship captains, the protection from naval impressment of the large body of watermen engaged in towing vessels, and the collection and distribution of the Merchant Seamen's Fund. The management of the Society's Floating Dock and of the numerous quarry tenants of the Hall required great watchfulness. The necessity of defending local commerce from hostile ships of war and privateers was often urgent; and some efforts had to be made, previous to the Battle of Trafalgar, to secure the harbour from a French invasion. Being exclusively mercantile men, the members of the Hall had to keep a vigilant eye on the financial and commercial

policy of the Government, on the attempts of distant harbours to levy passing tolls on Bristol ships, and on schemes of Londoners to snatch unfair advantages to the injury of the outports. The administration of the Colston Charities and the management of their extensive endowments, to which further reference will be made in the following chapter, engrossed much of the time of the Standing Committee. In later years these duties and responsibilities successively disappeared, and the Society were enabled to bestow a larger attention to religious, educational, and philanthropic objects. Through the development of Clifton and the growth of other sources of revenue, the heavy liabilities under which the Hall laboured at the beginning of the century were gradually cleared off, and though the surplus revenue thus secured would still seem derisory to one of the great incorporated companies of the capital, it was ungrudgingly drawn upon from the outset, and is still largely bestowed for the benefit of the community.

As will be shown in a future chapter, the Society have further contributed in the aggregate some £80,000 for the establishment, equipment, and maintenance of the Merchant Venturers' Technical College.

The Society's Hall underwent various improvements during the period under review. In 1851 Mr. Owen Jones, the decorator of the first Crystal Palace, was employed to furnish designs for ornamenting the interior of the building, involving a considerable outlay. But the chief alterations in the premises were effected in 1871, when, in consequence of a gift to the Society by Mr. Thomas Daniel of a house adjoining the Hall, the old offices of the Treasurer were demolished, and new buildings, including a spacious and elegant committee-room, were erected on the extended site. At

the sale of Mr. James Adam Gordon's effects in 1857, the Society purchased, for decorating the walls of their reception saloon, a fine portrait of Queen Anne, by Kneller, and five others, believed to be by Hudson, namely, George the First, George the Second when Prince of Wales, the same monarch and his consort, Queen Caroline, and the Princess Augusta, mother of George the Third. The portrait of Mr. Robert Bright, already referred to, was presented to the Hall in the same year. By permission of Queen Victoria, copies were obtained in 1862, at a cost of £250, of Winterhalter's portraits of her Majesty and the Prince Consort, as a memorial of the latter. And in 1885 Alderman Butterworth, then Master, presented a portrait of Arthur Hart, Master of the Society in 1688. A portrait of Mr. William Claxton, Treasurer for thirty-two years, was presented in 1873, a few weeks before the death of that highly-esteemed officer, by Mr. H. Cruger Miles (Master, 1871), and was placed in the Treasurer's room.

Entertainments were offered in the Hall to many visitors to the city, the most distinguished being George, Prince of Wales (George IV.), H.R.H. the Duke of Cumberland (King of Hanover), H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex, H.R.H. the Duchess of Teck, F.M. the Duke of Wellington, the last Duke of Buckingham, Earl Russell, Sir Frederick (Earl) Roberts, and the Presidents and leading members of the British Association and other scientific societies during their meetings in the city. Down to 1841, when the only other convenient building for large banquets was the Assembly Room in Prince's Street, the annual dinners of the Anchor Society were generally held in the Hall, and it was often granted for celebrations of Mr. Pitt's birthday and other party reunions, as well as for meetings to promote railways

and various public objects. In 1817, probably at the request of the Government, it was permitted to be used for the distribution of the new gold sovereigns issued in substitution of guineas, and of a plentiful coinage of silver for which the country had long been clamorous. In 1830 and at three subsequent general elections, when the only polling booths in the city were erected in Queen Square, the Sheriffs were allowed the use of the Hall for the accommodation of their staff; and after the deplorable events of 1831 it was the meeting-place of a court martial.

Continuing the record of the Society's Clerks (*see* page 229), Mr. Jeremiah Osborne was appointed in 1801 joint Clerk with his elder brother, John, who had held the office for the previous five years. The latter died in February, 1810, when his brother became sole Clerk, and continued to perform the duties until 1838, when, on account of failing health, his eldest son, Robert, was appointed his coadjutor. The latter, after becoming sole Clerk on the death of his father in June, 1842, held the office until his own demise in 1854, when his partner, Mr. Charles Edward Ward, succeeded to the vacancy. Mr. Ward died in March, 1873, and the Society, as a memorial of his services, voted £400 towards the erection of the west front of the Cathedral. The vacant office was conferred upon Mr. Jere Osborne, nephew of the above Robert, who had long assisted his late partner, Mr. Ward. On the occasion of his marriage Mr. Osborne was presented with a massive silver salver, bearing an inscription eulogising his services. It is somewhat remarkable that of the five members of his family who have held the Clerkship since 1786, four of them were appointed when under 30 years of age, and the fifth was only 33.

A list of the Treasurers of the Society will be found at the end of the volume.

In 1866 Mr. Thomas William Hill applied to the Society for the gift of a suitable piece of ground on which to erect an Almshouse, for the reception of twelve poor Church-women of the parishes of Clifton and St. Augustine, it being his further intention to endow the institution and to place it, after his own demise, under the Society's supervision. A plot of land in Gorse Lane, Clifton, was accordingly conveyed to him. By a deed executed soon afterwards, Mr. Hill transferred to a body of twelve trustees a capital sum sufficient to provide 7s. per week for the "elder sister" and 5s. per head for the other objects of his foundation. The trustees were empowered to fill up vacancies arising from death amongst themselves; but the Society were given visitorial powers over the board, with the right of displacing any member for breach of trust, and of appointing his successor. Half of the almswomen were to be elected by the trustees and half by the Society. Mr. Hill, who died in January, 1874, bequeathed his large residuary estate to the trustees, who were subsequently enabled to create pensions of 5s. per week per head to forty-six women residing outside the almshouse.

In conclusion, some singular circumstances in connection with the Society's Almshouse afford information respecting a bygone charitable movement of Bristolians hitherto unrecorded. From documents referred to in the minute books, it appears that, in the early years of the century, the doles to the inmates of all the almshouses in the city in no case exceeded three shillings per week, a sum which barely provided the miserable recipients with bread, owing to the high prices that prevailed during the great French war. In 1810 a notable Bristol philan-

thropist, Mr. Richard Reynolds, in concert with Mr. Philip John Miles and others, started a subscription for the purpose of permanently increasing the pay of each of the poor people to five shillings per week. But as the amount actually raised was little more than £12,000, whilst the sum required was £35,000, the money was invested in the purchase of 300 acres of land, which, owing to the high price of grain and the depreciation of the currency, was then selling at far beyond its normal value. The return of peace brought about so disastrous a fall in farming rents that in 1834 the accumulated fund produced a revenue of only £422, while a sum of £487 per annum was required to carry out the original intention. The trustees then offered to transfer the estate to the Society, on condition that the Hall would undertake to increase the pay of the inmates in Colston's and other city almshouses to 5s. per week, involving a yearly outlay of £331 10s., and would apply the balance towards increasing the dole to the Society's almsfolk. The distress of the agricultural interest was then so extreme, however, that the Hall declined to accept the responsibility. In 1839 the trustees made a second proposal, offering to transfer a capital sum adequate to provide an additional shilling weekly to the inmates of Colston's Almshouse, and double that amount to the King Street almspeople—thus raising both to 5s.,—but desired an assurance from the Society that the payments then made to the two institutions would not be reduced; but the Hall declined to bind itself to support a greater number of persons than were specified in the trusts, or to continue a gratuitous application of its funds longer than it thought proper. Eventually, in September, 1840, the surviving trustees of the fund, Mr. William Fripp and Mr. Christopher George, handed over £3,350 in 3½ per cent. stock to four members of the

Society, in trust to divide the interest amongst not less than thirty inmates at King Street. A further sum of £1,700 in the same stock was transferred for the benefit of Colston's almsfolk. The difficulty of investing money so as to ensure a definite fixed income for all future time is forcibly illustrated by the subsequent results of this arrangement. The dividends on the $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. stocks have undergone four reductions since the above benefactions were received by the Society, and two-sevenths of the income from them has disappeared. The loss has been borne by the Hall, and the weekly payments have not only been maintained, but have been enlarged. A new scheme for the management of the Society's Alms-house came into operation in 1898, by which its funds have been placed on an independent footing.

With respect to the practice of "colouring" the goods of non-burgesses, already frequently referred to, it may be stated that the Municipal Reform Act of 1835 abolished the exemption from local dues which had previously been a privilege of the freemen of Bristol and other boroughs, but reserved that privilege in favour of freemen then living, and of their children and apprentices born or indentured before June 5th, 1835. Some surviving persons entitled to this favour may therefore be still entitled to claim it. At all events, the practice of "colouring" goods, that is, of using the name of a freeman in order to avoid the payment of local dues—said to have been formerly common—may have continued up to a recent date.

CHAPTER VI.

COLSTON'S HOSPITAL AND ALMSHOUSE.

As has been already narrated (page 174), Mr. Edward Colston delayed his application for admission into the Society until the close of 1683, when he was far advanced in middle life. Although he had been absent from his native city since childhood, it appears to have retained a strong hold on his affections, and to have inspired him with intentions to benefit permanently the poorer classes of inhabitants. In August, 1690, Mr. Colston applied to the Corporation for a grant of about three acres of land, called the Turtles, or Jonas Leaze, on St. Michael's Hill, for the purpose of erecting an almshouse, chapel, and other buildings on the site; when the civic body, taking into consideration the charitable object in view, consented to dispose of the ground for the sum of £100. There is no record of the opening of the Almshouse, which was built for the accommodation of twelve men and an equal number of women, and cost about £2,500. In January, 1696, the founder conveyed the property, together with the endowment fund for its maintenance, chiefly consisting of fee-farm rents that had been acquired from the Crown, to Sir Richard Hart and twenty-seven other citizens, chiefly members of the Merchants' Society, who were constituted managers of the charity, with power to appoint successors. The nomination of the almspeople was reserved to Mr. Colston for life, and afterwards to the Society in perpetuity.

In October, 1695, the philanthropist acquainted the Society of his intention to provide them with funds for the maintenance (at 2s. per week per head) of six aged seamen, provided that rooms for that number were added to the Almshouse adjoining the Hall; and the condition having been thankfully accepted, and duly fulfilled, certain lands in Somerset were shortly afterwards conveyed to members of the Society.

Correspondence between Mr. Colston and the Society relating to the above transactions is printed at length in Garrard's *Life of Edward Colston*, pages 386-393.

In reference to the endowments of Colston's Almshouse, it may be stated that, after the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715, the estates of the Earl of Derwentwater and of several of the Northumbrian gentry who took part in the revolt, out of which fee-farm rents were due to the Almshouse under Mr. Colston's Settlement, were confiscated to the Crown on the landowners being convicted of high treason. The Society, however, took immediate steps to establish their right, as trustees, to the quit-rents, and their claim was at once admitted by the Government. The charity subsequently received two important benefactions. In 1814 Mr. Hart Davis conveyed to the Society a house and about three acres of land in Clifton, in trust, to apply the annual rental (then £60) to increasing by one shilling the weekly stipend of the almsfolk. The Society passed a cordial vote of thanks to the donor, and conferred the freedom upon Mr. Davis and his eldest son. The benefaction of £1,700 in 1840, by which another shilling per week was added to the dole, has been already referred to (page 279).

Mr. Colston's first donation for local educational purposes was made in 1695 to the Corporation, to

whom he soon afterwards conveyed two small estates in Somerset, producing about £70 per annum, which income was to be devoted to the maintenance, clothing, and education of six additional boys in Queen Elizabeth's Hospital. The conveyance of the property directed that if the Corporation should thereafter diminish the number of youths then in the School, and should refuse to fill up vacancies after being required so to do by the Merchants' Society, it should be lawful for the latter body to take possession of the endowment, and to apply it at their discretion.

In 1702, when Mr. Colston had temporarily returned to Bristol on the death of his mother, he acquainted the Corporation with his desire to make a much larger donation of a similar character to that just described. The Common Council, in August, deputed five gentlemen (of whom three were past Masters of the Society) to thank Mr. Colston for his generous proposal; and a few days later that gentleman accompanied the civic body to the Hospital (then occupying the site of the present Merchant Venturers' College), when an agreement was signed by most of those present to subscribe funds for the demolition of the old monastic buildings, and for the erection of a new Hospital, to accommodate 120 poor boys. Mr. Colston promised £500 towards the undertaking, and twenty members of the Corporation (forming a working majority of the entire body) offered donations amounting altogether to £1,400. As the number of scholars was then only forty, it seems unquestionable that provision would not have been made for thrice that number unless there were good reasons for anticipating an immediate and extensive development. It is, in fact, certain that Mr. Colston had intimated to the Corporation that he was willing to provide a sufficient endowment for

adding about fifty more boys to the existing roll. For reasons which the civic records leave unexplained, this munificent offer was not accepted by the Common Council, desirous as that body evidently was to provide the necessary accommodation. That the refusal was attributable to the sordid prejudices and absolute illiteracy of the governors of the Hospital, as is alleged in the *Life of Colston*, may be dismissed as a scurrilous and untruthful libel. Bearing in mind the provisions afterwards imposed by Mr. Colston on the Merchants' Society when founding his own school, namely, that all the children admitted into it should not only be carefully instructed in the doctrines of the Church of England, but that none of them should, when leaving, be apprenticed to a Dissenter, it is not unreasonable to conjecture that the proffered endowment was made subject to similar conditions. The period was one of fierce political passions. Before the negotiations were broken off, the High Church party had twice carried a Bill through the House of Commons, and it became law soon afterwards, under which any mayor or other member of a civic corporation, "or any other person bearing any office or place or employment relating to or concerning the government of any borough" [which clearly embraced the officers if not all the members of the Merchants' Society] who should, whilst holding such position, attend any religious meeting of Dissenters, was to be fined £40, deprived of office, and adjudged incapable to hold any office or employment whatever within England and Wales. The sect of Presbyterians was at that time influentially represented in the Bristol Corporation, and if Mr. Colston imposed religious restrictions on his gift to Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, it is not very surprising that his proposal was declined.

After considering the subject for about three years, Mr. Colston addressed a letter to the Merchants' Society, dated, "Mortlake, March 21st, 1705-6." After observing:—"Altho' my intention of making provision for fifty poor boys have been hardly censured by some of the inhabitants of your City, nay, even by some of the Magistrates, if I have not been wrong informed, yet the sense of that hath not extinguished those thoughts, but I still retain them;" and adding that a similar offer for the benefit of Christ's Hospital in London would doubtless meet with far different returns, he proceeded:—"But altho' I have had my education, and spent good part of my days there—yet since I drew my first breath in your City, I rather incline that the poor children born there should partake thereof; therefore if your Society will please to undertake the trust (and are not of the opinion that gifts of that nature are only a nursery for beggars and sloths, and rather a burthen than a benefit to the place where they are bestowed) upon the conditions mentioned on the other side, which is a paragraph taken out of my late will; then it's my desire that you would take it into consideration." The writer went on to state that he proposed to erect a school building on St. Michael's Hill, adjoining his Almshouse, capable of accommodating fifty boys, "which is the least number I think of," and a master. As to the endowment, he estimated that the boys could be fed, clothed, and educated for £10 a head per annum—the sum then expended at Queen Elizabeth's Hospital; and £100 a year would be added as a provision for placing them out as apprentices, at £5 per head, and for other expenses.

On the receipt of this communication, a Hall was held on March 29th, 1706, when it was unanimously

resolved to accept the trust proposed to be conferred upon the Society, and to tender thanks for the kind offer through a committee appointed for that purpose. This was accordingly done on the following day, when the committee returned hearty acknowledgments for the charitable proposals, approved of the proposed site and of the intended provision for the school, but expressed a doubt whether the apprentice fee would suffice to secure good masters. The latter point was afterwards pressed by the Society, who informed Mr. Colston that if he would raise the endowment to £640 per annum, "they would with all gratitude and thankfulness undertake the trust imposed upon them." Mr. Colston assented, and estates at Locking, Beere, and other places in Somerset, producing a net income slightly exceeding the estimated charge, were conveyed to trustees nominated by the Society.

The intended site being afterwards disapproved as inadequate, the Hall recommended the purchase of the Great House on St. Augustine's Back, which had been thrice the temporary abode of royal visitors, but had fallen from its high estate, and had long been degraded into a sugar refinery. The property having been purchased by Mr. Colston in 1707, for £1,300, its adaptation for its new purposes was forthwith undertaken. The deed settling the various endowments had been actually engrossed, when, in April, 1708, Mr. Colston informed the Hall of his intention to provide for double the number of scholars, and the Society at once accepted the enlarged trust, providing that a proportionate increase were made in the endowment. In response, Mr. Colston undertook to convey a further sum of about £600 per annum, consisting of fee-farm rents purchased from the Crown at an earlier date. The Hall had undertaken to

clothe the boys, but the founder resolved on furnishing the first batch of scholars "each with a suit of clothes, cap, band, shirt, stockings, shoes, buckle, spoon and porringer—one of each. Also brewing utensils, barrels, bedding, sheets, towels, tablecloths." (Knives and forks appear to have been thought an unnecessary equipment.) All preparations having been completed, the Hospital was opened in July, 1710, a special service being held on the occasion in the Cathedral. The first pupils were nominated by the founder, who reserved that privilege for life, but occasionally requested the Society to recommend fitting candidates. Subsequently, the patronage was equally divided between the Hall and a body of gentlemen styled Nominees, appointed by Mr. Colston, and empowered to fill up vacancies amongst themselves in perpetuity. Under the provisions of the Hospital Settlement, boys bearing the name of Colston, or proving kindred with the founder's family, were entitled to admission in preference to any others, if otherwise eligible, and the privilege was frequently claimed.

In 1718 the Society fell under Mr. Colston's temporary displeasure. The first schoolmaster having received notice of dismissal for incompetence, a letter was received from Mortlake, recommending that a person named Tooker, probably a member of a respectable Bristol family of that name, should be selected for the vacant office. But the Hall, having discovered that Tooker was so headstrong a Jacobite as to have refused to take the oath of allegiance to George the First, resolved that he was unfit for the post—which he was in fact disqualified by law to fill—and forthwith appointed another candidate. Mr. Colston's irritation at this proceeding is visible in a letter addressed soon afterwards to the Hall. Admitting that the Society were empowered to elect a master, he

observed that if the members had acted with common civility, they would not have been surprised at his having resented their haste in making the appointment before their disapproval of Tooker was communicated to him. He had not, he added, the least knowledge that his nominee was a non-juror. Under these circumstances he hoped that no objection would be made to the insertion of a "clause" in the Hall books, to the effect that he did not merely endow the Hospital for the bare feeding of a hundred boys, but chiefly that they should be bred up in the doctrines of the Church of England, and he conjured the Hall, for all time, to take effectual care towards that end, and to see that no boy was ever apprenticed to a Dissenter, as they would be answerable for that breach of trust at the last great Tribunal. The "clause," as well as the letter itself, was accordingly inserted in the minute book. So long as the Hospital was under the governance of the Society, the founder's instructions were so carefully regarded that out-going pupils were not permitted to apprentice themselves to firms of which even a single partner was a Dissenter.

The arrangements of the school under the scheme originally drawn up, and adhered to for many generations, now seem extremely parsimonious. The master charged with the training of 100 boys, and required to find slender stipends for two assistant teachers, had no salary; such remuneration as he received being derived from the profit made on his contract to educate, maintain, and clothe the scholars for the yearly sum of £10 per head. The regimen of the youths was thus necessarily of a Spartan character. Animal food was served for dinner on only three days a week; the fare on the other four days being simply bread, or bread, butter, and boiled pease, or bread and pottage. Breakfast

consisted of bread with a very little butter, or bread and broth. For supper a small piece of meat was served on Sundays; on other days a scanty allowance of bread and cheese was the only provision. In lieu of tea and coffee, which were then expensive, each boy was allowed thrice a day a pint of table beer, brewed on the premises by the master at a trifling cost. Another economical expedient ruled in the dormitory, where two of the elder or three of the younger boys occupied each bed. Even under these conditions, the master's profit, after defraying the annual tailor's and shoemaker's bills, must have been inconsiderable; and the Society, recognising the fact, were accustomed to appoint him as their Beadle. As his time was thus largely absorbed in the collection of rents and the supervision of repairs to property, not only in Bristol but on the extensive charity estates in various parts of Somerset, his scholastic duties must have been perfunctorily discharged. (This remissness, indeed, was complained of by Mr. Colston in his final Settlement.) Towards the close of the eighteenth, and during the first two decades of the nineteenth centuries, when bread was frequently at famine prices, a more liberal yearly grant was found indispensable. A salary of £50 was voted to the master, and the allowance for food and clothing was advanced step by step until it reached £17 per head in 1810, and £18 in 1814, when the master's stipend was raised to £100. Long before this inflation commenced, the Society had learnt from painful experience that, in accepting the terms of Mr. Colston's Settlements on the Hospital and Alms-house, their predecessors had greatly underestimated the liabilities that would accrue from the trusts. As the cost of living was nearly always increasing, while the large income derived from fee-farm rents was

absolutely stationary, the yearly expenditure for a lengthy period almost invariably exceeded the revenue. A portion of the deficit, it is true, arose from the reluctance of Mr. Colston's heirs to carry out his testamentary instructions, which, after more than thirty years' resistance, they were compelled to do by a decree of the Court of Chancery in 1769, under which the Society recovered upwards of £3,000 for arrears, and an additional yearly income of over £200. Another troublesome litigant was the Duke of Bolton, who obstinately refused to pay the fee-farm rent issuing out of his estate at Kidwelly. Twelve years' arrears, amounting to £1,200, were due from him in 1748, when a suit for their recovery had been pending against him for a lengthy period; but his grace unblushingly claimed his privileges as a peer to prevent the action being brought to trial, and it was only by great legal dexterity that he was forced to capitulate in 1749. But the sums accruing from these sources far from sufficed to restore a financial equilibrium, and the amount due to the Hall for the advances it had to make afterwards exceeded £11,000, involving the Society in a considerable bonded debt. By 1788, however, the farming rents arising from the Somerset charity estates had increased by £700 per annum as compared with the receipts when the lands were purchased, and the encumbrance was gradually reduced, notwithstanding the additional expenditure already referred to.

Having regard to the class from which the Colston Boys were chiefly drawn, and the rough manners of the lower orders of society in the eighteenth century, it is not surprising to find that the Hospital Committee were frequently called on to deal vigorously with outbreaks of insubordination and violence amongst the

scholars. To take a few examples, boys who had committed thefts, or assaulted the ushers, were given the choice of being prosecuted for their offences, or of being flogged by the master and delivered to serve in the Royal Navy. On one occasion, when fourteen youths, one of whom had rejoiced in the name of Young Turpin, were brought up charged with shearing off an usher's hair during the night, destroying their long coats, and escaping from the Hospital, the Committee ordered six of the culprits to be scourged in their presence, "which was done with much seriousness," and the others were expelled as incorrigible. A dread instrument called the Wooden Collar was also occasionally called into requisition. Although sanitary regulations were little attended to in that age, the condition of the Hospital appears to have been generally satisfactory. On only one occasion was an epidemic reported in the institution; and although nearly half the boys were under medical treatment, only two cases proved fatal.

A somewhat singular benefaction was made to the Hospital in 1814. From information contained in the minute books we learn that a boy named Philip Jones was admitted into the school in 1765, on the nomination of the Society, and that he bore the number 76 in the roll of scholars. Jones eventually became prosperous in business, and being desirous of showing his gratitude for the education he had received, he transferred, in 1814, the sum of £500 in 5 per cent. stock to certain members of the Society, in trust, that they should, out of the yearly interest, lay by £5 annually for the benefit of every subsequent boy numbered 76, the lump sum to be paid to each such youth on leaving the Hospital. If a Number 76 died whilst a scholar, or was considered unworthy of the

gift, the accumulated sum was to benefit his next successor. The remainder of the income of the trust, after the distribution of a shilling apiece to the other scholars, was to be given to the schoolmaster. From some inadvertence in keeping the roll, the proper descent of each number, including Number 76, had not been attended to, and all Jones's successors had been chosen by the Nominees instead of by the Society, thus clearly disappointing the donor's intentions. The subject having been brought before the Hall in 1844, the Nominees were requested to consider the case; and they shortly afterwards agreed that the next election of Number 76 should be left to the Society, and that future nominations should be made by the two bodies alternately. Another bequest of a like character was made by one William Vaughan, of Dixton, Monmouth, who bequeathed £115 to the Society in 1798, the yearly interest of which he directed to be expended every Colston Day in giving half-a-crown to scholar Number 49, the same sum to the boy who was doorkeeper for that week, and one shilling each to the others. On the reorganisation of the Hospital, to be referred to hereafter, the old system of numbering was abolished, and it was resolved that Jones's gift to Number 76 should thenceforth be awarded, on each vacancy, to a boy who had been one or two years in the school, as a reward for meritorious conduct rather than for proficiency.

In 1837, the system of "farming" the Colston Boys to the schoolmaster at a fixed yearly sum was abolished, and a committee, that had been appointed to improve the general management of the Hospital, soon afterwards reported their proceedings to the Hall. The dietary regulations that had been in force since the opening of

the institution had been superseded by new tables based on the system pursued at Christ's Hospital; the large allowances of beer had been discontinued, and the food made more generous. The old scheme of education, which had been found inferior to that in force in modern parochial schools, had been elevated and extended. The only recreation of the boys, consisting of "stamping about the court in pairs," had been replaced by active games and amusements; the practice of allotting three lads to a bed had been remedied by additions to the dormitory; the menial duties imposed on the youths had been mitigated by the employment of another servant; and the entire building had been renovated and improved. The new regulations proved to be more economical than the old system, for although the salary of the headmaster was raised to £210, with furniture provided for his private rooms, and votes were granted for establishing a school library and various recreations, a saving of £300 per annum was effected. A little later, prizes were offered yearly to meritorious pupils, navigation classes were introduced, and singing was taught by an efficient master.

Certain Royal Commissioners appointed to enquire into the Public Charities of the kingdom visited Bristol in 1836, and a subsequent prolonged investigation into local endowments was made by one of their agents. An unexpected result of these proceedings was the filing, in the Court of Chancery, by the Attorney-General, in July, 1839, of an Information against the Society in reference to a leasehold estate held by them under Eton College, but alleged by the Commissioners to form part of the endowments of Colston's Hospital. As the newspaper reports of judicial proceedings were at that period very brief and defective,

many important circumstances bearing upon the case were never laid before the public. The following summary of the facts, based upon legal documents in possession of the Hall and the pleadings on each side, has been kindly communicated by Mr. W. W. Ward:—

“During the year 1708 and the three preceding years Mr. Colston had been in constant communication with the Society with reference to the establishment and endowment of the Charity afterwards known as Colston’s Hospital. Negotiations for the purchase of the Beere Manor Estate, in Somerset, were entered into by the Society, acting on Mr. Colston’s behalf, with a Colonel Bowyer; and it was eventually agreed that the purchase money should be £9,000 and 150 guineas, and that part of the property should remain in the occupation of Colonel Bowyer and his wife during their lives at an annual rent of £315, but that, on payment by him of £2,500 to the Society, the rent payable by him should be reduced to £5 a year,* the Society covenanting to pay the balance of £310 a year for the purposes of the Charity during the lives of Colonel Bowyer and his wife. These negotiations were all fully reported to Mr. Colston, as the records of the Society prove beyond doubt, and the purchase was completed in 1708. In the same year Mr. Colston conveyed the Beere Manor with other property to the Society, with the view of providing the income necessary for the maintenance of the Charity. In the early part of the following year, 1709, legal effect was

* The object of this arrangement, which was solicited by Bowyer, came to light after his death. Long before the sale of the manor to Mr. Colston, the property had been encumbered by two “extents,” one for £700 and the other for £1,000, obtained by two of his numberless creditors. These charges Bowyer succeeded in concealing from Mr. Colston’s legal advisers; but as the fraud would have been at once discovered if the Society had taken possession as trustees, he induced the Hall to accept him as lessee of the manor for life on the terms stated above. Upon his demise, the holders of the “extents” raised suits for the recovery of their money, and Mr. Colston’s executors were compelled to disburse £1,400 in discharge of the larger claim. How the other “extent” was got rid of is not recorded.

given to the arrangements made with Colonel Bowyer; but of the £2,500 agreed to be paid for the reduction of his rent, only £500 was paid in cash, the payment of the balance being accepted by the assignment of a mortgage debt of £2,000 secured on a lease from Eton College for a term of years of the Manor of Monkton at Stogursey. In 1713, there being interest in arrear and a fine for renewal due, if renewal were desired, the Society paid the fine to Eton College and obtained a new lease in trust to secure £2,610, that sum representing the principal and interest due to the Society and the arrears of rent and renewal fine paid by them. The mortgage remained unpaid, and in course of time Eton College accepted the Society as lessees of the manor, which was thus held at the date of the Commissioners' enquiry.

“The Books of the Society showed that the rents payable by the Society during the lives of the Bowyers had been paid or accounted for; that in 1771 the advances made by the Society on behalf of the Charity amounted to £10,000 or thereabouts, and that the representatives of Mr. Colston paid to the Society the sum of £3,000 in settlement of past and future claims on account of taxes agreed by him to be paid; that the surplus rents arising from the increased value of the properties, including those of the Manor of Stogursey, had been applied, technically, perhaps, to the use of the Society, but, as a matter of fact, in the reduction of the advances made to the Charity; and that there would still be a balance of several thousand pounds due to the Society on an account taken of the whole concern. All this was practically admitted. It was also admitted that the Society had properly maintained the Charity and performed the duties imposed upon them. But the claim of the Commissioners was that the Society ought to be

charged with the £500 paid by Colonel Bowyer in 1709, and interest, and with the £2,000 secured on mortgage of the Manor of Stogursey, and interest; that, in the alternative, as regarded the £2,000, the Manor of Stogursey should be declared the property of the Charity; that any surplus of its rents was applicable for charitable purposes; and that, therefore, the Society were not justified at any time in applying the surplus as a set-off against former losses.

“The claim came on the Society as a complete surprise. For over 120 years they had regarded the leasehold manor as their own property; their administration of the Charity had never been impeached; they believed that they had not merely fulfilled their part of the bargain with Mr. Colston, but had done more than could have been legally required of them in the maintenance of his school.

“The question at issue depended upon the nature of the arrangement made between Mr. Colston and the Society in 1708. The view of the Society was that a definite bargain had been made, by which they undertook certain obligations in consideration of being put into possession of the lands and rents out of which the expenses of maintenance were payable. This no doubt was the traditional view in the Merchants' Hall. The Trust, it was believed, had been accepted on the basis of a bargain, very carefully worked out between Mr. Colston and the Society, and the bargain for better or worse was binding for all time. They had taken the estates on the understanding that if, as had been the case in the early years of the Charity, the rents were insufficient, they were to find the balance; and it followed, they thought, as a natural consequence, that if the rents increased they were entitled to apply the surplus to their

own use; or, which was technically the same thing, towards the reduction of their advances to the Charity. It seemed hard to imagine that in 1708 either Mr. Colston or the Society intended that the Society should engage to maintain the Charity during the remainder of Mr. Colston's life, as well as afterwards, for his beneficiaries, at a possible, if not certain, loss, and without the possibility of reimbursement.

“After the lapse of so many years there was little evidence forthcoming of the conduct of the contracting parties indicative of their intention. The date of the Deed of Settlement was 1708: the Society became virtual owners of the Stogursey Manor under Eton College in 1713: Mr. Colston did not die till 1721: he was a member of the Society and the Visitor of the Charity: accounts were rendered him in a form not inconsistent with the view of the Society: by his Will he referred to the Deed of Settlement, and made further provision in the event of the rents decreasing and the loss falling on the Society. All this did not come to much. It sufficed, perhaps, to raise the presumption that no difference of opinion had arisen between Mr. Colston and the Society as to the nature of the arrangement. But even if the intention of the parties, as inferred from their conduct, could have been more precisely ascertained, it is doubtful how far it would have affected the mind of a judge, if it was repugnant to the intention which he held was to be inferred from a true construction of the Deed. Looking, then, at the Deed of Settlement itself, the Society found much to support their contention. It constituted a Trust, of course; but the terms of a bargain also were clearly written on its face.

“Where Trust and Contract were so interwoven,

which element was to prevail? Was it a Trust regulated by Contract, or a Contract resulting in a Trust? Put in another form, the question was whether under the Deed the Society became owners of the estates subject to the maintenance of the Charity, or whether they were Trustees of the estates for the purpose of the maintenance of the Charity. Similar as these two propositions seem, they lead to very different results. In the one case, the Society would be entitled to the estates subject to a specific charge; in the other case, they would be Trustees of the whole, whatever increase there might be in the revenue of the Charity. The ownership of the Manor of Stogursey held under Eton College was involved in the same question. If the Society were Trustees of the whole estates, then, inasmuch as the Stogursey property had been acquired through dealings with the Charity property, it obviously followed that it formed part of the Charity property, should the Charity so elect. Such an issue could, of course, be only settled by judicial decision, and the litigation that ensued resulted in favour of the Commissioners. The case came on for hearing in 1842 before Lord Langdale, Master of the Rolls, who, having heard very lengthy arguments on either side, held that the Deed, though founded on Contract, resulted in Trust, and that, consequently, the Charity was entitled to the whole of the rents, including all profits derived from the Manor of Stogursey. He stated, however, that there was a great deal to be urged on behalf of the Society, who seemed to have conducted the Charity very rightly, and he marked his sense of the good faith shown by the Society in circumstances of such obscurity and difficulty 'by accepting the proposal of the Attorney-General that the account

should not go back further than the filing of the Bill in Chancery. The costs on both sides were ordered to be taken out of the rents which should be found due.

“The Society appealed, but without success, Lord Chancellor Cottenham confirming the previous decree in January, 1848. Upon the account being taken, the balance eventually found due by the Society was £3,817 16s. 5*d.*, the amount of the original claim with accumulated interest having been £17,500. The lease of the Manor of Stogursey was afterwards held by the Society in trust for the Charity until the year 1886, when Eton College took the Manor into their own hands.”

In February, 1849, the Hospital Committee reported that, in consequence of the transfer of Monkton manor, and the increased income from other estates of the Charity, the surplus funds then available would admit of an addition of twenty boys to the School, and that the needful increased accommodation could be provided, and the existing buildings generally improved, out of money then available. It was resolved to draw up a scheme for carrying out those objects, in order to obtain the sanction of the Court of Chancery; but no progress appears to have been made until 1857, when a scheme, emanating from a Master in Chancery, and approved by the Master of the Rolls, empowered the Society to increase the number of scholars, to build additional dormitories, and to borrow £4,000, if necessary, to supplement the available funds in hand. On the receipt of this document, many members seem to have questioned the desirability of expending a considerable sum on a site which they regarded as inconvenient, unsuitable,

and unhealthy for so extensive an institution. The Bishop's Palace, at Stapleton, reconstructed about twenty years previously, but abandoned as an episcopal residence after the death of Dr. Monk in 1856, was then being offered for sale by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who had spent about £24,000 on the property. After negotiations had taken place with that body, the Society, in September, 1858, approved of the purchase of the estate for £12,000, the Hall undertaking to pay one half of that sum for part of the Palace grounds and lands not required for the Hospital.

The Society's policy was condemned by four dissentient trustees and by many citizens as being in manifest contradiction to the intentions of Mr. Colston, who had prescribed that the Hospital should be maintained "for ever" in the mansion he had provided for it. Six past Masters and some other members of the Society, the living representatives of Mr. Colston, many members of the Corporation, and several of the city clergy were prominent in their opposition to the scheme. The Charity Commissioners, however, strongly approved of removing the Hospital from a crowded locality to more healthful surroundings, and appeals to the Master of the Rolls to refuse his assent to the proposal were unsuccessful, the dissentient trustees being also amerced in costs. A large dining-room and a house for the headmaster having been added to the premises, which underwent various modifications to fit them for the ultimate reception of 140 boys, at a total cost of £3,000, the "Great House" was abandoned for the new Hospital in October, 1861. Many improvements were effected in the curriculum of the school in subsequent years, and handsome sums were voted for giving the lads annual trips to interesting places,

establishing athletic sports, increasing the library, and offering additional prizes. One of the latest developments of the period was the introduction of teaching in experimental science. But a revolutionary change was then imminent.

In the Session of 1869 an Act of Parliament was passed having for its object the reform and reorganisation of the Endowed Schools of the kingdom. Whilst the measure was under discussion, the local governing bodies appealed to the Government for the exemption of Bristol from its provisions; but the Minister who had charge of the Bill, in declining compliance, assured the applicants that as the Bristol endowments were admirably managed the measure was not intended to apply to them. In despite of this assurance, however, the Commissioners appointed under the Act directed one of their delegates, Mr. Fitch, to inquire into the management and working of the great educational institutions of the city; and that gentleman, in 1870, produced a report of a somewhat extraordinary character. He recommended, in short, the practical abolition of Colston's and Queen Elizabeth's Hospitals and Whitson's Red Maids' School, having an aggregate income of about £16,000 per annum; and the establishment, by means of their funds, of a series of first, second, and third grade schools, the fees in which were to be fixed at rates which working-class parents, for whose benefit the endowments were exclusively intended, could not afford to pay. The design of the founders of the charities to afford relief to poor deserving families was condemned by Mr. Fitch as the root of manifold mischiefs and abuses that it was indispensable to cut away. The children of working men, he contended, could obtain primary education for twopence or threepence per head weekly—though the elementary schools

then in existence were notoriously inadequate to provide for two-thirds of the youthful population—and the charity endowments would be much more beneficially spent in “creating a ladder to the Universities.” With this aim, Colston’s Hospital was to be degraded to the third class, and to be reserved for 300 boarders, admissible from all parts of the kingdom, and paying from 18 to 25 guineas each yearly for their instruction and maintenance. Out of the funds set free by this and similar changes in the other endowed schools, a Queen’s School was to be established for girls of the wealthier classes, free scholarships were to be created for open competition throughout the country, and a few cheap schools were to be opened.

The proposals respecting the Hospital led to prolonged negotiations between the Society and the Endowed Schools Commissioners, in the course of which many of Mr. Fitch’s most unpopular suggestions were abandoned. In March, 1872, the Society drew up an alternative scheme, under which it was proposed to reduce the Colston boys to the original number of one hundred, and to abolish the old system of nomination, but reserving the right to present a limited number of orphan children for free education. The Society further desired to incorporate with the Hospital the Bristol Trade School, then doing highly useful work in technical instruction, but crippled by inadequate funds, and offered, if this proposal were carried out, to endow the united institutions with £10,000; or, if the plan were disapproved, to take charge of the Trade School, and to develop it on its existing lines to the utmost of their power.

Much correspondence and some personal conferences with the Commissioners took place in that and the two following years, in which the scheme, as originally formulated in London, underwent various modifications;

and it was not until February, 1875, that the new system of government received its formal confirmation by the Queen in Council. Under the scheme finally adopted, the arrangements ordained by Mr. Colston's Settlements were almost totally abrogated. The Society were retained simply as trustees and managers of the endowed estates. A highly composite body, consisting of the Bishop of the diocese and the Rector of Stapleton for the time being, eleven persons nominated by the Society, four by the justices of Gloucestershire and Somerset, three by the Bristol School Board, and three appointed by co-optation, were constituted Governors of the Hospital. The Society and the Colston Nominees were deprived of their patronage; and the boys receiving free education were thereafter to be selected by order of merit—eighty from the elementary schools of Bristol, and twenty from those of the counties of Gloucester, Wilts, and Somerset. Besides the foundation pupils, the Governors were empowered to admit other youths to the benefits of the Hospital on payment of about £30 each per annum. Exhibitions to the value of £100 a year were to be created for enabling lads of superior merit to complete their education at a higher grade school. And, as a concession to the founder's emphatic and reiterated declarations as to the main object of his munificence, all the youths were to be instructed in the doctrines of the Church of England. The scheme further imposed on the governing body the charge of managing and subsidising the Bristol Trade School (or Trade and Mining School, as it was often more fully called), and of establishing and supporting a new Colston School for Girls.

As the Hospital was thus disconnected from the Society, its subsequent history is outside the limits of

this work. It will suffice to say that the new governing body entered upon its duties in March, 1875, and that its Finance Committee reported in the following June that the Merchants' Society had contributed £10,000 to the funds of the Trust, by releasing the Hospital from the debt then due to the Hall. The expectations of the Commissioners in regard to the prospective income of the endowed estates soon proved to be hopelessly at fault. The scheme had hardly been sealed when agricultural depression set in, which became more extreme in succeeding years, resulting in the ruin of many farmers, and a great fall in rents. The Hospital income was thereby reduced so seriously in extent that for some time the Trust could not adequately support even two of the burdens laid upon it, and there was no prospect that it could ever bear the third. The Society then came to the rescue in a manner which will be more fully explained in the following chapter. Being relieved of the Trade School, the Governors of the Hospital were enabled, in 1887, to purchase, for £2,700, a site in Cheltenham Road for the contemplated Colston Girls' School, and subsequently erected and equipped a building accommodating 300 pupils at an outlay of about £10,000. The institution was opened in January, 1891.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MERCHANT VENTURERS' COLLEGE.

BEFORE proceeding with the history of the Merchant Venturers' College, it is necessary to give some account of a modest but remarkable institution of which it is the development. Early in the nineteenth century, when the provision for the education of the children of the working classes was extremely limited and defective, several leading members of the Church of England in Bristol resolved on establishing a Diocesan School of an improved character; and a building in Nelson Street, erected for the purpose, was opened in 1821. Thirty years later, when efficient National Schools had arisen in nearly every parish through the assistance of the State, the need for a separate Diocesan School had passed away. Its trustees accordingly decided to close it in 1852; and as the building, together with certain endowments, remained at their disposal, they asked the advice of the late Canon Moseley, the ablest educational authority in the city, as to the best application of their resources. The Great Exhibition of 1851 having made it clear that, in their knowledge of the scientific principles upon which trades and manufactures are based, English workmen were, for the most part, behind their brethren on the Continent, Canon Moseley conceived the idea of remedying this defect, so far as Bristol was concerned; and after carefully considering the requirements of the city, he submitted to the trustees the scheme of a School of Applied Science, similar to institutions of the same kind then

highly successful in Germany and other countries, but then unknown in England, where youths of limited means could be provided with suitable training for an industrial career. The trustees, after some deliberation, approved of this proposal. Dr. (afterwards Lord) Playfair attended a public meeting convened to promote the project, and congratulated the people of Bristol on being the first in this country to contemplate the establishment of so valuable an institution. The School, under its new title of the Trade School, and with a transformed curriculum, was opened on March 26th, 1856, by Earl Granville, President of the Council, who also presided at a meeting in Merchants' Hall, and expressed the deep interest felt by the Government in the new enterprise. The organisation, which has been kept essentially intact to the present day in the School's more developed form, was briefly as follows:—

- I. A Primary, or Preparatory, Department, from which boys, when they were thoroughly grounded, could pass into one side or the other of:
- II. A Secondary Department, dealing—
 - (a) With Commercial subjects, and
 - (b) With Mathematics and Applied Science.
- III. Day Classes for Adults in Chemistry, Mining, and Engineering.
- IV. Evening Classes of various kinds—in Latin, Modern Languages, Bookkeeping and other Commercial subjects, Drawing, Mathematics, and numerous branches of Science.

The liberal subscriptions of the promoters and their friends—amongst whom were the Merchants' Society—made it possible to fix the fees so low as practically to exclude no one who was likely to profit by the instruction

offered ; and this practice of imposing low rates of charge is still maintained.

The School was successful from the outset ; and ten years after its foundation, the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, President of the Council, who distributed its prizes in 1867, was able to say, in a report presented to the Queen in Council : " That the Trade School of Bristol should, with its 120 pupils, carry off four out of the eight gold medals awarded [by the State], besides two silver and four bronze medals, and ninety-seven prizes, redounds greatly to its credit, and places it decidedly at the head of the list of Science Schools."

The examinations in which these successes were gained were those established in 1863 by the Department of Science and Art (now merged in the Board of Education), and from that time until to-day the Government records tell a story of the Institution not unworthy of its brilliant beginning.

The Society's first direct connection with the Trade School occurred in 1863. The working of the Navigation School in King Street, maintained by the Hall, having been reported as unsatisfactory, an agreement was made with the governors of the Trade School, under which the Society contributed £50 yearly towards the salary of an efficient teacher of navigation, on condition that ten boys nominated by the Master and Wardens should be instructed gratis, and that an evening class should be opened for sailor boys and seamen. A special room, called the Merchant Venturers' Marine School, was to be fitted up by the Society, who were to furnish it with instruments and charts, and contribute £10 yearly for fuel. The arrangement was terminated two years afterwards, when the teachership became vacant, but was revived later on, with some modifications.

In 1877, two years after the School had been placed under the management of the new governing body of the Colston Trust, as has been narrated in the previous chapter, the headmaster, Mr. Thomas Coomber, addressed a letter to that body, pointing out that the building in Nelson Street occupied by the School had become overcrowded and totally inadequate, and that, if the Institution were to continue its successful career, a heavy expenditure on enlarged premises and on other essential needs was imperatively required. The Governors took up the subject warmly, and investigated in detail the necessities of the School, and the best means of supplying them. In the course of their deliberations they were offered by the Municipal Charity Trustees, for £8,000, the premises in Unity Street then recently abandoned by the Grammar School (and now the site of the Merchants' College). The building, however, was considered unsuitable, and a surveyor was instructed to report on the advisability of acquiring a plot of ground on St. Michael's Hill, and of erecting there not only a Trade School but the proposed Colston's School for girls.

The rising hopes of those interested in education were checked in October, 1879, when the Governors (the Colston Trust), after an unsuccessful attempt to obtain help from the Livery Companies of London, felt it their duty to postpone any further action in the matter "on account of the depression of landed property, and the probable diminution of the income now derived from the Somersetshire estates."

Meanwhile the Merchants' Society, impressed with the paramount need for the extension of scientific and technical instruction in Bristol, and also with the insufficient provision for the education of girls, had been meditating a plan which would help to supply

both of those requirements. It is somewhat remarkable that the minute books of the period contain no information as to the initial steps taken in those directions. The first reference to the subject is dated April 30th, 1880, when the Master informed the Standing Committee that his offer of £5,500 for the site of the old Grammar School had been accepted; but nothing is said as to the object for which the property had been acquired. On May 4th, the Hall, after confirming the Master's proceeding, resolved that it was desirable to erect on the said ground a new school and other buildings, to be called the Merchants' Trade School. The first hint of the contemplated design was communicated to the Governors of the Colston Trust in the following July by their Chairman, Alderman Proctor Baker (Master, 1869, and now Father of the Society), who announced the intentions of the Hall, and expressed his belief that the building about to be erected would probably be offered to the Governors at a nominal rent. The Governors thereupon expressed their grateful thanks for the liberality of the Society, and their readiness to accept the building if offered to them. From other circumstances recorded in the Hall records, it seems certain that Alderman Baker had himself suggested the policy then favoured by the Society.

An invitation to architects for designs was issued soon afterwards, but none of the plans sent in were considered satisfactory. In April, 1881, Mr. E. C. Robins was instructed to submit a new design, which was in due course approved; and in March, 1882, after the consideration of a number of tenders, the offer of Messrs. Brock and Bruce to construct the new building for the sum of £28,698 was accepted. As an illustration of the earnest thoughtfulness with which the Society proceeded, it may

be stated that as there was no example in this country of the Belgian mode of ventilation, recommended by the architect, the Hall commissioned the master and second master of the Trade School to visit Belgium and report their opinion of the system. A few months later, further development being already foreseen, the desirability of making provision for a large extension of the institution by securing several houses in College Green led to negotiations with the Corporation, the owners of the property. In the result, the civic Finance Committee stated that they would recommend the sale of six houses, adjacent to the School premises, for £8,000; but as the property was subject to leases having many years to run, the buying up of which would have amounted to a large additional sum, the Society resolved to offer £6,500. The corporate authorities then intimated their willingness to accept £7,000 for five of the houses, but the Society, regarding the price as excessive, refused to entertain the proposal, and the matter came to an end. A house fronting the School in Unity Street was purchased about the same time for £725, and was ultimately made available for some of the technical classes.

The intentions of the Society in regard to the School were gradually matured during the rise of the new edifice; and on March 7th, 1885, when it was on the verge of completion, a general meeting was held in Merchants' Hall, at which the following momentous resolution was adopted:—

“Whereas it appears that the buildings erected for the use of the Trade and Mining School by the Society are now approaching completion, and that the period has arrived when it was intended to offer the use of these buildings to the Governors of the Colston School Trust for the purposes of the Trade and Mining School, And whereas it is evident from the accounts of the Colston Trust that, chiefly in consequence of the diminution of the income

receivable from the endowment and its further prospective decrease, a sufficient sum for carrying on the Trade and Mining School in the new buildings (still less for its development and increase) is not at the disposal of the Governors, And whereas it would appear that, if the Governors be relieved from the charge of carrying on the Trade and Mining School, they may stand possessed of a sufficient income to establish and carry on the Day School for Girls contemplated by the scheme,

“Resolved that, in order to promote to the utmost the scientific and technical education of the classes resorting to the Trade and Mining School, the Society of Merchant Venturers offer to take upon themselves the entire charge of that School, and to undertake the control and management thereof, from and after the commencement of the Michaelmas term of the present year, and that, from the period of taking over the School, the whole expense of carrying it on be borne by the Society, and that an assurance be given to the Governors of the Colston Schools Trust that the School shall be generally conducted on similar lines, and with similar objects to those of the existing School, and that it is the intention of the Society to develop all branches of the School in the direction which may be found from time to time most useful for the promotion of scientific and technological teaching.”

At a meeting of the Governors on March 19th, the offer conveyed by the above resolution was gratefully accepted; and it was resolved to apply to the Charity Commissioners for their assent, and, if their approval were given, to proceed with the establishment of Colston's Girls' School without delay. In the following month, the Commissioners, in a letter to the Society, expressed their pleasure at being informed of the proposed establishment of the Technical School in the new building; but before assenting to the transfer of the Trade School to the Technical School they thought it right to obtain some formal assurance that the proposed arrangement would be permanent—which could be best effected either by a scheme made under the powers of the Endowed Schools' Act, or by the Society assuring the property to charitable uses under a trust deed. The Standing Committee

thereupon recommended the Hall to accept the second alternative; but the Society were advised to decline to be placed under the control of the Charity Commissioners in the management of the School. The Master and some other members soon afterwards proceeded to London to lay the views of the Society before Sir George Young, acting on behalf of the Commissioners; and a letter conveying the decision of that body was forwarded in July. Recognising the high educational value of the work undertaken by the Society, and expressing confidence that it would be continued in the same liberal spirit, the Commissioners stated that they could not regard it as satisfactory that the character of a permanent institution had not been given to the School in the usual way. In view, however, of the Society's objections, and of the guarantee afforded by the costly buildings, and of the Society's expressed intentions, the Board had consented to amend the Colston's Schools' Scheme, so as to relieve that Trust of the burden of the Trade School, and to put an end to that School. The Society's willingness to convey the new buildings provided they were exempt from the Board's control was accepted as further evidence of the Society's good faith, but might be dispensed with under the circumstances.

All difficulties having been thus disposed of, the masters and pupils of the Trade School migrated in September, 1885, from the contracted and dingy premises in Nelson Street to the spacious and convenient buildings prepared for them by the Society in Unity Street; adopting at the same time the name of their benefactors, and calling themselves thenceforth the "Merchant Venturers' School." No other change was made. The School had merely moved house and varied its title; it retained its identity and original organisation; and

in its new quarters, and with ampler means, it resumed its arrested growth. A committee consisting of the Master, Wardens, and eight members of the Society (to be thenceforth elected annually on Charter Day) was appointed for the management of the Institution. In the first winter session four new technological courses, including joinery, brickwork, masonry, and plumbing were introduced, lecturers being appointed for each course; and teachers of modelling, designing, and machine drawing were added to the staff and equipped with apparatus. The increased popularity of the School from the outset was strongly marked, the pupils attending the first evening classes numbering 415 against 212 at the last session in Nelson Street; whilst within six months of the opening of the building the inrush of pupils in the primary and secondary departments became so great that it was found necessary to provide an additional class-room. Several more technical teachers were introduced soon afterwards, large sums being voted for the purchase of apparatus; and the technological classes for various local trades were placed in connection with the City and Guilds of London Institute. About the same time, the Governors of the Colston Trust were permitted by the Charity Commissioners to establish—as soon as they had any surplus funds available—four exhibitions of £25 each, two to be awarded annually, together with a Moseley Scholarship of £20 a year for an exhibitioner of special distinction. Several handsome prizes were also offered by private firms in Bristol; and the Society voted £25 a year for three years to a distinguished pupil of the Trade School, who had gained a scholarship at Oxford. The Hall's contribution towards the maintenance of its School was at that period about £1,700 per annum.

The earliest of the annual exhibitions of work done in the Technical Classes was held in the Examination Hall of the building in 1887, and attracted upwards of 6,000 visitors. In the same year 724 students offered themselves at the Science and Art examinations.

The defective education obtained in the Elementary Schools of the city through the neglectful conduct of many parents was reported in 1888 to be acting prejudicially on the pupils received from them. It was stated that, to enable boys to pass through the Science courses at the age of 16, they ought to be sufficiently proficient to enter the secondary department in about the twelfth year of their age, whereas about three-fourths of the youths in the primary classes were still lingering there although their ages were from 12 to over 15, and many would probably leave before reaching the higher department at all. It was resolved that candidates for admission should undergo a preliminary examination, and that a preference should be given to boys whose parents undertook to retain them at school until the age of 16. A new scheme of studies was adopted, providing a higher standard of education without any increase of fees, and the School Board were informed that pupils of the sixth standard in their schools would be given teaching on Saturdays in science and handicrafts for trivial fees. A number of ladies offered to become responsible for the stipend of a teacher in dressmaking to young women, if a class for that work were established, and a room was accordingly provided, resulting in a great influx of pupils. The boot and shoe manufacturers of the city next undertook to provide apparatus for classes in those handicrafts and to subscribe £50 towards the expenses if the Society would contribute an equal sum, and this having been assented to, the firms offered £10

additional for prizes to the numerous youths who immediately flowed in. The opening of navigation, photography, and ambulance classes was another feature of the year.

In the spring of 1889 it was announced that the number of entries to the evening classes, then concluded, had been 1031, or nearly double the average of the three preceding years. A few months later, Mr. Thomas Coomber, who had been thirty-three years headmaster of the School, and who was, in a sense, the father of technical instruction in Bristol, tendered his resignation, and on his retirement in July, 1890, the Society voted him a pension of £300 per annum. Mr. Julius Wertheimer, B.Sc., who had held a post in the Leeds School of Science, was selected, out of fifty-six candidates, as Mr. Coomber's successor. The new headmaster brought with him comparative youth, an intimate acquaintance with the most recent phases and the most effective methods of scientific and technological teaching, a stock of fresh ideas, and an inexhaustible fund of energy. He was felt to be precisely the man wanted to further the Society's policy in developing all branches of their School, and the first step after his arrival was to carry out the recommendation of a recent examiner of the pupils—an Inspector of the Department of Science and Art—who had advised that a "drastic rearrangement as regarded classes and work was urgently needed." This was effected by considerable internal changes, which it would be tedious to enumerate, and by the help of several large votes granted by the Society for the purchase of additional apparatus.

In January, 1891, there came into being the first Technical Instruction Committee of the Corporation, appointed to administer the moneys received from the

Treasury under the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act of 1890. The sum that became yearly available under the statute for the promotion of education in the city was about £5,700, and the best method of dealing with so important a fund was naturally a subject of prolonged deliberation. Two courses were obviously open to the new Committee. They might either devote the bulk of their resources to the creation of one great Technical Institute after the American or the Continental model; or they might distribute their favours widely to existing institutions. The former course, it was held by many experts, would produce by far the more valuable results in the shape of highly educated "captains of industry," inventors, and discoverers; and if the Committee had adopted the views of those advisers, their co-operation with the Society might possibly have endowed Bristol with a first-rate Technical Institute, comparable with many that have been founded abroad, and adequate to meet the needs of the whole of the West of England.

The Technical Instruction Committee, however, were uncertain how long the income at their disposal would be available for the purposes of technical education. As the Local Taxation Act of 1890 was permissive only, and the City Council had the power to devote the money received under the provisions of the Act to the alleviation of the rates, the Committee had no certainty how long they would have the disposal of the estimated income for educational purposes; and there was at that time a doubt whether or not the Act might be repealed. Moreover, they probably believed it impossible to devise a scheme for providing a Technical Institution on a large scale that could be carried through the City Council, as there was great jealousy existing lest the

benefits of the money might be absorbed by the higher classes rather than by the working population. Even now, it may be questioned whether public opinion is ripe for such a measure. And the plan adopted, of giving largely in scholarships for the benefit of all classes, was necessary to make the scheme palatable, and in a large measure useful.

It is only fair to the corporate Committee to add that the Merchants' Society had not then realised that their own resources were unequal to the task they had undertaken. On January 30th, 1891, Alderman Proctor Baker waited upon the Standing Committee, to state that the Technical Instruction Committee were desirous of receiving suggestions as to the allotment of the funds about to come into their hands, adding that it might be advisable to consider whether any sum should be applied for towards the extension or maintenance of the Merchant Venturers' School. Whereupon the Standing Committee resolved that "inasmuch as the Society is prepared to meet all the requirements of the School, it is not desirable to apply for a money grant; but that the Corporation be asked to found scholarships tenable at the School." A possible opportunity of definitely settling the provision for technical instruction in the city on a large scale thus unfortunately slipped away. Acceding to the suggestion of the Standing Committee, the Corporation, in the following July, voted £1,350 per annum for founding junior scholarships, £960 for senior scholarships, £200 for evening class scholarships, tenable at any approved institution, and £400 for the extension of evening classes and instruction in various trades. The remainder of the fund was allotted to University College, to the Grammar School, and to the better provision of art teaching and promoting the education of girls. A cookery school was

also established. In the following December it was announced that the Technical Committee had offered a capitation grant of 15s. to the technical classes in Bristol, including, of course, those of the Merchants' School, provided the fee for such classes did not exceed 5s. per session. The terms were at once accepted (the Society afterwards reduced the fee to half-a-crown). The ever-increasing popularity of the School was shown by the fact that out of the 104 scholarships created by the Corporation, 93 were then held in the School, which also had 19 out of the 29 scholarships founded by the two adjoining counties. In 1892, owing to a great increase of pupils in the higher departments, three additional masters were appointed, and the elementary teachers of the city and district were admitted to the evening art classes free of charge. A satisfactory report was made by Professor Garnett and Sir Philip Magnus, who had examined the technical classes on behalf of the City and Guilds of London Institute for the advancement of Technical Education, who added that the School buildings were perhaps second to none of the kind in the country, and expressed high approval of the capacity and zeal of the teachers.

In July, 1893, a committee that had been appointed to consider the best means of securing additional school accommodation reported that since the advent of Mr. Wertheimer the roll of scholars had rapidly expanded, notwithstanding the greater severity of the entrance examination, that the School was consequently overcrowded, that all the rooms designed for teaching were fully occupied, and that even the kitchen and other departments had been converted into class-rooms. When the School was founded, added the committee, it stood in the very first rank of Technical Institutions; but

the establishment of such schools had since gone on so rapidly, and the standard of education in them had become so high, that unless the Society's School should be further developed it would not be able to keep its place. It was therefore recommended that, to meet immediate requirements, a considerable extension of the building and its equipment should be undertaken at an estimated cost of about £18,000, involving, of course, a large additional yearly outlay.

This report effectually opened the eyes of the Society as to the responsibilities they had undertaken for the benefit of the city and surrounding districts. Since the reorganisation of the Colston Trust, the Hall had expended large sums* for educational purposes, and the prospective demands indicated by the above report, when contrasted with the limited resources at disposal, naturally excited some dismay. Little time was lost, however, in seeking to obtain a site near the School suitable for its enlargement. Owing to the augmented value of the property in College Green, an extension in that direction was found impracticable. Attempts were next made to acquire a number of houses in Unity Street, and afterwards to secure two several blocks of property in Orchard Street; but these efforts were all unsuccessful. At length a conditional contract was signed for the purchase from the Municipal Charity Trustees of a large warehouse in Denmark Street, and plans of proposed buildings there were approved by the vendors; when, just as success seemed achieved, it was found that the consent of the Charity Commissioners to the sale would be withheld, and all that the Society could give to the School in the way of additional

* The amount expended up to the present time (1903) on the College, including the yearly grants for its maintenance, reaches nearly £80,000.

space was the house in Unity Street which fortunately belonged to them already.

In 1894 the style "Technical College" was assumed in place of that of "School," partly in order to avoid applying to the whole the term applied to some of its component parts—the Boys' School, the School of Science, the School of Art, &c.,—but chiefly in order that the name might convey to the general public outside Bristol an accurate idea of the nature and extent of the Institution, and of the education given in it. Mr. Wertheimer at the same time assumed the title of Principal, and several distinguished past students were elected Associates of the College, a much-prized honour which continues to be conferred. The change in the name of the Institution had a marked effect in heightening and extending its reputation.

Unhappily, its subsequent development has been checked by an inability to meet the ever-growing demands for admission to its advantages. Since 1895 no further extension has been possible, and though every available corner of the building has been turned to account for educational uses, the inconvenience arising from crowded quarters recalls that which had previously arisen in the old School in Nelson Street. But although building operations have been suspended, the Society have voted many large grants for improved equipment in apparatus, machinery, models, &c. In order to retain desirable students who from poverty could not complete their studies without assistance, the Principal has been empowered to award many such youths free scholarships tenable for three years. The popular lectures established by Mr. Wertheimer soon after his arrival have become a recognised institution of the city. And the Society has contributed

largely to clubs and societies formed for the recreation, amusement, and social intercourse of the students, past and present.

The continuous growth of the College may be seen from the following figures, which give the total numbers under instruction at the dates stated:—

In 1884, just before the transfer of the School, the Day and Evening students numbered	521
In 1890 the number was	1,430
In 1895 „ „ „	1,683
In 1900 „ „ „	2,021
In 1901 „ „ „	2,145
In 1902, the last completed year	2,215

An analysis of the last figures show that they were composed of the following constituents:—

Students in the Boys' School, including the School of Science	419
Adult students' Day classes	279
Adult students' Evening classes	1,517
	<hr/>
	2,215

In 1887 the total Government and local grants earned by the College amounted to £550; in 1900 the aggregate reached £3,823; and in 1901 £4,013: of the latter sum £2,442 was received from the Government, and £1,571 from local sources.

Inasmuch as want of room forbids any considerable addition to the number of pupils, the present policy of the Society is to make a selection, to some extent, amongst its Day students; discontinuing by degrees the preparatory forms (for which there is now less need than there was when the Institution was founded), and devoting the space thus set free to the organised School

of Science and the Senior Day classes, by far the most valuable departments of the College.

In November, 1897, the Society, in reconsidering the question of College Extension, recognised its want of foresight when the Technical Instruction Committee came into existence in 1891, and appointed a committee to consider the desirability of applying for direct aid from that body, and of coming to an arrangement with other educational institutions to prevent the unnecessary overlapping of classes doing precisely similar work. A formal request for co-operation having been made to the corporate committee, a suggestion was received in reply that a series of conferences should take place, with a view "to avoid the present waste of teaching power and of expenditure." Protracted negotiations ensued between the Society, the Technical Instruction Committee, the governors of University College, the School Board, and the School of Art. With regard to the two last-named bodies, an arrangement for co-ordinating Evening classes was concluded in March, 1899.

The scheme agreed upon reserved to the School Board all the subjects specified in the Government Code for Evening schools, but such subjects were not to be taught beyond the Code standards. To the Technical College was reserved all Science and Technological classes and all advanced Commercial classes. And to the School of Art, all classes in Art. The School Board and the Principal of the College were to frame elementary courses in Science on lines calculated to facilitate advanced progress, and similar arrangements were to be made between the School Board and the School of Art. The Board was to open no classes in Science provided that the Society opened elementary

Science classes in certain Board Schools; and a like understanding was come to between the Board and School of Art. Instruction in stages higher than the elementary was to be given, as regarded Science, at the College, and as regarded Art at the School of Art, provided that branch classes of each kind were opened in outlying districts by the Society and the Art School. The Society were to discontinue their Evening Art classes, to close their elementary and junior Commercial classes gradually, and to admit no student to Evening classes under the age of sixteen. The School of Art was to discontinue its Science classes; and the School Board was to close its advanced Commercial classes, all of which were to be held at the College only.

In consequence of this reorganisation the Technical Instruction Committee voted the Society £10 in respect of each branch class they opened in the Board Schools up to a limit of £300.

Numerous negotiations took place between the Society and the Governors of University College with the object of securing an alliance between the two Institutions, based on a scheme for delimiting the sphere of work to be pursued in each. The Society proposed that University College should have the sole supervision of the higher standard of non-Technical subjects—Philosophy, Languages, Literature, Law, Medicine, Music, Pure Science, Divinity, and kindred branches of knowledge,—that Mathematics and Pure Natural Science should be common to both colleges, and that Applied Science, Applied Art, and Commerce should be left exclusively to the Technical College. The correspondence on the subject promised at one time to have a satisfactory issue; but eventually the authorities of University College, after going so far as to approve

a federation under the title of "The West of England University and Technical College," insisted on retaining their Engineering classes. This attitude brought the negotiations to an end, the Society being convinced that Bristol could not support more than one first-class School of Engineering, and that no scheme of co-ordination would be worthy of adoption which did not fuse together the two existing Schools. The failure of the negotiations was reported to the Hall by the College Committee, who recommended that direct aid should be sought from the Technical Instruction Committee, with an invitation to that body to accept a share of the government of the College in a proportion corresponding to the pecuniary assistance contributed. Their advice having been approved, a letter was addressed to the Technical Committee to the above effect, pointing out that the College was a Technical Institution more than half made; that the Society, through want of means, were unable to complete the making of it; that a comparatively small further outlay would suffice for its completion; and that such outlay would not only produce its own educational return, but would render more productive the considerable capital already spent by the Society. The Technical Instruction Committee were therefore besought for co-operation in extending the existing buildings to College Green, under a scheme which would not only largely increase the educational value of the Institution, but would make a notable addition to the elegance and amenity of the neighbourhood. The Civic Committee, however, did not see their way to respond to this invitation.

It is disappointing to observe the lack of public sympathy and support in respect of the proposal to create in Bristol one of those large and complete

Technical Institutes which, in the opinion of all experienced authorities, are essential for the future prosperity of British manufactures and commerce. If this apathy be due to an expectation that the boon will be supplied by the unassisted liberality of the Merchants' Society, the present writer is enabled to state plainly that such a result is impracticable. The popular estimate of the Society's income—founded partly on the reported wealth of the great London Companies, and partly on a failure to distinguish between the Society's corporate property and the large charity estates of which they are trustees and from which they derive no benefit—is absurdly exaggerated. As a matter of fact, the clear annual revenue with which the Society is free to deal at its discretion has never reached £10,000; and, as four-fifths of this at the least are already habitually devoted to public objects—mostly charitable, educational, or religious—it could only be by reducing the number, or amount, of its general benefactions that the Society could spend appreciably more on its Technical College than the considerable sum already contributed to it every year.

On the other hand, the Technical Instruction Committee of the City Council has, for the support of technical education alone, almost as large an income as that which serves the Society for all purposes, and the Local Education Authority of the future will have still greater resources at its disposal. Whether that Authority will or will not take a wider view of what the merchants, manufacturers, and citizens of Bristol require in the matter of education; and whether it will or will not recognise that in co-operating with the Society it may easily establish the complete Technical Institute so urgently needed, it is for the future to determine.

As regards the existing situation, it may be submitted that the adoption and development of the Trade School is the greatest and most useful work recorded in the annals of the Merchant Venturers' Society, except, perhaps, its indefatigable exertions for the promotion of the Bristol Docks. And it will not be denied that the Hall has honourably carried out its undertaking to conduct its College "on similar lines and with similar objects" to those of the old Trade School—that is, as a School of Science and Technology available for all classes, particularly for those of small means,—as well as its expressed intention to develop all branches of the Institution "in the direction which may be found from time to time most useful for the promotion of Scientific and Technological teaching."

MASTERS, WARDENS, AND TREASURERS.

* * The records of the sixteenth century are imperfect. Previous to the Charter of 1639 there was no fixed day for the election of officers, and the dates varied from October 2nd to December 16th, except on one occasion, when the appointments were made on January 7th.

MASTERS.

1500 John Penke
 1552 Edward Prynne
 1566 Thomas Kelke
 1569 Dominick Chester
 1605 John Hopkins
 1606 John Whitson
 1607 Thomas James
 1608 Matthew Haviland
 1609 Robert Aldworth
 1610 Abel Kitchen
 1611 John Whitson
 1612 Robert Aldworth
 1613 Matthew Haviland
 1614 John Aldworth
 1615 Thomas James
 1616 Matthew Haviland
 1617 John Barker
 1618 John Barker
 1619 John Gunning
 1620 John Langton
 1621 Humphrey Hooke
 1622 John Guy
 1623 John Doughty
 1624 William Pitt,
 1625 Robert Aldworth
 1626 John Barker
 1627 John Tomlinson
 1628 Thomas Wright
 1629 Humphrey Browne
 1630 Humphrey Hooke
 1631 Humphrey Hooke

WARDENS.

David Leyson, John Stokes
 Thomas Hicckes, Robert Butler
 Dominick Chester, Thomas Alder
 Thomas Rowland, John Carre
 William Vawer, John Whitson
 Thomas James, Matthew Haviland
 Robert Aldworth, Abel Kitchen
 John Boulton, Thomas Hopkins
 William Hopkins, John Aldworth
 William Cole, George White
 John Barker, John Gunning
 John Harrison, John Aldworth
 Christopher Cary, John Langton
 John Barker, Robert Haviland
 Arthur Hibbins, Thomas Wright
 Robert Haviland, Richard Long
 William Jones, Humfrey Browne
 William Pitt, Walter Ellis
 Edward Coxe, William Hicks
 Miles Jackson, Giles Elbridge
 Francis Derrick, Nathaniel Butcher
 William Wyatt, John Tayler
 Richard Pley, Alexander James
 Francis Creswick, Derrick Popley
 Martin Pring, Thomas Colston
 John Gardiner, Edward Petre
 Gabriel Sherman, Thomas Jackson
 William Chetwind, William Cann
 George Lane, John Gunning, jun.
 John Langton, jun., William Hobson
 John Langton, jun., William Hobson

MASTERS.

1632 Humphrey Hooke
 1633 Humphrey Hooke
 1634 Humphrey Hooke
 1635 Richard Holworthy
 (Mayor)
 1636 Richard Long (Mayor)
 1637 Richard Long
 1639 (Jan.) Humphrey Hooke
 1639 (Nov.) Andrew Charleton
 1640 John Gonning
 1641 William Jones
 1642 Alexander James
 1643 Francis Creswick
 1644 Thomas Colston
 1645 William Cann
 1646 Hugh Browne
 1647 Joseph Jackson
 1648 Richard Vickris
 1649 Hugh Browne
 1650 Miles Jackson
 1651 Hugh Browne
 1652 Hugh Browne
 1653 Joseph Jackson
 1654 Joseph Jackson
 1655 Joseph Jackson
 1656 Robert Yate
 1657 William Yeamans
 1658 Robert Cann
 1659 John Bowen

 1660 Henry Creswick
 1661 Henry Creswick
 1662 Robert Yeamans
 1663 Sir John Knight
 1664 Thomas Langton
 1665 John Willoughby
 1666 John Knight
 1667 Walter Tocknell
 1668 Walter Tocknell
 1669 Robert Vickris
 1670 William Willett
 1671 Shershaw Cary
 1672 Rich. Streamer (Mayor)

WARDENS.

Thomas Hooke, Edward Pitt
 Thomas Nethway, Joseph Jackson
 Hugh Browne, John Drayton
 Thomas Chamber, Thomas Griffeth

 Edmund Arundel, Hugh Griffeth
 Edmund Arundel, Hugh Griffeth
 Giles Elbridge, Thomas Colston
 Alexander James, Francis Creswick
 John Gonning, jun., Miles Jackson
 Richard Aldworth, John Langton
 Richard Vickris, Walter Deyos
 Henry Creswick, William Colston
 William Bevan, William Cann
 Joseph Jackson, Thomas Amory
 William Dale, James Croft
 Edward Tyson, George Lane
 Robert Challoner, Robert Yate
 William Dale, William^s Yeamans
 Robert Cann, William Clare
 Thomas Speed, William Merrick
 Walter Tocknell, Robert Yeamans
 John Bowen, Robert Vickris
 John Knight, jun., Richard Deane
 John Knight, jun., William Willett
 Anthony Gay, John Willoughby
 Walter Tocknell, Thomas Langton
 Shershaw Cary, John Bowen
 John Knight, jun., Alexander
 Jackson
 Thomas Langton, Robert Yeamans
 John Pope, John Knight, jun.
 Henry Gough, Thomas Moore
 Alexander Jackson, William Hassell
 Thomas Moore, Thomas Scrope
 John Aldworth, William Tyson
 Joseph Creswick, Richard Streamer
 William Willett, William Hassell
 William Willett, William Hassell
 Richard Hart, Gabriel Deane
 Thomas Elton, Thomas Earle
 George Lane, jun., John Knight, jun.
 John Cooke, Charles Williams

MASTERS.

- 1673 Thomas Earle
 1674 William Lysons
 1675 Richard Hart
 1676 Richard Hart
 1677 George Lane
 1678 Do. (died), William
 Hayman
 1679 William Hayman
 1680 William Jackson
 1681 Thomas Elton (Mayor)
 1682 William Merrick
 1683 William Clutterbuck
 (Mayor)
 1684 Richard Lane
 1685 Edward Tocknell
 1686 Edward Tocknell
 1687 William Donning
 1688 Arthur Hart (Mayor)
 1689 Giles Merrick
 1690 William Swymmer
 1691 John Cooke
 1692 Robert Yate (Mayor)
 1693 Robert Yate
 1694 Samuel Price
 1695 Samuel Price
 1696 Peter Saunders
 1697 Peter Saunders
 1698 Sir William Daines
 1699 Sir William Daines
 1700 James Hollidge
 1701 James Hollidge
 1702 Thomas Hort
 1703 Thomas Hort
 1704 William Clarke
 1705 William Clarke

 1706 John Bachelor
 1707 John Bachelor

 1708 Abraham Elton, sen.
 1709 Anthony Swymmer
 1710 Thomas Moore
 1711 George Mason

WARDENS.

- William Hayman, William Browne
 William Jackson, William Donning
 Arthur Hart, George Hart
 Arthur Hart, George Hart
 Edmund Arundell, Samuel Hale
 Giles Merrick, Stephen Watts

 William Swymmer, Edward Tocknell
 Richard Lane, William Merrick
 William Clutterbuck, John Knight
 Samuel Price, Henry Daniel
 John Cary, John Combes

 John Yeamans, John Cann
 Robert Yate, Walter Lougher
 Robert Yate, Walter Lougher
 Peter Saunders, Richard Champney
 Thomas Cole, Charles Pope
 John Seward, John Yeamans, jun.
 Jacob Beele, Robert Kirk
 Henry Gibbes, Edward Jones
 Thomas Richardson, William Daniel
 Thomas Richardson, William Daniel
 Sir Rich. Crump, John Swymmer
 Joseph Jackson, James Hollidge
 Thomas Hort, Thomas Earle
 Thomas Hort, William Clarke
 John Bachelor, John Day, sen.
 Abraham Elton, Anthony Swymmer
 Thomas Moore, Isaac Davies
 Thomas Moore, George Mason
 Abraham Hooke, Richard Franklyn
 Abraham Hooke, Richard Franklyn
 Philip Freke, Henry Watts
 Sir John Duddleston, Francis
 Rogers
 John Day, William Swymmer
 Henry Swymmer, Joseph
 Whitchurch
 Abraham Elton, jun., James Donning
 Joseph Earle, William Hart
 Abraham Birkin, John Becher
 Robert Bound, Joshua Franklyn

MASTERS.

- 1712 Abraham Hooke
 1713 Philip Freke
 1714 Henry Watts
 1715 Sir J. Duddleston (died),
 H. Watts
 1716 John Day (Mayor)
 1717 William Swymmer
 1718 Henry Swymmer
 1719 Abraham Elton (Mayor)
 1720 James Donning
 1721 Joseph Earle
 1722 John Becher
 1723 Thomas Longman
 1724 Samuel Hunt
 1725 Jeremy Innys
 1726 John Blackwell
 1727 John Norman
 1728 Jacob Elton
 1729 Abel Grant
 1730 James Hilhouse
 1731 Edmund Baugh
 1732 Peter Day
 1733 Robert Earle
 1734 John Hollidge
 1735 James Day
 1736 John Duckinfield
 1737 John Coysgarne
 1738 Richard Lougher
 1739 Thomas Eston
 1740 William Challoner
 1741 Lionel Lyde
 1742 John Day
 1743 Richard Henville
 1744 Walter Lougher
 1745 Arthur Hart
 1746 Robert Smith
 1747 Christopher Willoughby
 1748 John Foy
 1749 Michael Becher
 1750 Henry Dampier
 1751 James Laroche
 1752 William Hare

WARDENS.

- John Hawkins, Hugh Bickham
 Thomas Longman, Samuel Hunt
 Jeremy Innys, Joseph Browne
 John Blackwell, William Attwood
 John Norman, Jacob Elton
 Abel Grant, James Hilhouse
 Chris. Shuter, Marmaduke Bowdler
 William Freke, Edmund Baugh
 Peter Day, Robert Earle
 John Hollidge, Edward Jones
 Nathaniel Wraxall, John Hobbs
 John King, James Day
 John Duckingfield, John Coysgarne
 Edward Foy, Edward Curtis
 Richard Lougher, Harrington Gibbs
 Thomas Eston, Thomas Freke
 John Templeman, Will. Challoner
 Lionel Lyde, Michael Pope
 John Day, Richard Henville
 Henry Combe, Walter Lougher
 Michael White, Arthur Hart
 Robert Smith, Chris. Willoughby
 Henry Hart, John Foy
 Lewis Casamajor, Thos.
 Chamberlayne
 Michael Becher, Henry Dampier
 William Jefferies, James Laroche
 William Hare, Nathaniel Foy
 Abraham Elton, Edward Cooper
 William Duckinfield, John Hilhouse
 William Hart, jun., Joseph Iles
 Henry Swymmer, Cranfield Becher
 Abraham Elton, Henry Casamajor
 Isaac Baugh, James Day
 Joseph Jefferis, Thomas Power
 Joseph Daltera, John King
 George Becher, Edward Willcocks
 Richard Farr, William Bowen
 Henry Hobhouse, Samuel Smith
 Robert Bound, George Daubeny
 John Cross, Isaac Elton
 William Reeve, James Hilhouse

MASTERS.

- 1753 Nathaniel Foy
 1754 Edward Cooper

 1755 Henry Swymmer
 1756 Cranfield Becher
 1757 Abraham Elton
 1758 Henry Casamajor
 1759 Isaac Baugh
 1760 Joseph Daltera
 1761 William Hart
 1762 Richard Farr

 1763 Samuel Smith
 1764 Isaac Elton
 1765 William Reeve

 1766 James Bonbonous

 1767 Sir Ab. Isaac Elton, Bart.
 1768 Samuel Munkley
 1769 Andrew Pope
 1770 William Jones
 1771 Thomas Farr
 1772 James Daltera

 1773 Isaac Elton, jun.
 1774 Robert Smith
 1775 Paul Farr
 1776 Henry Garnett
 1777 Samuel Span
 1778 Michael Miller, jun.

 1779 John Powell
 1780 Thomas Perkins

 1781 Henry Cruger (Mayor)
 1782 Sir James Laroche, Bart.

 1783 John Fowler

 1784 George Daubeny
 1785 Jeremiah Hill

 1786 Edward Brice

WARDENS.

- Ebenezer Hare, James Bonbonous
 Abraham Isaac Elton, Francis Rogers
 Samuel Munkley, William Wansey
 John Hobhouse, Edward Charleton
 Richard Combe, Thomas Farr, jun.
 Andrew Pope, James Daltera
 Joseph Daltera, Richard Farr
 Thomas Willoughby, Samuel Smith
 William Jones, Samuel Span
 Nathaniel Wraxall, William Hilhouse
 Isaac Elton, jun., Peter Hatton
 Robert Smith, Paul Farr
 Samuel Gardner, James Laroche, jun.
 Andrew Reeve, S. Gardner (died), C. Becher
 Michael Miller, jun., Henry Garnett
 John Powell, Henry Cruger
 George Daubeny, Thomas Perkins
 George Champion, Edward Elton
 John Fowler, William Weare
 Richard Champion, Henry Lippincott
 John Vaughan, Jeremiah Hill
 Paul Farr, John Powell
 Edward Brice, John Garnett
 John Champion, Henry Hobhouse
 John Daubeny, George Gibbs
 Henry Casamajor, John Fisher Weare
 Jeremiah Hill, jun., Richard Bright
 James Martin Hilhouse, Joshua Powell
 John Fowler, jun., Joseph Harford
 Charles Hill, John Scandrett Harford
 William Weare, jun., Samuel Whitchurch
 John Cave, Timothy Powell
 Thomas Hungerford Powell,
 Joseph Bonbonous
 Thomas Hill, Walter Powell

MASTERS.

1787 John Vaughan
 1788 Henry Hobhouse
 1789 John Daubeny
 1790 George Gibbs
 1791 Jeremiah Hill, jun.
 1792 Richard Bright
 1793 James Martin Hilhouse
 1794 John Garnett
 1795 Joshua Powell
 1796 Joseph Harford
 1797 Charles Hill
 1798 John Scandrett Harford
 1799 Samuel Whitchurch
 1800 Timothy Powell
 1801 Thomas Hungerford Powell
 1802 Joseph Bonbonous
 1803 Thomas Hill
 1804 John Gordon
 1805 Thomas Daniel
 1806 Charles Joseph Harford
 1807 John Cave
 1808 William Fowler
 1809 Richard Vaughan, jun.
 1810 James Fowler
 1811 John Blackwell
 1812 William Peter Lunell
 1813 Mark Harford
 1814 Andrew Pope
 1815 Samuel Brice
 1816 Rich. Sargent Fowler
 1817 Stephen Cave
 1818 Edward Brice

WARDENS.

John Gordon, jun., William
 Randolph
 Richard Tombs, James Rogers
 William Miles, Thomas Daniel, jun.
 William Fowler, Samuel Whitchurch
 Charles Joseph Harford,
 John Cave, jun.
 Richard Vaughan, jun.,
 James Fowler
 John Blackwell, William Peter
 Lunell
 James Jones, Mark Harford
 Isaac Bence, Charles Hill
 Thomas Daniel, Charles Joseph
 Harford
 Samuel Whitchurch, Andrew Pope
 Thomas Daniel, Samuel Brice
 Edw. Prothero, Rich. Sargent
 Fowler
 Hugh Vaughan, Edward Brice, jun.
 Samuel Span, Hugh Vaughan
 Samuel Whitchurch, Wm. Diaper
 Brice
 George Hilhouse, Benjamin Bickley
 George Gibbs, jun., Ant. Palmer
 Collings
 William Gibbons, Robert Bruce
 John Thomson, Charles Harvey
 Thomas Hellicar, Robert Bush
 John Barrow, James George
 Joseph Hellicar, Robert Vizer
 Benjamin Bickley, Robert Bruce
 William Perry, Thomas Durbin
 Brice
 Abraham Hilhouse, James George,
 jun.
 William Danson, Philip Protheroe
 Butler Thompson Claxton, Jas. Jos.
 Whitchurch
 Robert Willis Vizer, James George
 Robert Hilhouse, Robert Bruce,
 jun.
 Henry Brooke, George Lunell
 Peter Maze, John Barrow

MASTERS.	WARDENS.
1819 William Diaper Brice	Samuel Lunell, Henry Brooke
1820 George Gibbs	Hugh William Danson, John Barrow
1821 Robert Bruce	Martin Hilhouse, Peter Maze
1822 George Hilhouse	Rich. Dawbney Brice, Hen. Geo. Fowler
1823 Robert Bush	Edmond Danson, William Bruce
1824 John Barrow	Thomas Daniel, jun., John Evans Lunell
1825 Abraham Hilhouse	William Claxton, Peter Maze
1826 Philip Protheroe	George Lunell, James Maze
1827 James George	Rich. Walker Fowler, Peter Maze, jun.
1828 James Joseph Whitchurch	Hugh William Danson, Valentine Hellicar
1829 Thomas Durbin Brice	Val. Hellicar, Danvers Hill Ward
1830 Robert Bruce, jun.	George Lunell, Hugh William Danson
1831 Peter Maze	John Evans Lunell, Rob. Gay Barrow
1832 Rich. Dawbney Brice	Danvers Hill Ward, Edward Hinton
1833 Henry George Fowler	James Syms Barrow, John Hellicar
1834 Thomas Daniel, jun.	John Haythorne, William Claxton
1835 John Evans Lunell	Peter Maze, jun., William Brice
1836 William Claxton	Peter Maze, jun., Rob. Gay Barrow
1837 Peter Maze, jun.	Philip Protheroe, Francis Savage, jun.
1838 Valentine Hellicar	William Claxton, George Lunell
1839 Robert Gay Barrow	Philip Protheroe, John Savage
1840 John Hellicar	John Harding, Charles Pinney
1841 Francis Savage	Wil. Weaver Davies, Edward Drew
1842 John Savage	George Lunell, Richard Robinson
1843 John Harding	Francis Savage, Christopher George
1844 Charles Pinney	Geo. Woodroffe Franklyn, Henry Bush
1845 Edward Drew	John Harding, Wm. Thos. Poole King
1846 Richard Robinson	Valentine Hellicar, John Hurle
1847 Geo. Woodroffe Franklyn	James George, Henry Brice
1848 Henry Bush	John Harding, Rich. Jenkins Poole King
1849 John Hurle	Robert Gay Barrow, Charles Pinney
1850 William T. Poole King	James George, Richard Robinson
1851 Richard T. Poole King	Valentine Hellicar, George Pope
1852 William Brice	James George, Charles Pinney

MASTERS.

- 1853 George Pope
 1854 John Salmon
 1855 James Hassell
 1856 Thomas Porter Jose
 1857 William Oliver Bigg
 1858 Mark Davis Protheroe
 1859 James Bush
 1860 Francis Kentucky Barnes
 1861 Frederick William Green
 1862 John Averay Jones
 1863 John Averay Jones
 1864 Odiarne Coates Lane
 1865 Thomas Barnes
 1866 Sholto Vere Hare
 1867 Robert Gay Barrow
 1868 John Frederick Lucas
 1869 William Proctor Baker

 1870 Wm. Wilberforce Jose

 1871 Hy. Cruger Wm. Miles
 1872 Thomas Terrett Taylor
 1873 Wm. Aug. Fred. Powell
 1874 Mervyn Kesteman King
 1875 Arthur Baker
 1876 Charles Bowles Hare
 1877 Francis Frederick Fox

 1878 Francis Frederick Fox
 1879 George William Edwards
 1880 John Noble Coleman Pope
 1881 Robert Hassell
 1882 George de Lisle Bush
 1883 Charles Octavius Harvey
 1884 Reg. Wyndham
 Butterworth
 1885 Charles Paul
 1886 John Henry Woodward
 1887 Percy Liston King
 1888 Edw. Beadon Colthurst
 1889 Thomas Poole King
 1890 Hy. Willoughby Beloe
 1891 Hy. Fred. Tobin Bush

WARDENS.

- Robert Gay Barrow, John Salmon
 Edward Drew, James Hassell
 Thos. Porter Jose, Wm. Oliver Bigg
 Wm. O. Bigg, Mark Davis Protheroe
 Alfred John Acraman, James Bush
 Jas. Bush, Francis K. Barnes
 Francis K. Barnes, Fred. W. Green
 Fred. Wm. Green, John A. Jones
 John A. Jones, Ed. Thos. Lucas
 Edw. T. Lucas, Odiarne C. Lane
 O. Coates Lane, Thomas Barnes
 Thomas Barnes, Sholto Vere Hare
 Sholto Vere Hare, Charles Ringer
 Charles Ringer, John F. Lucas
 J. F. Lucas, Wm. P. Baker
 Wm. P. Baker, Wm. W. Jose
 Wm. W. Jose, Hy. Cruger Wm.
 Miles
 H. Cruger W. Miles, Thos. T.
 Taylor
 Thos. T. Taylor, Wm. A. F. Powell
 W. A. F. Powell, Mervyn K. King
 Mervyn K. King, Arthur Baker
 Arthur Baker, Charles B. Hare
 Charles B. Hare, Fras. F. Fox
 F. F. Fox, G. W. Edwards (Mayor)
 G. W. Edwards (Mayor), J. N. C.
 Pope
 G. W. Edwards, J. Noble C. Pope
 John N. C. Pope, Robert Hassell
 Rob. Hassell, G. de Lisle Bush
 G. de Lisle Bush, Charles O. Harvey
 C. O. Harvey, R. W. Butterworth
 R. W. Butterworth, Charles Paul

 Charles Paul, John H. Woodward
 J. H. Woodward, Percy L. King
 P. L. King, Edw. B. Colthurst
 E. B. Colthurst, T. Poole King
 T. P. King, Harry W. Beloe
 H. W. Beloe, Hy. Fred. T. Bush
 H. F. T. Bush, Thos. G. Matthews
 T. G. Matthews, Rich. A. Fox

MASTERS.

1892 Thomas Gadd Matthews
 1893 Richard Anstice Fox
 1894 Edw. Burrow Hill
 1895 Edw. Burnett James
 1896 Wm. Welsford Ward
 1897 John Henry Clarke
 1898 Herbert George Edwards
 1899 Averay Neville Jones
 1900 Geo. Oswald Spafford
 1901 Edgar A. V. Baker
 1902 Thomas Ruding Davey

WARDENS.

R. A. Fox, John H. Woodward
 Edw. B. Hill, Edw. B. James
 E. B. James, Wm. W. Ward
 W. W. Ward, John H. Clarke
 J. H. Clarke, Herb. G. Edwards
 H. G. Edwards, A. N. Jones
 A. N. Jones, Geor. O. Spafford
 G. O. Spafford, Edgar A. V. Baker
 E. A. V. Baker, Thos. R. Davey
 T. R. Davey, Allan Mc Arthur
 Allan Mc Arthur, Geo. H. Pope

TREASURERS.

1605 Thomas Aldworth
 1606 William Hopkins
 1607 William Cole
 1608 John Rowberoe
 1609 George White
 1610 Thomas Whitehead
 1611 John Guy
 1612 John Barker
 1613 John Gonning
 1614 John Gonning
 1615 John Langton
 1616 Humfrey Hooke
 1617 Andrew Charleton
 1618 John Tomlinson
 1619 Thomas Wright
 1620 Humfrey Browne
 1621 Peter Miller
 1622 Richard Holworthy
 1623 Richard Long
 1624 William Jones
 1625 Nathaniel Butcher
 1626 John Taylor
 1627 John Locke
 1628 Walter Ellis
 1629 Richard Play
 1630 Richard Aldworth
 1631 Alexander James

1632 Francis Creswick
 1633 Giles Elbridge
 1634 Thomas Colston
 1635 Gabriel Sherman
 1636 John Gonning, jun.
 1637 John Gonning, jun.
 1639 John Langton
 1640 Thomas Hooke
 1641 William Cann
 1642 William Wyatt
 1643 Hugh Browne
 1644 Walter Deyos
 1645 Walter Sandy
 1646 Robert Challoner
 1647 Henry Creswick
 1648 James Croft
 1649 Robert Yate
 1650 William Dale
 1651 William Yeamans
 1652 George Lane, sen.
 1653 Robert Cann
 1654 John Willoughby
 1655 John Willoughby
 1656 Robert Vickris
 1657 William Merrick
 1658 to 1664 Walter Tocknell
 1665 to 1672 Robert Yate

TREASURERS.

1673 William Lysons	1712 to 1729 Robert Earle
1674-5-6 Robert Yate	1730-1 William Jefferis
1677-8-9 Richard Hart	1732-3 Henry Lloyd
1680 to 1683 Sir Richard Hart	1734 to 1744 Henry Combe
1684 William Hayman (Mayor)	1745 to 1750 James Laroche
1685-6-7 (Sir) William Merrick	1751 to 1772 Christopher
1688 William Jackson	Willoughby
1689 Arthur Hart	1773 to 1800 James Daltera
1690 Giles Merrick	1801 to 1815 Samuel Whitchurch
1691 to 1696 William Swymmer	1816 to 1840 Joseph Hellicar
1697-8-9 Charles Jones	1841 to 1872 William Claxton
1700 to 1704 Peter Saunders	1873 to 1875 John Hellicar
1705-6-7 Abraham Elton	1876 to 1900 George Henry Pope
1708 William Hart	1901 Percy Liston King
1709-10-11 Henry Watts	

LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS.

- ABBOT, HENRY NAPIER, Esq., Shannon Court, Bristol.
ABBOT, L. C. F., Esq., Bradford-on-Avon.
ANDREWS, W., Esq., Hull Subscription Library, Hull.
ANTIQUARIES, THE SOCIETY OF, Burlington House, London.
ARMOURERS AND BRAZIER, THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF,
81 Coleman Street, London, E.C.
ARROWSMITH, J. W., Esq., 11 Quay Street, Bristol.
- BAKER, ARTHUR, Esq., Henbury, Bristol (2 copies).
BARKER, W. R., Esq., 106 Redland Road, Bristol.
BEAVEN, Rev. A. B., M.A., Greyfriars, Leamington.
BELOE, H. W., Esq., Redcliff Backs, Bristol.
BOARD OF EDUCATION, South Kensington, London, S.W.
BOARD, J. T., Esq., Distillery, Bristol.
BOBBETT, ARTHUR F., Esq., 24 Westfield Park, Bristol.
BOWLES, H. B., Esq., 35 Oakfield Road, Clifton.
BRAIKENRIDGE, WILLIAM JERDONE, Esq., 16 Royal Crescent, Bath.
BRAMBLE, Lieut.-Col. JAMES R., F.S.A., Seafield, Weston-super-Mare.
BRISTOL, THE LORD BISHOP OF, The Palace, Redland Green, Bristol.
BRISTOL, THE CORPORATION OF, Council House, Bristol.
BRISTOL, THE CORPORATION OF, for Central Public Library (c/o
Messrs. George's Sons).
BRISTOL MUSEUM LIBRARY, Queen's Road, Bristol.
BRISTOL MUSEUM SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARY, Queen's Road, Bristol
(2 copies).
BURGESS, P., Esq., Chipping Sodbury.
BUSH, JOHN, Esq., 9 Pembroke Road, Clifton.
- CARPENTER, R. H., Esq., 43 Canynoges Road, Clifton.
CARTWRIGHT, F. F., Esq., St. Stephen Street, Bristol.
CAVE, CHARLES H., Esq., Rodway Hill House, Mangotsfield.
CAVELL, ARTHUR S., Esq., 10 Elgin Park, Redland, Bristol.
CHALLENGER, CHARLES, Esq., 11 Glentworth Road, Redland, Bristol.
CHESTER-MASTER, Colonel, Knole Park, Almondsbury, Glos.

- CLARKE, JOHN HENRY, Esq., 28 Broad Street, Bristol.
 CLOTHWORKERS, THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF, Mincing Lane,
 London, E.C.
 COLTHURST, E. BEADON, Esq., 93 Pembroke Road, Clifton.
 COPE-PROCTOR, C. W., Esq., 70 Pembroke Road, Clifton (2 copies).
 CRIPPS, WILFRID J., Esq., C.B., Cripps' Mead, Cirencester.
- DANIEL, HENRY, Esq., Victoria Villa, Tyndall's Park Road, Bristol.
 DAVEY, T. RUDING, Esq., The Coppice, Leigh Woods (2 copies).
 DAY, H. C. A., Esq., 59 Broad Street, Bristol.
 DORINGTON, Right Hon. Sir JOHN E., Bart., M.P., Lypiatt Park,
 Stroud.
- EBERLE, J. FULLER, Esq., 96 Pembroke Road, Clifton.
 EDGEWORTH, THOMAS F., Esq., 127 Cheltenham Road, Bristol.
 ELTON, Sir E. H., Bart., Clevedon Court, Somerset.
 EVANS, ARNOLD, Esq., 4 Litfield Place, Clifton.
 EVANS, P. F. SPARKE, Esq., Trimore, Clifton Down.
- FORD, ROGER, Esq., Kensington Place, Royal Park, Clifton.
 FOX, FRANCIS F., Esq., F.S.A., Yate House, Yate, Glos. (5 copies).
 FOX, CHARLES HENRY, Esq., M.D., 35 Heriot Row, Edinburgh.
 FRIENDLY READING SOCIETY, c/o F. C. Tuckett, Esq., 6 Leigh Road,
 Clifton.
- FRY, CLAUDE B., Esq., Howecroft, Stoke Bishop.
 FRY, FRANCIS JAMES, Esq., Cricket St. Thomas, Chard.
 FRY, JOSEPH STORRS, Esq., Union Street, Bristol.
 FRY, THE RIGHT HON. LEWIS, Goldney House, Clifton.
- GARDINER, CLEMENT, Esq., 14 John Street, Bristol.
 GARDNER, C. E. L., Esq., 6 Priory Road, Clifton.
 GEORGE, WILLIAM E., Esq., Downside, Stoke Bishop (2 copies).
 GEORGE'S SONS, WILLIAM, Park Street (4 copies).
 GIBBS, H. MARTIN, Esq., Barrow Court, Flax Bourton.
 GILCHRIST, JAMES, Esq., 24 College Road, Clifton.
 GOLDNEY, FREDERICK HASTINGS, Esq., Beechfield, Corsham, Wilts.
 GRACE, ALEXANDER, Esq., Welsh Back, Bristol.
 GRANT, THOMAS, Esq., 9 Carnarvon Road, Redland, Bristol.
 GRIFFITHS, L. M., Esq., 11 Pembroke Road, Clifton.
- HAMMOND, WILLIAM, Esq., Belmont Lodge, Sneyd Park.
 HARFORD, W. H., Esq., Oldown House, Tockington, Glos.

- HARVEY, J. G. RUSSELL, Esq., Denmark Street, Bristol.
 HAWKINS, WALTER, Esq., *Times and Mirror*, Bristol.
 HESELTINE, E. J., Esq., Corporation of the Trinity House, Hull.
 HOBHOUSE, C. E., Esq., M.P., The Ridge, Corsham, Wilts.
 HOWELL, J. H., Esq., 104 Pembroke Road, Clifton.
 HUDD, ALFRED E., Esq., F.S.A., 94 Pembroke Road, Clifton.
 HUGHES, W. W., Esq., 2 Downfield Road, Clifton.
- JONES, AVERAY, Esq., 81 Pembroke Road, Clifton.
- LEGASSE, AUVERLEAUX, Esq., 25 Rue des Minimes, Brussels, Belgium.
 LANE, J. TREMAYNE, Esq., City Treasurer, Council House, Bristol.
 LEWIS, ARCHIBALD M., Esq., 3 Upper Byron Place, Clifton.
 LLOYD, P. J., Esq., 22 Hurle Crescent, Clifton.
- MARDON, HEBER, Esq., 2 Litfield Place, Clifton.
 MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 300 St. Paul Street, Baltimore,
 Maryland, U.S.A.
 MEADE-KING, H., Esq., 8 Baldwin Street, Bristol.
 MERCHANT VENTURERS' SOCIETY, Merchants' Hall, Bristol, (100
 copies).
 MERCHANT VENTURERS' TECHNICAL COLLEGE, Bristol.
 MOXLEY, W. S., Esq., 9 Elgin Park, Redland, Bristol.
- NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 170 Second Avenue, New York City,
 U.S.A.
- ORD, COLONEL F. C., Redland Hall, Bristol.
 OSBORNE, JERE, Esq., 9 Clifton Park, Clifton.
 PASS, ALFRED CAPPER, Esq., Wootton Fitzpaine, Charmouth, Dorset
 (2 copies).
 PAUL, W. EDGAR, Esq., 55 Woodstock Road, Redland, Bristol.
 PAUL, WALTER S., Esq., 13 Hurle Crescent, Clifton.
 PAUL, TRENCH & Co., Charing Cross Road, London.
 PEARSON, GEORGE, Esq., Bannerleigh, Woodland Road, Bristol.
 PINNEY, FREDERICK W., Esq., The Grange, Somerton, Somerset.
 POPE, J. N. C., Esq., 11 The Paragon, Clifton.
 POPE, Miss, 9 The Paragon, Clifton.
 POPE, REV. ANDREW, Upton Bishop, Ross, Herefordshire.
 POWELL, CECIL, Esq., The Hermitage, Weston-super-Mare.
 PRANKERD, PETER D., Esq. (*the late*), The Knoll, Sneyd Park.

- PRITCHARD, JOHN E., Esq., F.S.A., 8 Cold Harbour Road, Redland, Bristol.
- PROTHEROE, FRANK, Esq., 16 Arundel Mansions, Fulham Road, London, S.W.
- REDLAND PARK BOOK SOCIETY, c/o V. A. Williams, Esq., 77 Park Street, Bristol.
- REID, WALTER, Esq., The Woodlands, Woodland Road, Bristol.
- RICHARDSON, H., Esq., Literary and Philosophical Society, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
- ROBERTS, SIR OWEN, F.S.A., Clothworkers' Hall, Mincing Lane London, E.C.
- RYLAND, CHARLES J., Esq., 10 Alexander Road, Clifton.
- SAMPSON, WALTER W., Esq., Municipal Charities Office, St. Stephen Street, Bristol.
- SAVILE, CHARLES C., Esq., Clifton Wood House, Clifton.
- SIMPSON, J. J., Esq., Osborne House, Cotham Park, Bristol.
- STURGE, ROBERT F., Esq., 101 Pembroke Road, Clifton.
- SWANN, E. J., Esq., The Gables, Leigh Woods.
- TARR, FRANCIS J., Esq., 10 St. Stephen Street, Bristol.
- TAYLOR, ALFRED T., Esq., 9 Leigh Road South, Clifton.
- TAYLOR, EDMUND J., Esq., Town Clerk, Council House, Bristol.
- TAYLOR, GOODENOUGH, Esq., 77 Pembroke Road, Clifton.
- TAYLOR, THOMAS D., Esq., Hillside House, Redland Green, Bristol.
- THATCHER, THOMAS, Esq., 44 College Green, Bristol (2 copies).
- THOMAS, CHARLES, Esq., Pitch and Pay, Stoke Bishop.
- THOMAS, HERBERT, Esq., Ivor House, Durdham Park, Redland, Bristol.
- THOMAS, HARRY E., Esq., Rockleaze Point, Stoke Bishop.
- TITLEY, WILLIAM A., Esq., Chescombe Lodge, Durdham Down, Bristol.
- TORONTO, UNIVERSITY OF, c/o Cazenove & Son, 26 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.
- TOWSE, J. W., Esq., Fishmongers' Hall, London Bridge, E.C.
- TRAPNELL, CALLEB, Esq., 60 St. John's Road, Clifton.
- TRYON, S., Esq., 5 Beaufort Road, Clifton.
- TUCKER, C. H., Esq., 5 Royal Park, Clifton.
- TUCKETT, R. C., Esq., 5 Beaufort Buildings, Clifton.
- TUCKETT, F. COLDSTREAM, Esq., 6 Leigh Road, Clifton.
- TUCKETT, F. F., Esq., F.R.G.S., Frenchay, near Bristol.
- TWIGGS, H. WILLIAM, Esq., Ellesmere, Henleaze Road, near Bristol.

- VAUGHAN, Rev. HENRY, M.A., Wraxall Rectory, near Bristol.
 VAUGHAN, P. H., Esq., Redland Hill House, Bristol.
 VOWLES, WILLIAM, Esq., 1 Iddesleigh Road, Durham Park, Bristol.

 WAIT, H. W. KILLIGREW, Esq., 2 Worcester Villas, Clifton.
 WALKER, EDWIN, Esq., Wraxall House, Tyndall's Park Road, Bristol.
 WARD, W. W., Esq., Bosloe, near Falmouth.
 WARREN, ROBERT HALL, Esq., F.S.A., 9 Apsley Road, Clifton.
 WATNEY, Sir JOHN, F.S.A., Mercers' Hall, London, E.C.
 WATSON, EDWARD J., Esq., St. John's Arch, Bristol.
 WAY, Rev. Canon JOHN HUGH, Vicarage, Henbury, Glos.
 WEARE, GEORGE E., Esq., 16 Ellenborough Crescent, Weston-super-Mare.
 WELLS, CHARLES, Esq., 134 Cromwell Road, Bristol.
 WERE, FRANCIS, Esq., Gratwicke Hall, Flax Bourton, Som.
 WESTON-STEVENS, J., Esq., Sheriff, Ravenhurst, Beaufort Road, Clifton.
 WHITE, GEORGE, Esq., Cotham House, Bristol.
 WILLIAMS, T. W., Esq., Bank Chambers, Corn Street, Bristol.
 WILLS, Sir FREDERICK, Bart., M.P., Northmoor, Dulverton, Som.
 WILLS, Sir WILLIAM HENRY, Bart., c/o Frank W. Wills, Esq., 15 Berkeley Square, Bristol.
 WISE, W. H., Esq., Council House, Bristol.
 WORSLEY, PHILIP JOHN, Esq., Rodney Lodge, Clifton.

PRESENTATION COPIES: Public Libraries, 5; Press, &c., 11.
 275 copies printed.

INDEX.

- Acraman, Bush & Co., 254.
 Addington, Henry, hon. freeman, 270.
 African trade, 178; attempted monopoly, 178 to 183.
 Albert, Prince, hon. freeman, 270.
 Alder, Thomas, Warden, 46.
 Aldworth, Robt., 124, 140, 147, 151; Thos., 149; Rich., 160, 161.
 Algerine, corsairs, 123, 127, 219.
 Alma Road, 266.
 Almshouses, *see* M. V.; Colston; Hill.
 America, exploring schemes, 147; New England project, 150; emigrants, 151-2; attempt to tax, 190; harsh treatment of, 190-1.
 Anchor Society, 229, 275.
Angel Gabriel privateer, 153.
 Anson, Lord, hon. freeman, 225.
Antelope, H. M. S., capture by, 268-9.
 Apprentices laws, 32, 63, 75, 76, 77, 224 (2),
 Arctic expedition, 157.
 Arundell, Edm., 136.
 Assembly Rooms, 229.
 Assistants, body of, created, 71, 88.
 Avon, gross obstructions in, 155; Society's improvements, 207, 245; first proposal for docks, 207-8; Society's efforts, 208; apathy of city, 209; plans of engineers, 209 to 212, 232; a plan adopted, 233; Society promotes Bill, 234; (*see* Docks Co.) dockisation scheme, 249; plans for improvements, 250.
 Avonmouth, proposed piers, 242, 251; dock, 249, 251-3.
 Back Hall and chapel, 16-18, 25, 34, 83, 86, 97.
 Baillie, Evan, 186.
 Barham, Lord, hon. freeman, 270.
 Barker, John, 67, 81, 83, 124, 132, 152, 158; protest against royal oppression, 121.
 Barrow, R. Guy, 272.
 Barry Island, 207.
 Bayonne, trade with, 23 *n.*, 59.
 Bathurst, C. Bragg, hon. freeman, 225.
 Beaufort, Dukes of, hon. freemen, 225 (2), 270 (2).
 Beere manor purchase, 293.
 Berkeley, Earl of, hon. freeman, 202, 225.
 Blanket family, 11, 12.
 Bolton, Duke of, 289.
 Bonding warehouses, 253.
 Bordeaux trade, 23 *n.*
 Botetourt, Lord, hon. freeman, 225.
 Bowcher, Geo., 119, 124; John, 163.
 Bowyer, Colonel, 293.
 Brice, Edward, 185.
 Brickdale, Matt., hon. freeman, 225.
 Bright, Rich., 185; Robt., hon. freeman, 247, 248, 251, 257.
 Bristol Hope colony, 149.
 BRISTOL: early charters and customs, 2, 3, (4) 4, 5, 7, 16, 24; a "mother" borough, 3; its wine trade, 3; first Mayor, 4; pre-eminence of the Merchants' Guild, 5, 8; Great Insurrection, 8; Craft Guilds, 8; foreigners in, 9; the Great Fair, 10; growth of trade, 11; shipping of, 57, 58; a Staple Town, 12-15; Corporate Ordinances for merchants, 15, 16, 23 (2), 24, 63, 66; grant for St. Clement's Chapel, 19; tolls at the city gates abolished, 37; church plate surrendered, 37; Corporation oppose the Society at election, 52; Society's Act repealed, 55; Corporate policy reversed, 82, 108; piracy by local merchants, 59; ship money and plea of poverty, 60, 123-5; Wharfage dues created, 64; leased to Society, 164, 165, 208; exceptional shipping privileges, 93; oppressive government, 111 to 137; Levant trade, 137; strange operations in butter, 144 *n.*; emigrants to America, 151-2; local privateers, 152, 201-2, 204; an Archbishop's eulogy, 156; Civil War, 160 to 166; Mint in Castle, 161, 176; extension of quays, 164-6; tobacco culture, 172; first printing press, 177; Slave Trade, 179 to 185; smuggling by local merchants, 188-9; patriotic funds, 201-2-5; regiments raised, 202, 205; building mania, 204; first proposal for city docks, 207; various projects, 208 to 234; Town and Mayor's Dues, 236 to 244; decay of trade, 243; corporate resistance to port improvement, 250.
 Brokers, city, appointed, 27, 29.
 Browne, Hum., 83, 124, 152, 155, 161.
 Brunel, I. K., 242, 257, 258, 263-4.
 Buckingham, Duke of, hon. freeman, 270.
 Burghersh, Lord, hon. freeman, 225.
 Burke, Edmund, 184, 191, 193; letters to Hall, 195-7; hon. freeman, 225.
 Bush, Rob., 186; Henry, 257.
 Butler, Rob., 38, 39.
 Butter monopoly, Society's, 143.
 Calfskins' monopoly, Society's, 140.
 Cambridge, Duke of, hon. freeman, 270.
 Camden, Lord, hon. freeman, 225.
 Cann, William, 83, 159.

- Canning, Geo., hon. freeman, 270.
 Canynges, William, 13, 14, 16, 58.
 Carr, John, 51.
 Cary, John, on local trade, 177.
 Cave, John, 186, 257.
 Catherine, Queen, visit of, 168.
 Chamber of Commerce, 236 to 242, 255-6.
 Charles, I., his first charter, 87; second, 105, 161; illegal exactions, 117, 118, 135; ship money, 129, 133.
 Charles II., Charter of, 109; visit, 162.
 CHARTERS, Society's, from Edward VI., 38; Elizabeth, 46; Charles I., 87, 105; Charles II., 109.
 Champion, Wm., his docks, 209.
 Chandos, Lord, hon. freeman, 225.
 Charleton, Andrew, 124, 158, 160, 161.
 Chatham, Lord, hon. freeman, 225.
 Chester, Dominic, 46, 51, 52.
 China trade opened, 254.
 Cirencester, *see* Clothing trade.
 Claxton, Robt., 186; Wm., portrait, 275.
 Clement's, St., Chapel, 18, 19, 21, 22, 153, 221.
 Clerks, Society's, 229, 276.
 CLIFTON: Hot Well, 165-7-8-9, 214, 217, 261; Society purchases manor, 167; New Hot Well, 215, 263; "Old Castle," 168*n.*; Theatre, Jacob's Wells, 215; Cold Baths, Jacob's Wells, 262; Suspension Bridge, 258; Down preserved to public, 260; Rocks Railway, 262; Pump Room and Hydro, 262-3; proposed Water Works, 263; Observatory, 263*n.*; growth of population, 265; Victoria Square, 265; College, 266.
 Clothing trade, Bristol, 9, 10, 11.
 Coffee-roasting restrictions, 251.
 Cole, Thos., 158.
 Collingwood, Lord, hon. freeman, 270.
 "Colouring" goods, 23, 24, 170, 279.
 Colston, Thos., 83, 91, 124, 152, 159, 163 (2); Wm., 149; Wm., 124, 159, 163 (2), 173; Rich., 174; Wm. murdered, 174; Thos., 174; Edw., jun., 225; Francis, 225.
 COLSTON EDWARD, 174, 176, 280, 287; ALMSHOUSE, 278, 280, 282; SCHOOL, 284 to 298, removed to Stapleton, 299; suits in Chancery, 289, 292; additional boys, 298; reorganised, 300-2; Girls' School, 303.
 Combe, Rich., 220.
 Convoys for Bristol ships, 203.
 Conway, H. S., hon. freeman, 225.
 Coomber, Thos., 307, 314.
 Cordwaner, Roger, first Mayor, 4.
 Coxe, Sir R. H., hon. freeman, 225.
 Cranage dues reduced, 245.
 Creswick, Francis, 124, 131, 163.
 Crimps employed, 198.
 Cruger, Hy., M.P., 186, 197.
 Cumberland, Duke of, hon. freeman, 270.
 Custom House extortions, 120-2.
 Customs, receipts from, 125, 127.
 Daniel, Thomas, 186, 205.
 Daubeny, George, 185, 230.
 Davis, Hart, hon. freeman, 281.
 Day, Sir Thomas, 169, 175.
 Dean Forest destroyed, 132.
Demevara wrecked, 249.
 Diocesan School, 304.
 Dock schemes, *see* Avon.
 Dock Company formed, 234; capital, 235; heavy dues, 236 to 243; dues reduced, 244; treatment of *Great Western*, 245; agitation for purchase of docks, 246; transferred to city, 248.
 Docks, Champion's floating, 209; purchased by Society, 210.
 Dolman, John, 216.
 Dolphin Society, 229.
 Domesday Book on Bristol, 2.
 Doughty, John, 124, 149, 153.
 Dowdeswell, W., hon. freeman, 225.
 Drake, Admiral, hon. freeman, 225.
 Draper, Sir Wm., hon. freeman, 225.
 Driver, C., 153.
 Dublin granted to Bristol, 3.
 Ducie, Lord, hon. freeman, 225.
 Duddleston, Sir John, 222.
 Duncan, Lord, hon. freeman, 225.
 Dupplin, Lord, hon. freeman, 225.
 Durdham Down acquired by city, 260.
 East India Company, 167, 190; trade opened, 254.
 Edward II., 5.
 Edward III.: demands on town, 6, 7; fosters weaving, 11; his charters, 7, 16.
 Edward VI., spoliation under, 37; petition of Bristol merchants to, 37; his charter of incorporation, 38.
 Elbridge, Giles, 91, 124, 151, 152, 158, 163.
 Elizabeth, Queen: Charter to Society, 46; Acts of Parliament, 47, 53; piracy encouraged by, 59; demand for ship money, 60; exactions, 112.
 Ellis, Walter, 124, 131, 153.
 Elsworth, Sir R., 108.
 Elton, Abraham, 197, 220.
 Exchange, grant for building, 218.
 Excise scheme, Walpole's, 189.
 Fane, H. and T., 229; F. and T., freemen, 225.
 Farr, Rich., 189.
 Fitch, J. G., on Colston's School, 300.
 Fitzherbert, Wm., 159, 163.
 Flat Holm Light, 206.
 Floating Harbour, *see* Avon.
 Foreigners (non-freemen), treatment of, 16, 23, 24, 25, 32, 78, 84, 87, 97, 100, 102, 169, 171.
 Foster, Sir M., hon. freeman, 225.
 Fox, F. F., 272.
 France, trade with, 23 *n.*, 59, 82, 88.
 Free Port Association, 247, 256.
 Freemen, rise of civic, 9; loss of privileges, 279.
 Freemen, honorary, of Society, 224, 270.
 Freightage regulations, 30.

- Freke, Thos., 200.
 Friaries, Bristol, 37.
 Fry, Edward, 224.
 Gallows Acre Lane, 265.
 Gaunt's Hospital estates, 37.
 George, Chris., 278.
 Gibbes, Henry, 131.
 Gibbs, George, 257.
 Gloucestershire, tobacco culture, 171.
 Gloucester, honour of, 2 (2), 3.
 Gloucester Merchants' Guild, 6.
 Gonning, John, 66, 124, 126, 151, 152, 160, 161 (2).
 Gordon, John, 185.
 Gorges, Sir F., 148, 150.
 Grafton, Duke of, hon. freeman, 225.
 Granville, Earl, visit of, 305.
 Great House, St. Augustine's, 151, 285.
Great Red Book, 16.
 Great Western Railway, 257.
Great Western Steamship Co., 245-6.
 Grenville, Geo., hon. freeman, 223.
 Groceries, Royal exactions for, 113-16.
 Gross, Dr., on Bristol guilds, 3, 9, 10, 14.
 Guild Merchant, Bristol, 1.
 Guildhall, first, 5, 26.
 Gunboats, local, 206.
 Guy, John, 82, 83, 115, 124, 126, 148-9, 171.
 Hakluyt, Rich., 147.
 Halifax, Earl of, hon. freeman, 225.
 Hamburg Co.'s monopoly, vi., 139.
 Hanbury Road, South, 266.
 Hare, Sholto V., 269.
 Harford, Jos., 185.
 Haviland, Mat., 124, 140, 149.
 Hawkes, John, 19.
 Hawkins, Sir John, 224.
 Hawkshaw, Sir John, 250, 259.
 Henrietta, Queen, visit of, 162.
 Henry II., Charter to Bristol, 3.
 Henry III. and Bristol, 3, 4, 7.
 Henry VIII., French war of, 36.
 Hicks, Thos., 38, 39.
 Hill, T. W., Almshouse, 277.
 Hilsborough, Lord, hon. freeman, 225.
 Holworthy, Rich., 124, 131, 149; Lady, 231.
 Hood, Lord, hon. freeman, 225.
 Hooke, Hum., 91, 124, 149, 152-3, 158, 160, 161, 163 (2).
 Hooke, Sir Hum., 172 (2).
 Hopkins, John, 64.
 Hot Wells, *see* Clifton.
 Hot Well Point removed, 262.
 Iceland trade, 14, 25.
 Impressment for navy; abuses, 199.
 Index, 341.
 Irish food imports, 178, 193.
 Irish rebel privateers, 166. [197
 Irish trade, restrictions on, 177-8; 191 to
 Iron, price of, 23, 190, 221.
 Jackson, Miles, 124, 155, 158, 159, 221.
 James I., arbitrary rule of, 112 to 117;
 ship money, 123-7; calf skins monopoly,
 140; American charters, 148.
 James, Thomas, M.P., 112, 148; Alex.,
 124, 131, 159, 163 (3); Thomas, Arctic
 explorer, 158.
 Jessop, William, plans for Float, 212,
 232-4.
 John, King, and Bristol, 3 (3), 4.
 Jones, William, 24, 31; Rich., benefactor,
 176; J. Averay, 252, 272; Philip, gift to
 Colston's School, 290.
 Kelke, Thomas, 46.
 Kingston, Duke of, hon. freeman, 225.
Kirlington, ship, gallantry of, 199.
 Kitchin, Abel, 124, 131, 140, 155.
 Knight, Francis, 140.
 Knight, Sir John I., 122, 139, 143, 147,
 167, 170 n.
 Knight, Sir John II., 170 n., 228.
 Knighthood, compositions for, 130.
 Lane, O. C., death of, 273.
 Langton, John, 124, 149, 161.
 Laroche, Sir Jas., 185, 220.
 Lawe Ditch, 19.
 Leigh Woods purchased, 259.
 Levant trade, *see* Turkey.
 Lewis family, 140, 142, 143.
Little Red Book, 12, 13.
 Liverpool, Earl of, hon. freeman, 270.
 Locke, John, 124, 131, 159.
 Long, Richard, 124, 136, 151, 155, 158,
 160, 161, 163 (2).
 Lunell, W. P., accident to, 273.
 Mariners, local Fraternity of, 19.
 Mark's, St., Hospital estates, 37.
 MASTERS OF SOCIETY, list of, 326; badge,
 273.
 Mayors of the Staple, 12.
 Mayor's Dues on shipping, 236-242.
 Maze, Peter, 257.
 Melville, Lords, hon. freemen, 270.
 Mercantile System, The, 177.
 Mercantile Marine Board, 255.
 Mercers' Company, London, 14.
 Merchant Guild, 1-9.
 Merchant Adventurers of England, v.,
 13, 15, 39, 88, 106.
 Merchant Staplers, 11.
 Merchants' Company, Bristol, created by
 Corporation, 15, 16, 23-35.
 MERCHANT VENTURERS, SOCIETY OF:
 Petition to the Crown, 37; Charter of
 Edward VI., 38, 39, 42; attempted trad-
 ing monopoly, 38, 39, 46, 47, 52, 53, 66,
 67, 82, 87, 107, 108, 110; Charter of
 Elizabeth, 46; Act creating a trade
 monopoly, 47; Corporation procure its
 repeal, 53, 55; attempts to revive, 82,
 83; grant of arms to Society, 50; lease
 of anchorage dues, 62; Society reor-
 ganised by Corporation, 63; collects
 wharfage dues, 65, 164; lease of dues,
 164-5, 208; ordinances defining official
 functions, admission of members, &c.,
 67-80; list of members (1618), 81; sup-
 pression of piracy, 82, 123; infringe-
 ments of rules, 83; edicts against

- MERCHANT VENTURERS, SOCIETY OF:** "foreigners," 85, 169; first Charter of Charles I., 88; Charter Day fixed, 88; ordinances revised, 97; second Charter of Charles I., 105, 161; Charter of Charles II., 109; seizure of Society's records, 111; royal exactions, 115, 117, 118, 121; appeal to Long Parliament, 119; Custom-house extortions, 119-122; protest against Ship Money, 123-4; declines to farm Customs, 128; Levant trade, 137-140; license to export calfskins, 140; Welsh butter license, 143-6; applies for wine licenses, 146; exploring expeditions, 147-9; New England project, 150; emigration to America, 151; privateering 152; Arctic expedition, 157; compulsory arbitration, 159; gifts to King, &c., 161-2; rebel privateers, 166; offer of East India Company, 167; Manor of Clifton bought, 167; the Hot Well, *see* Clifton; visitors entertained, 172; a member expelled, 173; civic gift of land, 176; resistance to African Company, 178-183; progress of Slave Trade, 179, 183-5; defence of the trade, 185; appeal for sugar bounties, 187; Spanish "depredations," 188-9; Walpole's Excise scheme, 189; policy towards America, 190-1; and towards Ireland, 192, 196-7; recruiting for the Navy, 197; statue of William III., 200; Patriotic Fund (1745), 201-(1798), 205; direction of war cruisers, 203; defence of the port, 206; improvement of Avon, &c., 206; efforts on behalf of city docks, 208, 211-14; purchase of Champion's dock, 210; New Hot Well, 215; votes for improvements, &c., 219, 266; presents of wine, 220; fines for admission, 222, 267, 270-1; treatment of Quakers, 222; attendances at Halls, 223; upper-class apprentices, 224; hon. members, 224, 270; Charter Day festivities, 226; audit dinners, 227; pensions, 228; local dues on shipping, 237; Municipal Corporation inquiry, 243; cranage dues surrendered, 245; Port and Pier Railway, 251; Portishead Railway, Dock, &c., 252-3; Avonmouth Dock, 252; Downs granted to city, 260; Charter Day on Sunday, 271; a protest disallowed, 271; Master's casting vote, 271; fee to Standing Committee, 271; badge of Master, 273; changes in Hall business, 273; benefactions, 274; takes over the Trade School, 308; income of Society, 324.
- MERCHANTS' HALL** (*see* St. Clement's Chapel) 21, 153; furniture, 154; reconstructed, 221; civic and other feasts, 226-30; balls, 230, 275; decorated and extended, 274.
- MERCHANTS' ALMSHOUSE**, 19, 22, 23, 82, 176, 277, 281.
- MERCHANTS' SCHOOL** (original), 82, 230; for navigation, 230, 306.
- MERCHANT VENTURERS' COLLEGE**, 304, 308; opened, 311; progress and cost, 318-20; co-ordination with Board and Art Schools, 321; aid sought from Technical Committee, 323; urgent need of development, 324.
- Merchants' Road**, 266.
- Meredith, Sir W.**, hon. freeman, 225.
- Miles, Wm.**, 185, 211; P. W. S., 251; hon. freeman, 270; P. J., 278.
- Mints, Bristol**, 161, 176.
- Mohun, Lord**, 135.
- Monkton, manor of**, 292-8.
- Morgan family, Pill**, 155.
- Moseley, Canon**, 304.
- Municipal Corporations' inquiry**, 243.
- Navy, recruiting for**, 197, 205.
- Newfoundland, colonies at**, 148, 149.
- Newnes, Sir Geo.**, 262.
- Nickalls, Jos.**, dock plans, 211, 212.
- North, Lord**, hon. freeman, 191.
- Northampton, Marquis of**, 259.
- Nugent, Rob. (Earl)**, 192, 193, 225.
- Observatory, Clifton**, 263.
- Osborne family**, 230, 276.
- Patriotic funds**, 202, 205.
- Patrimony, freedom by**, 32, 63, 75, 76, 268.
- Paul, Capt.**, hon. freeman, 225.
- Pembroke Road**, 265.
- Penke, John**, 24.
- Penny, Capt.**, letter of, 204.
- Penpole, compass at**, 172.
- Perkins, Thos.**, 247.
- Peters, Edw.**, 131.
- Pictures in Hull**, 155, 221, 275.
- Pill, gross abuses at**, 155, 199; votes to, 207.
- Pilotage regulations**, 254.
- Pinney, John**, 186.
- Piracy by Bristol merchants**, 59; in Bristol Channel, 82, 123, 159; Algerine, 123-7, 219.
- Pitt, Wm.**, 83, 124, 153.
- Pitt, Wm.**, hon. freeman, 225.
- Pitts, Sam.**, gallantry of, 199.
- Poor, Corporation of**, 176-7.
- Popham, John, M.P.**, 52, 148.
- Popley, Derrick**, 83, 124.
- Popwell, Wm.**, 23.
- Port improvements**, *see* Avon.
- Port and Pier Railway**, 251-2.
- Portishead, pier and docks**, 242, 249, 252.
- Portland, Earl of**, 120.
- Portugal trade**, 15, 82, 88.
- Poulet, Earl**, hon. freeman, 225.
- Prescott, Geo.**, hon. freeman, 225.
- Price, Sam.**, 176; John, 231.
- Pring, Martin**, 147, 148, 153, 206.
- Prisage of wines**, 112.
- Privateers, Bristol**, 152, 201, 202, 204.
- Protheroe, Philip**, 186.
- Prynn, Edw. (first Master)**, 22, 38, 39.
- Puritan emigration stopped**, 150.

- Purrier, John, hon. freeman, 225.
 Purveyance, abuses of, 112 to 117, 120.
 Quaker refused admission, 222.
 Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, 282 (2).
 Raglan, Lord, hon. freeman, 270.
 Raleigh, Sir W., piracy by, 59.
 Redemption, freedom by, 33, 222, 267.
 Ricketts, Fred., 257.
 Rockingham, Lord, hon. freeman, 190.
 Rodney, Adm., hon. freeman, 225.
 Romney, Col. J., 146.
 Rowe, John, expelled, 173.
 Rowland, Thos., 51.
 Rupert, Prince, 161 (2), 162 (2).
 Sadleir, Sir Ralph, 22, 167.
 Sandwich, Lord, hon. freeman, 225.
 Sandy, Walter, 150.
 Saumarez, Capt., gift to, 203.
 Saville, Sir George, hon. freeman, 225.
 Scrope, John, hon. freeman, 225.
 Sheffield, Lord, hon. freeman, 186, 225.
 Ship money writs, 60, 123, 129, 133.
 Shipping, Bristol (1572), 57; excessive dues, 236 to 244.
 Slave trade, *see* African trade, extent of 179, 183-5; men-of-war engaged in, 181; food of slaves, 184; agitation against, 184; barbarities, 185-6; profits of, 185.
 Small Street Gate removed, 218.
 Smeaton's dock schemes, 208, 212.
 Smith, Sir Jarrit, hon. freeman, 225.
 Smyth, Sir Greville, 259, 261.
 Snygge, Sir Geo., 114, 115.
 Soapmakers oppressed, 108, 131.
 Somerset, Lord G., Lord E., and Lord F., hon. freemen, 257, 270.
 Somerset, ship money in, 62.
 Southwell, Edw., hon. freemen, 225 (2).
 Spain, trade with, 11, 15, 58, 59, 61, 82, 88.
 Spanish Co., 62, 63; "depredations," 188-9.
 Span, Sam., 185, 195-6.
 Spencer, Earl, hon. freeman, 225.
 Spencer's Hall, *see* Back Hall.
 Staple Court, 11, 12, 13, 15 *n.*
 Stapleton Palace bought, 299.
 Star Chamber abuses, 121, 137.
 Stogursey, *see* Monkton.
 Steamships introduced, 242.
 Strangers' goods, *see* Foreigners.
 Stubbs, Bishop, on guilds, 7.
 Sturmy, Robt., 16.
 Subscribers, list of, 336.
 Suffolk, Lord, hon. freeman, 225.
 Sugar, export bounties, 186-8.
 Sussex, Earl of, hon. freeman, 225.
 Taylor, John, 83, 151, 158, 160 (2), T. T., Tea, local imports, 254. [251].
 Technical Instruction Com., 314-8.
 Theatre, Jacobs' Wells, 215.
 Thomas, Chris. J., 251.
 Thorne, Robt., 15.
 Thurlow, Lord, hon. freeman, 225.
 Tobacco imports forbidden, 130; home cultivation, 171; smoking, 171.
 Tomlinson, John, 124, 130, 158.
 Town Wall, 19, 176.
 Town Dues, excessive, 236 to 244.
 Townshend, Chas., hon. freeman, 225.
 Trade School, 301-6; taken over by Society, 308, *see* M. V. College.
 Treasurers, Society's, 334; gifts to, 220.
 Tucker Street, 10.
 Turkey Co.'s monopoly, 137-140, 190.
 Tynte, Sir C. K., hon. freeman, 225.
 Vaughan, Rich., 26; Rich., 185.
 Vawer, Alderman, 64.
 Vick, Willm., his bridge bequest, 257.
 Victoria Rooms, hovels near, 266.
 Vintners' Comp., London, 118.
 Volunteers, Bristol, 205.
 Wales, F., Prince of, hon. freeman, 225.
 Wansey, Wm., hon. freeman, 225.
 Ward, W. W., on Monkton manor, 293.
 WARDENS, List of, 326.
 Water Works, proposed Clifton, 263.
 Water Company, Bristol, 264.
 Weare, John F., 185.
 Weavers, *see* Cloth Trade.
 Wertheimer, Julius, Principal, 314.
 Wellington, Duke of, hon. freeman, 270.
 Westmorland, Earl of, hon. freeman, 225, 229.
 Wharfage Dues created, 64; leased to Society, 164, 165, 208; reduced, 248; surrendered, 256.
 Whiteladies Road, 265.
 Whitson, John, 62, 64, 66, 82, 112, 124, 127, 140, 145, 147, 155, 221, William III., statue of, 200.
 Wine, Royal, at Bristol, 3; royal exactions on, 112 to 119; Society's gifts of, 157, 220.
 Wine licenses, local, 146.
 Woad trade, 23.
 Worcester, Marquis of (Duke of Beaufort), 172; Marquis, hon. freeman, 225.
 Worrall, Samuel, 230.
 Wyatt, Willm., 131, 162.
 Yate, Robt., 169.
 Yeamans, Wm., 145.
 York, Archbishop of, on local abuses, 155.
 York, Duke of, hon. freeman, 225.

ERRATA.

- Page 16, 5th line from foot, for "xx" read "xv."
Page 33, line 21, for "eny" read "ev̄y."
Page 33, 12th line from foot, for "eny" read "ev̄y."
Page 35, line 4, ditto.
Page 35, line 22, ditto.
Page 35, line 27, for "alwey" read "away."
Page 40, line 4, for "habend" read "hend̄."
Page 40, 4th line from foot, for "ac" read "et."
Page 41, line 3, for "huiusmodo" read "huiusmodi."
Page 41, line 6, for "existend" read "existen̄."
Page 42, line 6, for "aditaut" read "aditant."









C

60194

Ec.H
L357h

Merchant Venturers' Society of
Bristol.

NAME OF BORROWER.
