

## HISTORY OF CIRENCESTER.

### CHAPTER I. – THE BRITONS.

In the days when the whole of Great Britain was unenclosed, a broad fertile meadow, watered by a river and defended by hills, would offer such natural advantages for a settlement that it would be almost sure to be seized upon at the very earliest date, and there is every reason to believe that this was actually the case with the spot now known as Cirencester, long anterior to history. Researches into the distribution of the tribes of men who inhabited Britain immediately previous to the invasion, or just before the coming of Christ, have revealed that the county of Gloucester was in the hands of a wide-spreading nation called the Dobuni. In British, *Dovun* (*dwfn*) meant *deep*, or full of vales, and from this word came Devon, the *deep* or valley county. *Dob*, in British, also meant stream, and *un*, land: Dobuni would then mean a people who were stream borderers, living in vales besides the streams, a description which exactly agrees with the actual condition of the inhabitants of Cirencester. This nation of the Dobuni lived along the valley of the Thames from Cirencester to Oxford. The chain of hills called the Cotswolds, stretching across this immense vale at its western extremity, formed a boundary between them and the Silures, a very warlike nation who inhabited Wales and the counties upon its borders. These Cotswolds were their Alps, which defended the vales of Gloucestershire – the Italy of England – from the invasion of the Silurian barbarians. Along this chain of hills the Dobuni, who were a comparatively peaceful race, probably shepherds and tillers of the earth, had erected a number of earth-work fortifications, stretching across the whole vale. These fortifications were placed upon commanding heights, and when not in sight of each other communicated by beacons midway between. If an attack was threatened upon any part of this chain, the watchers had only to light a beacon fire, which was answered from height to height, and in a few minutes the whole country side was aware of the danger.

In the rear of this line of fortifications, just at the foot of the Alps, the Dobuni had made a settlement upon the fertile banks of a river which they called *Corin* or *Cerin*, - *top*, *head*, because it was one of the heads or feeders of the great river Thames, along whose shores their nation dwelt. The settlement was called *Caer Ceri*, from *caer*, an enclosed place (primarily a stone), or the city on the river *Ceri*. It was probably surrounded with mounds of earth and ditches of considerable extent, not only for the protection of the inhabitants, but into which they might drive

their flocks and herds in case of danger. The most ancient British historian, Nennius, in a list of the cities of the Britons before the arrival of the Romans, only enumerates thirty-three, which would indicate that he only named the capitals or principal places which were fortified, and properly called cairs. The fourteenth upon the list is Cair Ceri, or Cirencester, and the very fact of its being called a cair, which means a fortified place, and placed upon this list, shows that it was already of importance.

The government of the tribes of Britain resembled that of the present tribes in Arabia, where each tribe has a number of sheiks or chiefs, who acknowledge the supremacy of a sheik of sheiks. From the number of chiefs mentioned in the ancient British poems it would appear that every cair or city had its ruler, so that Cair Ceri had probably its resident prince, and to this day the name of a part of the town indicates the site of his palace or court. The Leauses is considered to be derived from the ancient British *Llis*, a court or palace, and if so the meadows known as the Leauses, and which are singularly rich in ancient remains, were the site of the British princes' palace or court. It is true that Leauses has been derived from *lerze* – Saxon for pasture land, a word still surviving in leaze, cow-leaze – land grazed but not mown, only it happens that in Saxon times this part of Cirencester appears not have been pasture land, but the principal portion of the city. Leauses, too, is a modern spelling. In the early part of the eighteenth century it was called the Lewis ground, and there is a lane leading to it at this day called Lewis lane. Lewis would be an easy corruption from *Llis*.

Here then was the court of the British prince of Cair Ceri, surrounded at some distance by mounds and ditches, with the river or a branch of it running through the middle of the city, so that in case of attack the inhabitants and their cattle, then penned within the mounds, might drink in security, which would not have been the case had the water been outside.

The Dobuni had so pitched their settlement that it stood at the crossing of the “iiii ways made by the Britons,” as the last abbot of Cirencester told John Leland in the time of Henry VIII.

These four ways were the Acman-street which went from Cirencester westward to Bath, known as Acmanceaster; the Ickniel-street which went eastward to the country of the Icenii; and the Irmin-street, which came in from Gloucester, and ran to Cricklade and Southampton. The Irmin-street thus crossed the Acman-street and Ickniel-street at Cair Ceri, so that there was a meeting of four ways. These ways were not mathematically straight like the roads proper, afterwards constructed upon their basis by the Romans, but wound about from town to town, and were probably used in great measure for commercial purposes – to drive

flocks and herds from place to place, just as the ridgeway tracks of the Britons, being grassy and soft to the feet of cattle, are used to this day by the drovers when possible. Along the Acman-street from Acmanceaster, Bath, a great city in those times, where was the temple of Sul the Sun, whose warm waters bubbled up beneath, would come the drift wood as it were of the civilization of the distant East, brought by the Phœnicians to Cornwall in their voyages for tin. These traders from Tyre and Zidon in their many oared galleys doubtless exchanged the products of the East for the ore with the natives, and thus those amulets and necklaces of amber beads found in the tumuli might travel along the Acman-street, until they were worn by the British princes.

When a prince, or warrior-chief of the Dobuni living at Cair Ceri died, a tumulus was erected over his remains, as was the custom amongst most of the nations of Britain. There are several of these tumuli at Cirencester. One stands in Oakley Park and is called Christmas Tower. It is a mound of earth thrown up to about twenty feet high, and when opened was found to contain several large urns full of ashes and bones. The earth immediately surrounding the urns was burnt showing that a pile had been erected over the body and set on fire. Another stands just without the town on the eastern side and is known as Torbarrow. Tor was a British word meaning hill; there are numbers of *tors*, conical hills in Devon and Cornwall. A third, a long barrow, stands in the Querns. It is stated to have been a custom to erect these long barrows so that their longer axis should point exactly to the point of the horizon at which the sun rose on the day of their erection, so that the date of their being thrown up could be ascertained. The long barrow in the Querns points towards the south-east.

The Querns appears to have been a burial place, and the name is another remnant of the British language. Cairn, karn, a stone, or heap of stones, thrown over a grave. The same radical meaning attaches to the Egyptian Karnac, a vast stone temple by the Nile; to Carnac, a Druidical temple in Brittany; and to the Querns, namely, a place of stones, showing the wide range of the language spoken by that great ancient race of whom the Britons were a branch.

The junction of the four roads at Cirencester, and the consequent meeting of traffic no doubt materially assisted the growth of the place, until it at length became the principal city of the Dobuni. The country around was teeming with population, as is evident from the number and great size of the earth work fortifications upon the hills. There were four of these fortifications disposed around Cirencester within a few miles, namely Ranbury Camp, Pinswell, Trewsbury Castle, and Bagendon. These fortifications, and those upon the hills forming the great chain of forts formerly spoken of, were all probably inhabited to a greater or less

extent, and the length of their ramparts could not be defended by less than thousands of warriors.

Immediately then before the Roman invasion Cair Ceri, or Cirencester, as the capital of the nation of the Dobuni, situated in the rear of a chain of forts, at the junction of the four great roads, presented a lively picture of British life. Here dwelt the Prince distinguished by his golden torque, or twisted wreath of gold, and surrounded by his warriors who were ready to defend the mounds of the city with their spears and bows, or mounting their chariots to charge the enemy, mowing them in pieces with the scythes attached to the wheels. The deer, the wild boar, and the wolf dwelt in the forests around, one of which has perpetuated its name in Sharncote – Cerney-coed, the wood on the river Cerin, or Churn. Herds of cattle and flocks of sheep – the wealth of the Britons – moved over the enclosed vales and hill sides. Here came the bard with his traditions of the heroes of old whose graves – huge mounds of earth – stood beside the highways, or on the slopes of the hills, here came distant echoes of the deeds that were convulsing the Eastern world, borne by the Phœnician trader to the coasts of Cornwall, here too no doubt came the news that a foreign invader had landed upon the shores of the island. Julius Cæsar did not come so far west as Cair Ceri.

But about A.D. 40, one Beric, a prince of the Dobuni, being expelled from his country on account of some intrigues, fled to Rome, and solicited the Emperor Claudius to invade Britain, assuring him that the Dobuni would readily receive the Romans. The Emperor sent Aulus Plantius with an army, the Dobuni submitted, and about the year A. D. 43 the Roman standards appeared before Cirencester.

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*To be continued.*

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HISTORY OF CIRENCESTER.

THE ROMANS AT CIRENCESTER.

CHAPTER II.

The Dobuni, having submitted to the Roman general, he forthwith began to make their country the base of further military operations against the Britons. The most fierce and warlike nation upon the borders of the Dobuni were the Silures, who inhabited the banks of the Severn, and against these, as the most dangerous neighbours of his newly acquired territory, and as likely, unless conquered, to disturb its peace, Aulus Plautius directed the movements of his army. Cair Ceri, at the foot of the Alps dividing the Dobuni from the Silures, presented a favourable situation for a military magazine, and for the residence of the general whilst directing the operations upon the enemy. The chain of forts upon the hills offered the means of overawing the turbulent Silures, and were, no doubt, strengthened by the Romans as outposts to protect their civilizing work in the peaceful territory below. The Romans, finding the place called Cair Ceri, or Cori, added to the name the Latin termination *um*, Corinium, by which name it was afterwards known and entered upon their Itineraries or guide-books. By some it was called Corinium Dobunorum, or Corinium of the Dobuni. Here, as the most convenient situation, the Romans established their magazine, and here their general Aulus Plautius, spent at least a portion of his time whilst engaged in subduing the Silures. As he had entered the country of the Dobuni rather as a friend than as an enemy, and had received the submission of Cogidunus, their Prince, the Britons appear to have attended his court. Plautius married a British lady, Pomponia, who was a Christian, and upon the return of her husband to Rome, was actually tried for professing that religion. Rufus Pudens, an officer in Plautius' army, also married a British maiden, Claudia, a Christian, and a relation of the British Prince. They had a son, Linus, who was a Christian, and afterwards became the first Bishop of Rome – the first successor to St. Peter. These early British Christians were mentioned by St. Paul in the ii.Tim. iv,v.21, "Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren." The Roman epigrammatic poet, Martial, who was living at the time, and seems to have been intimate with Rufus Pudens and Claudia, twice refers to them in his poems which have been thus translated: -

“ON CLAUDIA RUFINA.

“Although born among the blue-eyed Britons, how fully has Claudia Rufina the intelligence of the Roman people! What beauty is hers ! The matrons of Italy might take her for a Roman, those of Attica for an Athenian. The Gods have kindly ordered that she proves fruitful to her revered husband, and that while yet young she may hope for sons-in-law and daughters-in-law ! May heaven grant her ever to rejoice in one single husband, and to exult in being the mother of three children.”

“TO RUFUS ON A HAPPY MARRIAGE

“Claudia Peregrina, Rufus, is about to be married to my friend Pudens. Be propitious Hymen with thy torches. As fitly is precious cinnamon united with nard, and Massic wine with Attic honey. Nor are elms more fittly wedded to tender vines, the lotus more love the waters, or the myrtle the river’s bank. Mayest thou always hover over their couch, fair Concord, and may Venus ever be auspicious to a couple so well matched. In after years may the wife cherish her husband in his old age, and may she when grown old, not seem so to her husband.”

The poet calls Claudia, Peregrina, which means that she was a foreigner, and alludes to her birth among the Britons. These Christians, Pomponia, Rufus, Claudia, and Linus, without doubt at times resided in Corinium, which thus, scarcely ten years after the Death upon the Cross, witnessed the worship of Christ, and that in so distant a country to that of the scene of the Crucifixion, that it was thought almost out of the world, and the soldiers of Plautius’ army, when assembled on the opposite coast of Gaul, mutinied, and refused to be led into so remote and unknown a country as Britain. And it was only from mere shame that they were at last induced to embark. These remarkable facts naturally led to the enquiry – how could Christianity at so early a date have penetrated into this obscure corner of the world? Paul is recorded to have visited the “utmost bounds of the west,” which may include Britain, in the earliest times considered the most western land. Brutus, the Trojan, when directed by the oracle to go to the farthest west, wandered about until he reached Britain, where he remained, believing that he had found the place indicated. It would be hard to define what is meant by “the utmost bounds of the west” in the sense of the ancients, without including Britain. The legend says that Paul came at the request of Claudia, and if so, since her country was the Dobuni, there is every possibility that he visited Cair Ceri, but if he came at the request of a Christian, Christianity must have preceded him. This much seems evident, that as early as ten years after the Crucifixion, Christ was worshipped by persons of high rank – a Roman officer, a British Princess, and the Roman General’s wife – who were all at times at Cirencester.

Vespasian, who afterwards became Emperor of Rome, was now associated with Aulus Plautins in the command of the army in Britain. Richard of Cirencester, writing of the cities of the Dobuni, says they were “Salinæ Branogena (Droitwich), on the left of the Sabrina (Severn), Alauua (Alchester), and the most venerable of all Corinium (Cirencester),

a famous city supposed to have been built by Vespasian.” The same author states that the Britons had formerly 92 cities, of which 33 were more celebrated than the rest. Ten of these 33 were under the Latian law, and one of the ten was Corinium or Cirencester. The Latian law was the privileges granted to the inhabitants of Latium, which mainly consisted in the right of following their own laws, exemption from the edicts of the Roman prætor, and the option of adopting the laws of Rome. Richard, in his Itinerary, in which the distances of the principal cities upon the Roman roads from each other are given, mentions Corino, or Cirencester, as fourteen (properly eighteen) miles from Glebon Colon, or Gloucester. It would appear that from the time of Vespasian the city rapidly increased in importance. Regularly-built walls of stone arose upon the old mounds, enclosing a parallelogram of about 240 acres. The walls were about 15 feet high and eight thick, with a fosse on the outside, and a bank of earth thrown up within against them. Their whole extent was about two miles. Within these bulwarks Roman civilization soon gave evidence of its presence by the erection of numerous villas, the care and ornamentation bestowed upon which indicate that they were inhabited by men of wealth, and that the city enjoyed a long peace. The walls of some of these villas have been disinterred to the height of a few feet, and found ornamented with colours and paintings, like the houses in the buried city of Pompeii. The floors were laid with tassellated pavements, constructed of various coloured stones about a quarter of an inch square, in many instances brought from distant counties. Some were like glass of a ruby hue. By means of these dice-like stones, the Roman artists worked out, not only geometrical patterns, but scenes from the mythology of Greece and Italy – as Orpheus playing on his lyre, charming the birds and beasts who walk in a stately measure round him; Acteon, with the stag’s horns budding from his brow, and attacked by his own dogs; medallions of the seasons, hunting scenes, and monsters of the deep. These pavements formed indestructible and richly-coloured carpets of stone. The floors were most carefully protected against damp by a layer of rammed gravel, on which was a second layer of gravel, lime, sand or broken tiles, then a third strata of pounded brick, lime, and sand, upon which last the tessellæ themselves were laid. The floor of these rooms intended for winter occupation was supported upon pillars of brick for the purpose of making fires below and warming the apartments. A temple rose in the midst, supported upon pillars calculated to have been thirty feet high. These columns were of the Corinthian order, and one of the capitals yet remains, measuring four feet across, with two tiers of acanthus leaves. Two other capitals of a smaller size are preserved, sculptured, one with heads of Bacchus and Silenus. Several other mutilated columns remain, and a portion of one was recently

discovered built into the wall of a chapel in the Abbey Church. The moulding had been partly re-cut, so that it appeared to be in unison with the character of the building, but on removing the wall it was found that the half of the column which had been imbedded had a Roman moulding differing from the half which had been exposed. Near by was found a small hand altar, and as a line drawn from the Preston to the Stratton road would pass through the Church, it has been thought that here stood the basilica, or hall for the transaction of public business, afterwards converted into a Christian Church.

Baths, the invariable accompaniment of Roman civilization, were built, and altars erected to the gods in various parts of the city. Bacchus was represented upon the columns, and statuettes of Apollo, Mercury, Minerva, Diana, and Atlas, have been found, together with the small figures called Lares and Penates, household gods. Querns, or hand-mills for grinding corn, steelyards for weighing, bodkins, brooches, armlets, and other articles of personal use, with numberless pieces of pottery and hundreds of coins, have been dug up, and are still found, giving evidence of the long and peaceful residence of the Romans. On one of these pieces of pottery, a tile, is the mark of a dog's paw, the animal having run across the damp clay, and the impression having been baked in; on another is a curious Roman acrostic of five words, which reads the same forwards, backwards, upwards, or downwards. Even medicine stamps, used to impress the character of the wares upon the medicines, have been found. The coins range from Augustus (B.C. 29) to Honorius (A.D. 423), a period of nearly four hundred years, during which time the Roman rule was dominant in Britain. These coins present a series of cabinet portraits of the emperors, like a gallery of portraits, and as it were give an insight into their characters – Vespasian, a firm antique head; Nero, beautiful but effeminate.

The Romans also dug wells, one of which has been cleared out, and a portion of a Roman pitcher found built into the wall.

Nor did they stop short at building villas, temples, baths, and other conveniences for the serious business of life, but outside the city walls, in a place whence the stones for these walls were obtained, they erected an extensive amphitheatre for their amusement. It consisted of two semicircular mounds of earth, rising twenty feet, sloping gently down to the arena, with tiers of stone seats for the spectators. The arena was fifty yards long, in the form of an oval, with an entrance at each end, and winding approaches for the combatants, which can still be traced leading to hollows at some distance, wherein were probably the dens for the wild beasts used in the shows. Seated upon the tiers, the spectators not only enjoyed a clear view of the gladiators in the arena, but from their elevated position could overlook the ramparts of the city below.

It was near here too, outside the city walls, that the Romans buried their dead. Several stone coffins and funeral urns have been found about the Querns. A stone bore an inscription to "Julia Casta, wife, aged thirty-three." Their usual custom appears to have been to burn the body and place the ashes in an urn, which again was sometimes placed in a sarcophagus of stone; but they occasionally buried the entire body, for skeletons have been found with armlets upon the wrists. Lower down the wall, at Watermoor, was another favourite burial place, where have been found three monumental head-stones. Two of these were in memory of deceased warriors, and were each sculptured with the figure of a man on horseback, spearing a prostrate enemy. One was to the memory of "Dannicus, a horseman of the Indian wing, of the troop of Albanus, who had served sixteen years, a citizen of Rauricum. By the care of Fulvius Natalis and Fulvius Bitucus, the heirs of his last will. He is buried here." The other to "Sextus Valerius Genialis, a horseman of the Thracian wing, a citizen of Fricia, of the troop of the squadron of Genialis, he lived forty years and served twenty; he is buried here and his heirs erected this monument." A third stone was sculptured with the figure of a citizen in a cloak, and the inscription, "Philus the son of Cassavus, a citizen of the Sequani, forty-five years old, is buried here."

Much of the pottery disinterred bears upon it representations of scenes in the arena, of combats between gladiators, and with wild beasts, similar to those scenes which must have occurred in the amphitheatre in the Querns. These vessels of earthenware are often stamped with the maker's name, and besides the pictorial scenes are ornamented with scrolls.

To render the possession of the conquered country easy by the rapid transit of troops, and by the formation of colonies, the Roman engineers employed the subjugated people in constructing straight roads from station to station. These roads were often formed along the same route as the British tracks, but ran straight, and were built up of stone and hard materials to the height of several feet, with a slightly convex surface, or raised in the middle that the rain-water might drain off. The stones and soil thus thrown together left a ditch or fosse beside the road, which in the event of an attack upon an army travelling the road, would to a certain extent form a defence, as would the raised road itself. In marshy places these roads were raised several feet. The Fosse-way, near Cirencester, which takes its name from the ditch beside it, made by throwing up the stones and earth to form a road, is one of the most perfect specimens of Roman engineering works of this kind in Britain.

Although so many antiquities have been discovered in this place, scarcely any weapons of war have been disinterred. A spear-head, with the nail by which it was fastened to the shaft, and some arrow-heads, are

almost all that remain, and yet it would seem certain that great numbers of troops must have both been stationed here, and have passed through, indicating that the city enjoyed a long peace, for it is in times of battle that weapons are lost. It was, no doubt, this security and long peace that enabled the Roman immigrants to erect such elegant villas, to employ artists of all kinds, to carry on all the usages of civilization, and to adorn the city with beautifully sculptured columns and temples, thus presenting upon the banks of the Churn a picture and miniature of their native Rome.

After, however, the time of Aulus Plautius, the public events recorded as happening here are few, considering the long lapse of four hundred years which followed, until the retreat of the Romans. Successive emperors, no doubt, sent their successive governors, and legions of soldiers passed through, but no events happened sufficiently important to have survived. At length, when the Roman empire began to fail in itself, the legions were withdrawn from the distant provinces thus left unprotected, the Romans began to leave the island, burying their money in secret places in hopes of returning in happier days, but these fortunate times did not come, and hence it is that so many deposits of coins have been discovered.

There is a legend that Constantine the Great was crowned at Cirencester, but it is without foundation. As, however, three Constantines and a Constans are recorded at different times to have ruled in Britain, it is possible that a prince of that name was crowned here. It is related that after the departure of the Romans, the Britons, unable to resist the encroachments of the Pictish and Norweigan invaders themselves, or to obtain assistance from Rome, sent Guethlin, archbishop of London, to Armorica, or Lesser Britain, now Brittany in France, to Aldroen, the king of that contry, to desire him to assume the crown of Britain, and to protect them with his forces. Aldroen declined the crown for himself, considering the country too distracted and exhausted to be worth having, but sent his brother Constantine with two thousand men. Constantine, it is said, was crowned at Cirencester – some say Silchester – about A. D. 408.

Constantine married a noble lady descended from a Roman family, and had three sons – Constans, Aurelius Ambrosius, and Uther Pendragon, which last was the father of the renowned King Arthur.

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## HISTORY OF CIRENCESTER.

### CHAPTER III. THE SAXONS, DANES, AND NORMANS.

In a book of poems attributed to Taliessin, a celebrated British bard of the fifth century, there is a poem called the Omen of Prydein the Great, in which mention is made of Cair Ceri, or Cirencester, in the following words:-

“The stewards of Cair Ceri dishonoured complain.”

No explanation is given of what they complained. The Saxons had now entered England, and it is said that a Saxon prince called Cissa rebuilt Cirencester. The Saxon chronicle says that in A. D. 477, “Ella, and his three sons, Cymen, and Wlencing and Cissa, came to the land of Britain with three ships.” If Cissa did actually rebuild or increase Cirencester, these facts would give a reasonable etymology of the common name of the place Cissiter, *i.e.*, Cissa’s-ceaster, or Cissa’s fort. Cissaceaster might easily become shortened to Cissiter, and this appears more reasonable than to suppose Cissiter a contraction of Cirencester.

Cirencester arose from the Saxons adding the word ceaster, meaning a walled place, to the British cerin the name of the river, hence came Cerin-ceaster, or Cyrenceaster – the walled city upon the Cerin. Cerin, the name of the river, afterwards became corrupted to Churn, just as the Saxon ceorl, a husbandman, became the modern churl, a rude fellow. Cirencester means exactly the same as Cair Ceri – the walled place upon the river Ceri. It may possibly have been called both Cissa-ceaster – Cissiter, and Cirencester, in those times as now.

The great King Arthur is related to have been crowned in St. Cecily’s Church, Cirencester, but other accounts place his coronation in the city of Legions, Glamorganshire, in A.D. 508. There were now incessant struggles between the Britons and Saxons.

The Britons appointed their princes in succession, against whom the Saxon invaders fought with fury and treachery, and in the course of the struggle, the Saxons called an African tyrant to their assistance, who besieged the British king Careticus, in Cirencester about A.D. 577. The event happened this way according to the history of Geoffrey Monmouth – “After Malgo (King of the British) succeeded Careticus, a lover of civil war and hateful to God and to the Britons, the Saxons discovering his fickle disposition, went to Ireland for Gormund, king of the Africans, who had arrived there with a very great fleet, and had subdued that country.

From thence, at their traitorous instigation, he sailed over into Britain, which the perfidious Saxons in one part, in another the Britons, by their continual wars amongst themselves, were wholly laying waste. Entering therefore into alliance with the Saxons, he made war upon King Careticus, and after several battles fought, drove him from city to city, till at length he drove him to Cirencester, and there besieged him. Here Isembard, the nephew of Lewis, king of the Franks, came and made a league of amity with him, and out of respect to him, renounced the Christian faith, on condition that he (Gormund) would assist him to gain the kingdom of Gaul from his uncle, by whom he said he was forcibly and unjustly expelled out of it. At last, after taking and burning the city (of Cirencester) he had another fight with Careticus, and made him flee beyond the Severn into Wales. He then made an utter devastation of the country, set fire to the adjacent cities, and continued these outrages until he had almost burnt up the whole surface of the island from the one sea to the other, so that the tillage was everywhere destroyed, and a general destruction made of the husbandmen and clergy with fire and sword. The terrible calamity caused the rest to flee whether-so-ever they had any hopes of safety.” This vivid picture of the wretched state of the country through the incessant warfare of the Britons and the Saxons is fully borne out by more reliable historians. The legend relates that Gormund beseiged the city for seven years, and at length took it by stratagem. He caused combustibles to be tied to the tails of a number of sparrows, and letting them loose they flew and settled upon the thatched roofs of the city, which immediately burst into flames. The troops entered in the confusion, and the Britons under Careticus were driven out, and another battle fought immediately afterwards, in which Careticus was utterly defeated.

Alexander Neccham, Abbot of Cirencester in 1213, a learned man and a poet, commemorated the event in a Latin verse: -

*Urbs vires experta tuas, Gurmunde, per annos septem,*

A city which proved thy power, Gormund, for seven years.

Giraldus Cambrensis, an author of the twelfth century, called Cirencester the city of sparrows in allusion to Gormund’s stratagem. The arms of the town are a Phoenix rising from the flames, just as the town sprung up afresh from the ashes to which it had been reduced by Gormund.

The more authentic history of Cirencester re-opens in A.D. 557, in which year the Saxon Chronicle contains this entry: - “A.D. 557. This year Cuthwine and Ceawlin fought against the Britons, and they slew three kings, Comail and Condidan and Farinmeail, at the place which is called Deorham, and took three cities from them, Gloucester and Cirencester and Bath.”

The Chronicle of Ethelward has the addition, "They (Cuthwine and Ceawlin) took three of their most distinguished cities, Gloucester, Cirencester and Bath."

From these entries it appears that Cirencester was then of sufficient importance to be ranked with Gloucester and Bath, and was considered one of "the most distinguished cities" of the Britons. It was, therefore, no doubt the residence of a British prince, and here are three kings, Comail, Condidan, and Farinmeail, mentioned in connection with the three cities, so that probably one of them ruled Cirencester. The place called Deorham, at which the battle was fought and the British defeated, is supposed to have been Durham, near Chipping Sodbury.

Cirencester had now passed out of the hands of the Britons, but the Saxons had hardly established themselves and formed the island into kingdoms under their leaders, than they turned their arms against themselves, and each prince struggled for the supremacy over the others, endeavouring to become Britwalda, or king of kings. Cirencester was in the kingdom of the West Saxons. The Saxon Chronicle states: - A.D. 628. This year Cynegils and Cuichelm fought against Penda at Cirencester, and then made a treaty."

Cynegils was king of the West Saxons, and consequently king of Cirencester. Cuichelm was his son. Adjoining the kingdom of the West Saxons was the kingdom of Mercia, ruled over by Penda, who now attempted to take Cirencester with the aid of his ally Cadwalla, king of the West Britons (Wales), but was repulsed by King Cynegils and his son Cuichelm, after which they made a treaty. At this date the Saxons who formed the kingdom of Mercia were still Pagans, and their conversion is not recorded until 27 years after the battle at Cirencester. Ultimately it appears, the son of King Penda (Peada) succeeded in attaching Cirencester to Mercia in A.D. 656.

A memorial of these struggles of the Saxon Chiefs for supremacy over each other seems to have come down in the name of a place in Cirencester hundred, which was called "Brightwalde's-barrow." The Chief, who succeeded in obtaining rule over several of the kingdoms into which the land was then divided, was called Britwalda, or Emperor, so that Brightwalde's-barrow seems to have been the burial place of one of the Britwaldas or Chief of Chiefs. King Penda, of Mercia, in his endeavours to become Britwalda fought a battle at Cirencester, and though he was not killed at Cirencester it was a drawn battle and many of his men may have been buried here, or he may have passed over the place himself. Holinshed's Chronicle in the account of the battle spells the place Cirenchester.

The Saxons built a collegiate church at Cirencester whilst it was in their possession. It is supposed to have been founded by Alwyn the Saxon, in the days of King Egbert, who reigned from A.D 800 to 837.

The Danes were now in the island and after many struggles with the Saxons received a severe defeat at Heddington before King Alfred, in A.D. 878. There King Gothrum was baptized. Then records the Saxon chronicle in 879, "This year the army went to Cirencester from Chippenham and sat there one year \* \* \* A.D. 880. This year the army went from Cirencester to East Anglia."

Asser, the biographer of King Alfred, records the event in these words – "In the year of our Lord's incarnation 879, which was the thirty-first of King Alfred, the aforesaid army of pagans leaving Chippenham, as they had promised, went to Cirencester, which is called in British "Cair Cori," and is situate in the southern part of the Wiccii, and there they remained one year. \* \* \* In the year of our Lord's incarnation 890, which was the thirty-second of King Alfred, the above named army of pagans left Cirencester and went among the East Angles."

From this it appears that after the defeat of the Danes at Heddington, by King Alfred, their King Gothrum was baptized, having previously worshipped Thor and Odin, and entered into an agreement to leave Chippenham. Accordingly Gothrum marched his defeated army out of Chippenham – "as they had promised" – and came to Cirencester, and wintered there. In the following year he left. The Wiccii, in whose southern parts Cirencester is stated to have stood, were the inhabitants of Gloucester, Worcester, and part of Warwickshire. The manuscripts of Asser spell Cirencester, "Cirrenceastre," and "Cirun-ceastre."

Ultimately the Danes obtained the kingdom under King Canute. The Saxon chronicle contains this entry, "A.D. 1020. King Canute came again to England. And then, at Easter, there was a great council at Cirencester; then was outlawed Ethelwerd, the ealdorman, and Edwy, king of the churls."

This great council was the mycelgemote, or parliament of the nation, which was then held wherever the convenience of the monarch required. The churls were the ceorls, husbandmen. Another account states that at this great council, an English duke, Ethelwald was outlawed, and Eric, duke of Northumberland, banished from the kingdom. These measures, it is said, made Canute very popular.

In the reign of Edward the Confessor, who ascended the throne in 1041, Reimbald, a priest or dean, of the collegiate church founded at Cirencester by the Saxons, became chancellor of the kingdom.

Domesday Book, which was composed about 1080 by order of William the Conqueror, preserves a record of the state of Cirencester in the time of Edward the Confessor, and in that of William. From this record it

appears that in the days of Edward the Confessor, or immediately previous to the Conquest, that the land and property at Cirencester was divided between the King, Reimbald, the priest, the collegiate church, and several thanes. The estates in the possession of the crown extended over four "hides," which were tracts of land each annually worth a Norman pound, *i.e.*, a pound weight of silver, or about 120 acres, so that the crown had about 500 acres. The manor annually paid three bushels and a half of bread-corn, three bushels of barley, and six and a half measures of honey in kind, and £9 5s. in money. It also contributed three thousand loaves every year for the dogs – the King's hounds – and the Queen had the wool of all the sheep as part of her income.

Besides the King's estate, a freeman held two hides, or about 240 acres of land in Cirencester, for which he paid 20s. per annum, and was liable to serve the sheriff of the county in whatever part of England he should be called upon. The Earl William put this land out to farm, and gave it to one of his followers.

William, son of Baderon, also held two hides, or 240 acres, in Cirencester, but let them to one Hugh. There was a *villein*, or copyholding tenant upon it, and four *bordarii*, who did service, also two *servi*, or labourers. It was worth then 100s., but afterwards, in the time of the Normans, only 70s.

The collegiate church possessed two hides of land, or 240 acres, of which six were meadow, all of which was held free of custom or rent, from the crown.

In the hundred of Gersdon, now Crowthorn and Minety, Godric held a place called Omenie, of King Edward, which was about 500 acres in extent.

Godric, the thane, also held about 120 acres in Norcote. Godric was a freeman, and might go wherever he pleased.

Pretestune, or Preston, was held by Elaf, who was also free, and could go where he pleased.

Ackelie (Acley – Oakley) was held by Kenneward and Brictric.

Earl Tosti held Drifelle (Driffield), and under him Elaf the thane. This Tosti was the son of the great Earl Godwin, who so long was the chief man in England, until he was banished by King Edward in 1051. Afterward, in 1066, Tosti's brother Harold was made King of England, and gathered together a great army to withstand William of Norway, who was expected to invade the island. But Tosti joined forces with the King of Norway, and they came to the mouth of the Humber and fought against the English, and defeated them at York. King Harold, to save his kingdom, was compelled to march to the north, leaving the south coast unguarded. He met the Norwegians and Tosti at Stamford-bridge, and defeated them both in a great battle, in which Tosti fell. But, meantime, William of

Normandy had landed, and Harold hastened back to meet him, but his forces were weary and disorganised. The battle was long and bloody, but at last Harold was killed, and his army defeated, and William the Conqueror became king. Thus the traitorous attack of Earl Tosti in the north, by drawing off King Harold from the south-east, enabled William to land, and by disorganising Harold's forces gave the Normans the victory.

Elaf the thane, who held Drifelle under Earl Tosti, was displaced when his lord was outlawed; and Reimbald, the dean of the church at Cirencester, held it when William the Conqueror surveyed the land. There were then twenty-five persons living on the estate, besides a priest. A mill stood on it, valued at 5s. a year. There were 20 acres of meadow, and the whole was valued at £8 per annum.

Reimbald, the dean, also held Elaf's land at Pretestune, or Preston, on which there were twenty-two persons, and which was also valued at £8.

Reimbald also held Omenie, in Gersdon, on which were seventeen persons and a priest. Here stood two mills, valued at 10s. per year; there were 20 acres of meadow, and the whole was worth 100s. rent. Norcote, with ten persons, and valued at 40s. rent, closed the rent-roll of Reimbald. Upon these vast estates seventy-four men were living, and there were two priests.

At the same time, in the reign of William the Conqueror, Ackelie was held by Roger de Laci, and under him Giralde. There were nine persons on it, and two priests, and it was valued at £8. Gislebert held an estate in Akelie of the king, and under him Osulf. There were twelve persons on it, and it was worth 30s. per year. Turstin, son of Rolf, also held an estate in Ackelie, and under him Girvinus. Nine persons lived on it, and it was valued at 50s. per annum.

William the Conqueror gave some land in the hundred of Cirencester, and part of a wood at Wick, or Painswick, to the Church of St. Mary, of Cirencester. It was worth 10s. a-year.

The rent paid by the manor of Cirencester to the crown in the reign of King Edward the Confessor consisted chiefly in kind; but in William the Conqueror's time it was £20 5s. and 20 cows, and 20 hogs, and 16s. instead of the 3000 loaves for the dogs. And "*20s. for the new market, of which St. Mary had the third penny.*" From this it appears that so far from the market at Cirencester being a thing of modern date, which has been stated to make an invidious comparison with other towns, it actually existed in the reign of William the Conqueror, A.D. 1086, nearly 800 years ago. The manor of Cirencester then paid 20s. a-year for the right of holding it, and the Church of St. Mary had the third penny of the profits.

The manor was then chiefly plough land, but there was some meadow and two woods. There were 56 persons upon it, only two of whom were free. Thirty-one were *villeins*, who held their lands by doing husbandry work at certain seasons of the year upon that part of the manor which the lord held in his own hands, and which was called the domain. Thirteen were *servi*, servants or labourers, wholly employed in working upon the domain for the lord; and ten were *bordarii*, who held their lands by doing some service to the lord, such as furnishing him with provisions. This was the state of Cirencester in the feudal times at the commencement of the Norman rule.

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#### HISTORY OF CIRENCESTER.

##### CHAPTER IV. - THE NORMANS.

Henry I to Richard II. Foundation of the Abbey -  
Grants - Charters - Events from A.D. 1117 to 1339.

In the year A.D. 1117, the collegiate church at Cirencester that had been built by the Saxons was abolished, and King Henry the 1st founded an abbey. It was fourteen years in building. Serlo, fourth dean of Salisbury, was the first Abbot. He died in 1147. The abbey had a charter granted to it by Henry I, the particulars of which are recited in one granted by Edward III, which will presently occur. The abbey was dedicated to St. Mary. Henry gave it the lands that had been possessed by Rainbald. Henry also founded an hospital dedicated to St. John after the abbey was completed.

Henry the 1st died in 1137, and Stephen succeeded to the throne. Civil war almost immediately ensued between him and the Empress Maud, or more properly Countess of Anjou, Henry's daughter. In this war the celebrated Robert, Earl of Gloucester, took a most decided part. It appears that in those days there was a castle at Cirencester since Robert is recorded to have garrisoned it for Maud, and to have gathered a large army here to support her cause, but Stephen came suddenly upon him, defeated him, took the castle, and burnt it. This was in A.D. 1141. It was soon however, repaired, and William de Dive, constable to the Earl of Leicester, held it against the King for some time, until he obtained advantageous terms for his master by surrendering it.

King Richard I. in the ninth year of his reign, *i.e.*, A.D. 1165, increased the revenues of the abbey of Cirencester, by giving it the manor of Cirencester “with all and singular appurtenances, and with the town of Mynetie, which is a member of the said manor and with the seven hundreds of the same manor, and to his farm belonging, and with all other the appurtenancies to be holden of the said King and his successors for ever, at the rent of £30 a year, with Soca, Saca, Thol, Them, Infangtheof, and Outfangtheof, Hamsoca, and Girthbricke, Blodewite, Murder, Forestall, Flemsfleet, Ordeal, and Orest, within time and without, and in all places and with all causes which may be.”

The terms Sac, Soc, &c., refer to the institutions and rights of feudal tenure.

In the seventh year of King Richard I., A.D. 1196, a tallage was made upon the manors of the crown by William Bishop of Hereford under which the burgesses of Cirencester paid £10. The sum does not sound large, but it must be borne in mind that coins in those days being comparatively scarce bore a far higher value than those at present circulating under the same denomination.

On the death of King Richard, John succeeded to the throne and was quickly involved in civil war with his barons – the result of which was the signing of the celebrated Magna Charta by the King. In A.D. 1215 John assembled an army at Cirencester to suppress the barons who were in the field under the command of Robert Fitzwalter, but he was compelled to submit and sign the charter, being the weaker party. In the fifth year of King John's reign, A.D. 1204, the lands of William of Cirencester, situated in Minety, were granted to the abbey, and in A.D. 1216, another farm was also granted to it. In the same year the Monks obtained a grant to hold a fair at Cirencester. King John confirmed the grants of King Henry by a charter of which the following is a copy: -

“JOHN, by the grace of God, king of England, &c.; to the archbishops, &c., greeting. It is becoming our dignity, and is necessary to our salvation that we should defend, keep and preserve those holy and religious places which were founded by our great grandfather, King Henry the 1st, and were confirmed by King Henry II., our father; therefore we give and grant, and by this present charter confirm to God, and to the holy church of St. Mary of Cirencester, and to the canons regular serving God in that place, in free and perpetual alms, for the good of the soul of the aforesaid King Henry, who was founder thereof, and for the soul of our father afore mentioned, and for the souls of King Richard our brother, and Queen Anne our mother, and of our brethren and all others departed this life in the true faith, all our manor of Cirencester, with its appurtenances; with the town of Minchey, which is a member of the said manor, with the seven hundreds belonging to the said manor and farm, with all their appurtenances; to hold of us and our successors, yielding and paying £89 yearly for all services, at our exchequer, at the feast of St. Michael. And know ye, that for the good of our soul, and all others above mentioned, we have given, released, and quit claimed, in perpetual alms, to the honour of St. Mary, and to our said canons of Cirencester serving God, forty shillings yearly rent, which the said manor was accustomed to pay, so that for the

future they shall pay only a rent of £30 as aforesaid; and this we have done that the canons of our demesnes, who are so named therein, may the more freely, quietly, and safely serve God, in praying for us, for our father, and the rest above mentioned; wherefore we will, &c. We will also, and command, that they enjoy that manor as full and quietly, with all its liberties and free customs, as King Richard, our brother, enjoyed the same, when it was in his hands, except pleas of the crown, and our forest of Minchey, which we reserve to ourselves, as the charter of King Richard, our brother, can testify. Witnesses – Robert, earl of Leicester; William, earl of Pembroke; William de Albenince, Garine de Glapum, Peter Estokes, &c.”

In A.D. 1227 or 1217, one Alexander Nequam, or Neccham, Abbot of Cirencester, died. Nequam is recorded to have been a very learned man, and to have been a proficient in all kinds of literature. One historian says he was buried at St. Albans, but others in the cloisters of the cathedral church at Worcester, with an epitaph – which translated runs, - “Wisdom suffers an eclipse. The sun is buried, who being alive every kind of learning flourished. Neccham is reduced to ashes ! Were there one left in the country to succeed him, his death would be less to be lamented.”

Between the years A.D. 1230 and 1238, an agreement was entered into between Hugh de Bampton, or Bathon, Abbot of Cirencester, and Elias Gifford, lord of the manor of Brimpsfield, of which the following is a copy: -

“Hugh, Abbot of Cirencester, and the Convent agree with Elias Gifford, that the bailiffs of them and their successors may come to Bromesfield only twice a year, to hold view of Frankpledge in the court of the said Elias and his heirs to wit, of pleas of the Crown and all other things to view of frankpledge belonging, viz., about the feast of St. Martin and about Hock day upon reasonable summons, so that the men of the said Elias and his heirs abiding within the Liberty, shall come at the two days where they shall shew to the Abbot’s bailiffs, all pleas to the view of frankpledge belonging, which of the said two days by the view of their said two bailiffs shall be determined and the said Elias and his heirs at each of the said two days, shall give to the Abbot and Convent; second, whether the said court shall be amended or not for all occasions (fines) and amerciaments to the said view belonging; so that the men of the Abbot and Convent in the Liberty of the said Elias abiding shall not give more to the amerciament of the said two views than to them shall appertain of the said four shillings, according to the number of men abiding in the Liberty of the said Elias; and if any robber or robbers shall be taken in the Liberty of the said Elias or his heirs they shall be taken without delay to the Abbot’s prison in Cirencester and there be received and judged; and if hue and cry shall be levied within the same Liberty, it shall not be determined but by the view of the Abbot’s bailiffs, so that if any of the Liberty of the said Elias being, unless he shall be of the men of the Abbot and Convent of Cirencester, by occasion of that hue and cry shall fall into amerciament, the said Elias and his heirs shall have the said amerciament, and if any of the Abbot’s and Convent’s men, or any other, who shall not be of the Liberty of the said Elias, and by occasion of the said hue and cry shall be amerced the Abbot and Convent of Cirencester, and their successors, shall have that amerciament; and if any of the men of the Abbot and Convent, or their cattle in damage of the said Elias and his heirs, shall be found in his wood, or meadow, or standing corn, or pasture, or else when saving the liberty of pasture in Wartwold, they shall make to the said Elias and his heirs, amends as appraised by some of the Abbot’s and some of the said Elias, and his heirs, men without any amerciament; and if any of the men of the Abbot and Convent, or any of the

men of the said Elias and his heirs, in anything shall forfeit and he shall complain, the Abbot and Convent and their successors shall hold their court thereof, and therein it shall be determined and not in the Hundred. Likewise if any men of the said Elias and his heirs shall forfeit to any of the men of the Abbot and Convent and shall complain, the said Elias and his heirs shall have their court, and it shall be determined there and not in the Hundred; and if any kenteling (strayling) should happen within the Liberty of the said Elias and his heir, they shall have it, and for the said 4/, the said Elias and his heirs shall be quit of all suit of the Hundred, except by them and their attornies twice a year to the Hundred of Rapsgate and their court as usual. In like manner the said Elias and his heirs or their attornies, at the calling of the court of the Hundred of Cirencester, upon any extraordinary occasions or to hear the king's precepts, shall come upon reasonable summons and by the said 4/ all the men of the manor of Brimpsfield shall be quit of all complaints and demands belonging to the Abbot and Convent or their bailiff; and all persons whoever they be, who shall have a right to enter into the said tything before the bailiffs of the Abbot and Convent shall enter serving the 1d. for entering the tything to the tything man; and if any complaint of the said Elias and his heirs, or his men's of cattle impounded unjustly, taken and detained against pledges and sureties, shall arise, the Abbot and Convent, and their successors may revoke such complaint from the County (court). Plaint to be withdrawn in the court of the Abbot and Convent upon the law of the land, so that the Abbot and Convent may have the reasonable amerciament, if any shall be incident."

In A.D. 1253, Henry III. gave the monastery a grant to hold fairs; and in 1258, another grant to hold markets in Cirencester and in the seven hundreds. In this reign the abbot paid £20 as an aid to the king, upon the marriage of his eldest daughter. The abbot was summoned to parliament in the forty-third year of this reign, or A.D. 1259.

In A.D. 1287, in the reign of Edward I., a writ of *quo warrant*e was brought against the abbot to show his right to the seven hundreds. The £30 a-year rent which was paid by the abbot, was settled by this king on Queen Margaret, as a portion of her dower. It was to be paid by tale, not by weight. During this reign, in the year 1305, there was a deed made between the Abbot of Cirencester and one John de Latton, which is still extant. The descendants of John de Latton formerly lived at Kingston Bagpuze, in Berkshire. The deed runs thus –

*“Grant from Henry de Hamptonell, Abbot of Cirencester,  
to John de Latton.*

“To all Christian people who shall either hear, see or bear this present deed, Henry, by divine permission Abbot of Cirencester, and the convent of that place, send health in our Lord. Know ye that we have granted to John de Latton, and Isabel his wife, in the form and under condition following, these several things hereafter specified, to receive every week so long as they shall jointly live: - Fourteen white loaves and nine gallons of beer, whereof five gallons of the beer shall be such as the convent useth, and the other four gallons shall be of the chaplain's beer; and they shall receive one mess every day out of our kitchen, in like manner as our day officers do receive it from our house. Provided that if the said Isabel shall survive, that then and immediately from the death of the said John, one moiety of all above granted shall altogether cease. And in consideration of the aforesaid grant, the aforesaid John hath wholly released to us and to our church, and hath quit claimed for himself and his heirs for ever, of all right and claim which he had or any way can have, with the reversion thereof, in all the lands and tenements, and

all their appurtenances, which Walter, father of the said John did hold by lease from us in Latton. And the said John and his heirs shall fully and entirely warrant the said lands and tenements to us and to our church, without any diminution whatsoever. And if it should happen, which we hope will never be, that the said John and Isabel shall any way be deficient in the said warranty, or should lay claim, or pretend any right to the said tenements, that from thenceforth the said abbot and convent shall be for ever discharged from the performance of every part of this grant, without any pretence whatsoever. In witness whereof the parties above said have interchangeably set their seals to this indenture. Given at Cirencester, at the feast of the purification of the blessed Virgin, in the thirty-third year of the reign of King Edward, son of King Henry."

In the rein of Edward II. there were two petitions from Cirencester to Parliament. The following extracts show their character: -

"Cirencester. S. Edward II. (A.D. 1315.) - On the petition of Nicholas de Stratton, praying that judgment may be delivered in a plea pending before the Barons of the Exchequer, Rex versus the Abbot of Cirencester, touching a tallage due from the Borough of Cirencester (as from other Boroughs), for the King's works, which tallage the Abbot claims for own works, declaring that he holds it by grant from the predecessor of the king that now is."

"Response. - The Treasurers and Barons of the Exchequer are to proceed to judgement."

"Abbey of Cirencester, S. Edward II. - The Abbot and Convent of Cirencester declare in petition that by charter of Richard I., and the confirmation of subsequent monarchs, they hold the manor and seven hundreds of Cirencester at £30 a-year, paid into the Treasury: within the bounday of which hundreds are the two manors of Wythyndon and Bybury, where petitioners have hitherto had the return of the King's writs, as in the others, but the Bishop of Worcester, now Lord of those two manors, disturbs the Abbot's bailiffs in the aforesaid two manors of Wythyndon and Bybury, under colour of a charter granting to his predecessor the return of writs in all his manors."

"Response. - Let him have a brief in Chancery against the Bishop and his bailiffs."

In A.D. 1317, William Erchebund, and Matilda his wife, received a grant of land in Cirencester from Cristina, once the wife of Richard de Haile, of Cirencester.

Edward II. spent the Christmas of 1322 at Cirencester. He was engaged in collecting an army to defend his favourites, but was unsuccessful. In the ninth year of this king's reign several merchants of Amiens, by name Giles Beaupigne, Henry Beaupigne, John de Sancto Filiano, and Robert his brother, settled at Cirencester. It is considered that they were dealers in wool. In A.D. 1320, Walter Wrilock and others granted two messuages, one toft, twenty-six acres, a yardland, four acres of meadow, &c., to the abbey: and in the same reign (Edward II.) the abbot held Crinklewood, which consisted of about 30 acres.

Edward II. was deposed in A.D. 1327. On Sunday, on the Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle, in that year, the Great Seal of England was delivered to the Bishop of Norwich, William Ayremin, lord treasurer, to be the keeper thereof, by the Queen and Prince, in the Queen's Chamber within the Abbey of Cirencester, in the presence of Roger Mortimer, Joan Countess of Warren, and others.

Edward III. ascended the throne A.D. 1327. He confirmed the previous gifts of King Henry to the Abbey, and as his charter contains many curious particulars respecting the possessions of the Abbey, a translation is appended.

*Charter of Edward III.*

“The King to Archbishops, &c. We have inspected the charter of Henry the First, of famous memory, heretofore king of England, our progenitor, in these words: - Henry King of England, to Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Priors, Earls, Barons, Justices, Sheriffs, and all the sons of holy church established throughout England, greeting: Know all men, that I, by the consent and authority of Pope Innocent, of pious memory, and by the advice and common approbation of the archbishops, and bishops, princes, and barons of my kingdom, have given to God and the Church of the blessed Mary of Cirencester, of which I was the unworthy founder, for the good of the souls of my parents and ancestors, and for the remission of my sins, and for the welfare and safety of my kingdom, and to Serlo, the first abbot, and to all his successors, and to the regular canons serving God in that place, in pure alms, all the estate of Reimbald the priest in lands and churches, and other things as followeth: to wit, two hides of land in the town of Cirencester, and the third part of the tolls of the market, which is held on Sunday in the several streets; and two parts of the tithes of the demesnes of Cirencester, and the whole tithe of all the rest of the parish. In Gloucestershire, eight hides of land in Preston, and the church thereof; one hide of land in Norcot, seven hides in Drifeild, four hides and one yardland in Amney, and the church thereof; two hides in Walle, which did belong to Balchi Daci; one hide in Elmundestan, one yardland and a wood at Wik, the church of Cheltenham, with the land thereof, and the mill, and the chapels, and all other appertinencies to the said church belonging. In Wiltshire, nine hides in Latton and Eisey, and the churches of both those places, with their land; and the chapel of Eaton, which belongs to the church of Eisy; three houses in the town of Cricklade, and the church of Pevesey, with the lands, tithes, and customs appertaining to the said church; the church in Avebury, with the lands, chapels, tithes, and customs appertaining to the said church. In Somersetshire, the church of Melborn, with the lands, chapels, tithes, and other things belonging to the said church; the church of Frome, with the lands, chapels, tithes, and all other things, whether woods or plains, appertaining to the said church; the church of Waleu, with the lands, chapels, tithes, and all customs, whether woods or plains, appertaining to the said church. In Dorsetshire, ten hides of land in woods and meadow in Puley. In Berkshire, the church of Shrivenham, with the lands, chapels, tithes, and all other customs appertaining to the said church; the church of Cockeham, with the lands, chapels, tithes, and all other things appertaining to the said church; the church of Bray, with the lands, chapels, tithes, and all things appertaining to the said church; ten hides in Eston; eleven hides and three yardlands in Hatcheburne, and the church of the same, with the chapels and tithes of the other Hatcheburne. In Oxfordshire, one hide of land in wood and plains, and one mill in Bolcot. The church of Passenham, in Buckinghamshire, with the lands, tithes, and all things appertaining to the said church. In Northamptonshire, the church of Rowel, with the lands, chapels, tithes, and all customs belonging to the said church; the church of Bristoke with the lands, chapels, tithes, and all customs, whether in woods or plains, appertaining to the said church; three houses in Winton. And I have further granted to the said church of Cirencester, of my own demesnes, for ever, one hide of land in Cirencester, called Scereve Hide, to make orchards, copses, and place for a water mill; and the abbot, Serlo, with my license, has exchanged two messuages of that hide with the burgesses of Cirencester, for the conveniency of the priests. I have also granted a water-course, and

the wood called Aeley, with the forest and all its lands; and I retain in myself nothing out of the wood besides my hunting and the abbot may not plow up any part of it.

We moreover ordain, concerning the estates belonging to Reimbald, that whatsoever part the bishop of Salisbury hath shall remain to him during his life, but after his death it shall return to the proper use and demesne of the canons regular: We ordain the like concerning the lands held by William Fitz Warin the Sheriff; and the like of the lands held by Nicholas, nephew of the bishop of Winton; and the like concerning the lands which the secular canons held by their prebends. We do also grant to the said church throughout all their possessions, soc and sac, toll, theam, infang-theof, and all other liberties, immunities, customs, and privileges, in as free manner as the said church held the same in the reign of king Edward the confessor, or in the reign of my father or brother, or in my time; and as free as any other eleemosynary lands in the kingdom are held; therefore I approve, and by royal authority do corroborate this my grant and concession, and by the power given to me by God, I decree that the said church shall for ever enjoy the same; and I declare that I reserve those lands so given in alms in my own hand, and under my protection, as if those alms-lands had been my own proper gift. Witnesses. – William, archbishop of Canterbury; Turstan, Archbishop of York; Roger, bishop of Salisbury; Henry, bishop of Winchester; Alexander, bishop of Lincoln; Jeoffry, bishop of Durham; Nigell, bishop of Ely; Robert, bishop of Hereford; John, bishop of Rochester; Robert, keeper of the seal; Robert de Vere, Miles Glose, Robert Doiley, Hugh Bigott, Robert de Cursey, and Pagan, the son of John; and Eustance and William, his brothers; and William de Albra Britone.

“Done at Burne, as I was crossing the seas, in the year of our Lord, 1133, and in the third-third year of our reign.

“We therefore (Edward III) the said grants, &c., do confirm, &c. Given under the hand of the King at Berwick-upon-Tweed on the 1st day of July.”

In this charter there is a circumstance mentioned which reveals the state of the times under Roman Catholic dominion – a market is mentioned as being held in the street of Cirencester on Sunday. The possessions of the Abbey appear to have been very extensive. It had lands in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Somersetshire, Dorsetshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Northamptonshire. Sixty-six hides are mentioned, and reckoning a hide at only 100 acres this would represent 6,600 acres. Besides this there were woods and plains whose extent is not given. Besides chapels there are 15 outlying churches mentioned. The value of this great property must have been immense. The mastership of the hospital of St. John, founded by Henry I., was given to the Abbot by Edward III. In a deed of the date of 1360 the name of the town is written Cearencester.

In the days of Edward III, there flourished a Monk at Cirencester whose writings have since made his name famous. Richard of Cirencester is a name well known to every antiquarian. He was born at Cirencester, and appears to have entered the Benedictine Monastery of St. Peter, Westminster, during the abbacy of Nicholas de Lytlington. His name occurs in various documents of that establishment under date of 1387, 1397, and 1399. He is said to have been called the Historiographer from his studies of Anglo-Saxon history and antiquities, and is said to have

visited different libraries and ecclesiastical establishments to obtain information. He obtained a license to visit Rome from his Abbot, William of Colchester, in 1391. He was confined in that Abbey Infirmary in 1401, and died either in that year or the next. His works are *Historia ab Hengist ad Anno*, 1348, in two parts, one preserved at Cambridge, and the other in the library of the Royal Society. Another work entitled "*Epitome Chron. Roi Cor. West. Lib. 1*," is preserved in Bennet College, Cambridge, and there are supposed to be other works in Lambeth Library and at Oxford. In the Peterborough Library are preserved two theological works by him with those titles – "*Tractatus super symbolum majus et Minus*," and "*Liber de efficus Ecclesaticus*."

His most famous work is called "Richard of Cirencester on the Ancient state of Britain," and has been several times published. It has been much disputed as to whether or not this work is genuine.

In A.D. 1399 Parliament granted Edward the III., for two years, the ninth sheaf, lamb, and fleece on the landed estates, and from the burgesses a ninth of their moveables, reckoned at their real value. Walter of Cirencester was one of the assessors. In the *Nenarum Inquisitores* are the following extracts respecting the working of this grant at Cirencester.

*Merchants of the Town of Cirencester.*

The fifteenth of the goods and chattels of Will le Nor-therne, merchant of Cirenceser, taxed even at their true value, 40 marks, 35 shillings, 6 pence.

The fifteenth of the goods and chattels of Peter Hughes, merchant, of the same town, taxed even to their true value , 30 marks, 24 shillings, 8 pence.

The fifteenth of the goods and chattels of John de Weston, merchant of the same town, &c., 30 marks, 26 shillings, and 8 pence.

The fifteenth, &c., of Peter de Stratton, 20 marks, 17 shillings, and 9 pence.

The fifteenth of Luce de Chapman, &c., 25 marks, 22 shillings, 3 pence.

"And there are no more merchants living by merchandies in the town, John Meys, Peter de Durham, and Nicholas Coys festal, merchants, were plundered of their merchandise to the value of 50 marks at Southampton and on the sea, at the time when the foreigners burnt and plundered the aforesaid town of Southampton, and – as the king took from Richard le Dyere, his wool at Cirencester to the value of 200 marks, and so he has no merchandise.

In the succeeding reign of Richard II., William Erchbald and others were seized of seventeen messuages, and twenty acres in Cirencester for the church of Cirencester."

R. JEFFERIES

(To be continued.)

Word count 4 721

HISTORY OF CIRENCESTER.

CHAPTER V.

ROMANCE OF THE MEDIÆVAL TIMES. – CONSPIRATORS  
AT CIRENCESTER – BURNING OF THE  
TOWN. – CORPORATION

Richard II. was deposed and Henry IV. ascended the throne in A.D. 1399; but there were many of the nobility still attached to Richard, and these headed by the Duke of Surrey, or Earl of Kent, the Duke of Exeter, the Duke of Aumerie, and the Earls of Gloucester and Salisbury, entered into a conspiracy to restore him. Their plan was to invite the King to a tournament at Oxford, to seize him, and proclaim Richard. Six copies of the plot were written on parchment, and given to the principal leaders. King Henry accepted the invitation, and the Duke of Aumerie, or Rutland, started from Westminster for Oxford, to prepare the tournament, carrying his copy of the plot with him, hidden in his bosom. But he turned aside to visit his father, the Duke of York, and when they were sitting at dinner, his father chanced to see a parchment with several seals hanging out of his bosom, and asked to know what it contained. He refused, when the duke, alarmed, snatched the parchment away, and discovered the plot. The duke ordered his horses to be saddled to ride and inform the king, but Rutland rushed out and rode towards Windsor before him. An anecdote preserved in a chronicle of Malmesbury Abbey shows that the secret had already partially crept out, for the same night one of King Henry's household, slept with a courtesan in London, and in the morning she gave him a tender farewell, saying that she should see him no more. He asked why, and she replied that the Earls of Huntingdon, Kent and Sarum, were laying in wait at Kingston, to kill the King and his followers, on their coming from Windsor, and to then restore King Richard. She added that one of these Earls' retinue had been with her the night before and told her of it.

Rutland reached Windsor before his father, revealed the plot, and obtained pardon. He probably managed to send warning to the other conspirators, for they at once raised their followers, and marched on Windsor, and surprized the castle, hoping to secure the king, but he had left for London. The next day he appeared at Kingston with an army of 20,000 men, when the barons finding themselves overpowered retired towards the west. They passed through Wallingford and Abingdon.

The same evening – the evening of Twelfth night – the quiet inhabitants of Cirencester were startled in the midst of their festivities by the arrival

of a large body of turbulent armed men, who seemed the vanguard of an army, splashed with mud and dirt from the roads. These men proclaimed King Richard, and produced him before them attired in the royal armour, but in reality it was Maudlin, Richard's chaplain, who resembled the king in person. Then the leaders went to the inns, and encamped their forces immediately without the walls. The Duke of Surrey and the Earl of Salisbury took up their lodging in one inn, and the Duke of Exeter and the Earl of Gloucester at another. The people of Cirencester were at first stunned with amazement, and overawed, but in the night they saw that the inns were unguarded, that tired with the long march the troops slept, and no sentinels were set, upon which the bailiff boldly assembled a body of men, consisting of a party of archers, and townsmen, altogether about four hundred, shut the gates so as to prevent the army without from coming to the rescue, and attacked the inn in which were the Duke of Surrey and the Earl of Salisbury. Finding themselves overpowered, some of their retinue set the town on fire in order to distract the attention of the townsmen; but this infuriating the attacking party, the Duke of Surrey and Earl of Salisbury fled to the abbey for sanctuary. The Duke of Exeter and Earl of Gloucester, who were in the other inn, hearing the uproar, and seeing their friends overpowered, climbed over the housetops and reached the camp outside the walls, with the view of bringing succour from their army. But the troops in the camp, hearing the noise, and seeing the flames, and finding the gates of the town closed, concluded that King Henry's army had entered on the opposite side, had captured their leaders, and was upon them. Panic-struck they fled, and Exeter and Gloucester found an empty camp. Powerless themselves, they were obliged to leave their friends Kent and Salisbury, and fled towards Bristol. The bailiff and the people exulted with success, pursued the Earls of Kent and Salisbury to the Abbey, and broke into the sanctuary. Then in the words of the old historian, Holinshed, "They brought them forth of the Abbey where they hadde them in their handes, and in the twilight of the evening stroke off their heads." This was on Twelfth Night, January 1400. Many of their followers were taken and sent to the King at Oxford. Both of these earls were young men, - fiery, and adventurous. Their heads were sent to London. Their companions Exeter and Gloucester, who escaped by the housetops, were taken afterwards.

Shakespeare, in *Richard II.*, thus alludes to this event - act 5, scene 6 -

Bolingbroke: Kind uncle York, the latest news we hear

Is that the rebels have consumed with fire

Our town of Cicester, in Glostershire;

But whether they be ta'en, or slain, we hear not.

The accounts of this affair are somewhat confused, but the above appears to be the order of events. Hoinshed, the old historian, gives the following narration: -

“They came to Cirencester in the dark of the night, and took up their lodgings. The inhabitants suspecting the matter as the truthe was, they took thereupon counsaile together, and got them to armour, and stopped all the entries and outgates of the inns where these newe guestes were lodged; insomuch that when they, about midnight, secretlie attempted to have come forth and gone their waies, the townsmen, with bow and arrowe, were ready to stay them and keep them in. The Lordes, perceaving the danger, got them to their armour and weapons, and did their best by force to repulse the townsmen; but after they had foughte from midnight till three of the clock of the evening of the next day, they yielded themselves to the townsmen, beseeching them to have their lives saved till they might come into the presence of the King. This request they had obtained, if a Priest, that was Chaplaine to one of them, had not in the mean tyme set fire on certain houses of the town, that whiles the townsmen were busie to quench the fire the Lordes might find means to escape; but it came to nothing to passe as he imagined; for the townsmen, leaving all care to save their houses from the rage of the fire, were kindled more in furio towards the Lordes, and soe to revenge themselves of them, they brought them forth of the Abbey where they hadde them in their handes, and yn the twilight of the evening stroke off their heads.”

The townsmen were rewarded for this most important service, by a grant from the king of all the property the rebels had left in the town, “excepting all gold and silver, and money, and vessels of gold, or silver, or gilded; and except all jewels of all kinds.” The gold, silver, and jewels were reserved, probably because much of it had been taken from the king’s loyal adherents by the conspirators: for when they attacked the royal household at Windsor they robbed Sir Walter Hungerford, one of the king’s knights, of his collar of the king’s livery, worth twenty pounds, and compelled him to go along with them. The collar was, no doubt, ornamented with gold and jewels, and worn as a sign of the wearer’s being in the king’s service. The Hungerford family made some bequests to Cirencester at a later date. The grant runs thus -

“The King, to all unto whom these presents shall come, greeting. Know ye that of our special grace, and for the good and laudable and acceptable services which the men of the town of Ciceter have performed, in resisting the malicious attempts of Thomas, late Earl of Kent, and John, late Earl of Salisbury, and other traitors and rebels, who had traitorously taken up arms against us and our crown, contrary to their allegiance, we do give and grant to the men aforesaid, all the goods and chattles, in whose hands soever they may be found, which did belong to the said late earls, and the other traitors, and were found in the said town when the said earls and other traitors were there arrested by the men aforesaid; excepting all gold and silver, and money, and vessels of gold and silver, or gilded, and except all jewels of all kinds; to hold of the said men of our gift. In witness thereof, &c.

“Given at Westminster, the 28th February, I. H. 4.”

In the second grant, Henry extended these favours:

“The King, to all unto whom these presents shall come, greeting. Know ye that of our especial grace, and for the good services which our beloved liege-people and commons of the town of Cirencester, as well men as women, have performed unto us, in the taking

of the Earls of Kent and Salisbury, and of others their followers, in the late rebellion, do grant unto the men four does in season, to be delivered unto them by our chief forester for the time being, or his deputy, out of our forest at Braden; and also one hogshead of wine, to be received every year out of the port of our town at Bristol, by the hand of our officer therein for the time being. We also grant unto the women aforesaid, six bucks, to be delivered them in right season, by our chief forester aforesaid or his deputy, out of the forest aforesaid; and also one hogshead of wine, to be delivered to them out of the port of our said town of Bristol, by the hands of our officer therein for the time being. This grant to continue during our pleasure. In witness thereof, &c.”

The bodies of Kent and Salisbury were buried in Cirencester Abbey Church. But afterwards, Maud, widow of John Montagne, Earl of Salisbury, obtained a license under the great seal to take up the bones of her dead husband, and to remove them to Busle-sham, now Bisham, in Berkshire, and his head was restored from London. He had founded a Priory, for canons of St. Austin, at Bisham, and he was buried in it. It is evident from this narration that the walls and gates were still standing in the time of Henry IV., for the Earls encamped without the walls, and the troops afterwards on trying to enter found the gates shut. These walls and gates, and a castle, are said by Richard of Monmouth to have been existing in the time of the Emperor Constantine, A.D. 326, that is, a thousand years before. After defending the town a *thousand years* they seem to have been demolished shortly after this reign. One of the gates was near the bridge on the London-road. It was in existence in the fifth year of Richard II. – 1382 – and was the principal entrance to this part of the town. “Our forest at Braden,” mentioned in the king’s grant, was at Bradon, below Purton, where there is still a wood.

Subsequently, the townsmen petitioned the king to be erected into a corporation. An inquisition was ordered to be made, and in the fourth year of his reign (1403), a corporation was embodied, consisting of a mayor and two constables, with a court of staple for the encouragement of trade. The town was made into a distinct hundred, having been previously the property of the Abbot. As the account of the execution of the lords mentions a mayor, or bailiff, of the town as heading the attack upon them, it would seem that there must have been some kind of government previously. It may have been that the weavers of the town – an important body at that time – possessed some institution. Several foreign merchants in wool settled here in the reign of Edward II. The charter of King Henry may have in effect been merely a royal recognition of a previously existing institution. But, as up till then, the Abbot had had jurisdiction over the town, it may be more probable that it was his bailiff who headed the attack, and this would account for the townsmen being able to enter the sanctuary of the Abbey. By the charter of King Henry the town was made a separate jurisdiction, and the Abbey, with some outlying villages, became a distinct hundred, and its torn, or court,

was held outside the town, whence it was called the Out Torn and Minety, and now, Crowthorne and Minety. Previous to this separation, the court had been held in a house called the Tolsede (or Tolsey), which stood in the middle of the Market-place. The name was probably derived from tol, and stede, stead, or house, i.e., the toll-house; market-house. It stood in the Butter-row, in the centre of the Market-place, but was removed in 1829. Up to this time the Abbot had been almost supreme at Cirencester. A great portion of the property was his, as also the jurisdiction. He had exceeded his power on some occasions, and in this reign an inquisition was issued against him for usurping divers privileges in the towns of Cirencester and Minety.

There appears to have been a riot committed against the Abbot about the year 1413, for in that year it is recorded that "On Monday, the 22nd May, the Commons came before the King, when the Speaker declared before him, that in the time of his father, many fair promises were made for the due observance of laws, but that no execution issued; wherefore he prayed the King the better to provide there-for; and, namely, to see due correction of the late riot committed at Cirencester against the Abbot therein. To the which, the Speaker, on the King's behalf, was required to exhibit the same in writing, to the end the King might be better provided." By the erection of the town into a separate hundred, and giving it a court of its own, the Abbot had lost much of his importance, for previously there had been but one court, in which he had pre-eminence, and there appears to have been ill-feeling between the parties.

The Abbots had not yet obtained a regular seat in Parliament. In A.D. 1265, when a parliament was summoned in London, by the direction of Leicester, he, to crush the power of his opponents, the barons, summoned deputies from the boroughs, which had never been done previously, and thus made a precedent which resulted in the establishment of a house of commons, whereas it had hitherto been all lords. To further strengthen himself he called several ecclesiastics, who had not been before summoned, and amongst these was the Abbot of Cirencester, Roger de Rodmarton, to this remarkable parliament. On the accession of Edward II., in 1307, a council was held at Carlisle, where he then was, to which council Henry de Hamptonel, Abbot of Cirencester, was summoned. But in 1416, William Best, Abbot of Cirencester, obtained a stated seat in Parliament for himself, and his successors, and the Pope sent the mitre and pontificals to him.

R. JEFFERIES.

*(To be continued.)*

Word count 2 632

HISTORY OF CIRENCESTER.  
CHAPTER VI.  
CIRENCESTER MEN. – BISHOP ROWTHAL. - CIRENCESTER  
IN THE REIGN OF HENRY VIII.

In the return made by the Commissioners of the Peace in the 12th year of Henry VI (1434), there occurs the name of Henry Prelatte, of Cirencester, among the gentry. It has been ascertained that he was ffeodar or steward for manors in the county belonging to Lady Stafford and Bergavenny.

Sir William Nottingham, whose will was dated 1st September, 1483, founded a Hall for the Weavers' Company in Cirencester, with a Hospital for the poorer brethren, known as St. Thomas' Hospital.

Some curious particulars are recorded in an entry in the Court Rolls, under date 15th August, 4 Henry VII., A.D. 1489 –

“To this Halemot came Agnes Arnold, widow, by John Jones, her attorney, and John Crocker, in person, and prayed the following Indenture to be enrolled in the Court rolls:

–  
“This Indenture, made vi. Aug. 4 Hen. VII., between Agnes Arnold, widowe, late wyfe of Thos. Arnold, and John Crocker, witnesseth that said John Crocker oweth to her £29 4s. 4d., to be paid to her by the advice and concent of my lorde Thomas, Abbot of the Monastery of our Lady of Circester –

“Out of a tenement in Castle-street, in C. (Cirencester), late in the tenant of John Alysor, nowe in he hands of Thos. Moreton, esquier for the King's body, xvis.

“And of another tenement in Inchethroppe, otherwise called Seynt Cecely-strete, of C. forsnide, now in the hands of Wm. Blake, tanner, xiis.

“And also of another in Chepyng-strete, in the hands of Henry Raynold, viiis.

“And also of lands arable in the fields of C. and Chesterton, iijs.

“And so yerely, until the £29 4. 4d. is fully paid.”

The Thomas Moreton, mentioned above, was of Lechlade, and brother to Robert, Bishop of Worcester. The record is curious on account of the names of the streets preserved in it. Cecily-street, in appears, was formerly Inchethroppe-street, and the name seems still preserved in Instrip-ward, in which Cecily-hill stands. Chepyng-strete, which might be translated Market-street, is now Sheep-street, Cheapside, in London, has a similar derivation – from cheape, to sell; modern English, to cheapen. The Wm. Blake, mentioned as a tanner, may have been some relation to John Blake, the last abbot.

A.D. 1504. Christian, Lady Hungerford, widow of Sir Thomas Hungerford, of Siddington Langley, Worcestershire, was buried in the Monastery of our Lady, St. Mary of Cirencester.

Thomas Rowthal, who afterwards became Bishop of Durham, and enjoyed the confidence of two monarchs, was born in Cirencester about the year 1470. His career was very extraordinary, and has rendered every detail of his life interesting. The following account is extracted from the *Athenæ Oxoniensis*, of Anthony à Wood, published in 1691: -

“Thomas Ruthall, or Rowthall, was born in a Market Town in Gloucestershire, called Cirencester, in the church of which place I saw some years since a monument for one John Avenynge, and his wife; which John dying 1401, might probably be (according to time) grandfather to Avenynge (whom some call Avelynge), mother to Thomas Ruthall mentioned. He was educated for some years in this University, as it evidently appears in one or more of our Registers, but in what College or Hall I know not. Thence, as it is said, he went to Cambridge for a time, but when it doth not appear. Sure it is that one Ruthall took the degree of D.D. in this University, and in the year 1500 was incorporated at Cambridge, with Dr. Richard Mayhew, President of Magdalen College. In 1503 he was elected Chancellor of the University of Cambridge (being then Arch Deacon of Gloucester), and in the beginning of September 1505, he was made Dean of Salisbury, in the place, as it seems, of one Edward Cheyney, who occurs Dean of that Church 1499. About that time, he being esteemed a person of great virtue and prudence, was made Secretary to King Henry VII, who, a little before his death, nominated him to the see of Durham, upon the Translation of Rainbridge to York. Soon after, King Henry VIII. succeeding on the Throne, he made him his Secretary for a time, and one of his Privy Council; and being then elected to the said see of Durham, the Temporalities thereof were restored to him 3rd July, Henry VIII. (1509). Afterwards he was made Lord Privy Seal, was esteemed a famous clerk, and admirably well-read in both the Laws, being, as it is said, Doctor or Professor of them. Towards his latter end he founded a free school at the place of his nativity, and gave a House and £7 per annum (properly £8) for the maintenance of a master; which school having for the most part flourished in good sort, hath educated many that have been eminent in Church and State. He paid his last debt to nature at Durham-place, near London, on Wednesday, the 4th of February, 1522-23, and was buried in the Chapel of St. John Baptist, joining the Abbey Church of St. Peter, in Westminster, at which time *Dr. Rowland Phillips*, vicar of *Croydon*, a great divine and a renowned clerk, preached an excellent sermon. Some years after was a fair raised tomb built over his grave, with his Statue thereon, mitred and vested, and a small inscription on it, but false as to the year of his death.”

Bishop Rowthal's coat of arms being found in the Abbey Church, it was conjectured that he had contributed to the rebuilding of the nave, which was accomplished under Abbot Hakebourne, between 1504 and 1522. But Leland, who visited the place in the time of Henry VIII, writes that - “There is now but one Paroch chirch in all Cirencester; but that is very fayre. The body of the chirch is al new worke, to which Ruthal, Bishop of Durham, borne and bred up in Cirecestere, promised much, but preventid with deth gave nothing.” The arms may have been put up in memory of him or of his family, since the same author relates that “One Alice Aveling, aunt to Bishop Ruthal by the Mother's side, gave an Hundreth Markes to the Building of the right goodly Porche of the Paroche Chirch. And Ruthalle's Mother contributed an other to the performment of it.”

Rowthal accumulated an immense fortune, and became a great favourite of Henry VIII, to whom he was first secretary and Privy

Councillor, and afterwards Lord Privy Seal. Cardinal Wolsey was his rival for the King's favour. Rowthal appears to have kept his position till he lost it by an unfortunate mistake. As secretary, the King employed him to draw up an account of the royal revenues. He did so, but at the same time made an inventory of his own wealth, the paper containing which got by some means mixed up with the account of the King's income. His servant, probably a spy in the pay of his rival, conveyed it to Cardinal Wolsey. The Cardinal laid it before the King, with the broad suggestion that if the monarch should want money he would now know where to find it. The King was amazed at the amount – it is said to have been £100,000, an immense sum in those days. Rowthal saw himself declining in favor, and was so much annoyed at the untoward incident and the rise of his rival that he contracted a disease which carried him off in 1524. Wolsey succeeded to his see of Durham.

Shakespeare, with a kind of poetical justice, has made the same error the cause of the downfall of Cardinal Wolsey, who in the play of *Henry VIII* is represented as accidentally enclosing an inventory of his wealth in some papers of state which he sent to the rapacious monarch to peruse.

*King Henry* (reading a schedule): - What piles of wealth

hath he accumulated

To his own portion; and, what expense by the hour  
Seems to flow from him ! How i' the name of thrift  
Does he rake this together? – Now, my lords;  
Saw you the cardinal?

*Duke of Norfolk*: - My lord, we have

Stood here observing him. Some strange commotion  
Is in his brain.       \* \* \* \* \*

*King Henry*: - It may well be;

There is a mutiny in his mind, This morning  
Papers of state he sent me to peruse,  
As I required, and wot you what I found  
There, on my conscience, put unwittingly?  
Forsooth an inventory, thus importing  
The several parcels of his plate, his treasure,  
Rich stuff, and ornaments of household; which  
I find at such a proud rate, that it outspeaks  
Possession of a subject.

Rowthal founded a free grammar school at Cirencester, which is still in existence.

The antiquarian Leland visited Cirencester in this reign, and left the following notes of what he saw:

*Cirecestre*, corruptly for *Churnecestre*, peradventure of Ptoleme cawll'd corimum, stondeth in a Botom upon the Ryver of *Churne*. The Cumpace of the old Waul, *cujus pauca adhuc extunt vestigia*, was nere hand ii myles. A Man may yet walking on the Bank of *Churne* evidently perceyve the cumpace of Foundation of Towers sumtyme standing in the Waul. [Belykehod yn times past Guttes were made that Partes of *Churne* streame might cum thorow the cyte, and so to returne to theyr great Botom] and nere to

the Place wher the right goodly Clothing Mylle was set up a late by the Abbate, was broken down the Ruine of an old Tower toward making of the Mylle Waulles, in the which Place was fownd a quadrate Stone fawllen down afore, but broken in *aliquot frusta*, wherein was a *Romaine* Inscription, of the which one scantly lettered that saw yt told me that he might Percyve *Pont Max*. Among diverse *numismata* fownd frequently there Dioclesians be most fairest. But I cannot adfirme the Inscription to have been dedicate onto hym. In the middes of the old Town in a Medow was found a Flore *de testellis versicoloribus*, and by the Town *nosecus temporibus* was fownd a broken shank Bone of a Horse, the Mouth closed with a Pegge, the which taken out a Shephard founde yt filled *nummis argenteis*. In the South West side of the Waul be lykelyhod hath been a Castel, or sum other great Building, the Hilles and Diches yet remayne.

[Sum say that it was the Place wher Sege was laide to the Town, and not far thens is a steepe rownd Bery like a Wind Myl Hill ext. *muros* cawlded Grismundes Tower, for Gismundes Tower, as theie say.]

The Place is now a Waren for Conys, and therein hath bane fownd Mennes Bones *insolitæ magnitudinis*, also to sepulchres *ex secte lapide*. In one was a round Vessel of Leade covered, and in it Ashes and Peaces of Bones. More than iii Partes of the old Town is now goodly Medow Ground. The iiii Part ys yet well inhabited, having one Paroche Chirche very richely wrought, and an Abbay of Blak Chanons *fundatore* Henrico *primo*. [There is also a little Chapel as an Almose House.] But there afore was a great Chirch of Prebendaries. In the Body of the Church in a sepulchre Crosse of White Marble is this, *Hic jacet Rembaldus presbyter, quondam hujus ecclesiæ decan [& tempore Edwardi regis Angliæ cancellarius]*.

Cummyng from *Glocestre* to *Cirecestre*, almost yn the Myddle Way betwixt wher the Wood fayleth and Cham-payne Country toward *Coteswold* appereth, the faire old Way made by the Britons ys very evidently seen, and so goeth as strait as a Line to *Cirecestre*, and fro thens to Bathe. But sum wold that the way from *Cirecestre* to Bath should be the very Fosse and the Way betwixt *Cirecestre* toward *Glocestre* to be an other of the iiii Wayes made by the Britons. The Abbat of *Cirecestre* told me that abowt *Cirecestre* should be crosse meating of all the iiii Wayes.

[The soyle in the stony Feeldes about *Cirecestre* is more apt for Barle than Wheete. Thereabout as in *Coteswold* is small plenty of Wood except in few Places kept of necessitie.]

*Cirencestre* standeth on Churne Ryver.

Churncestre caulled in *Latini Coriminum*. There was afore the Conquest a faire and riche College of Prebendaries in this Toune; but of what *Saxon's* foundation no man can telle.

Henry the first made this College an Abbay of Chanons Regulares, gyving them the Landes of the Prebendaries to tally and other Thinges. *Rumbaldus*, Chauncelar to King *Edward the Confessor*, was Dene of this House, and buried in the Body of the Chirch, as it appereth by the Epitaphy on his Tumbe. The Este Parte of the Chirch of *Cirencestre*-Abbay sheweth to be of a very old Building. The West Part from the *Transeptum* is but new Work to speke of. King Richard the first gave to *Cirencestre* the Courtes and Perquisites of 7 Hundredes thereabout yn Gloucestershire.

The Landes of *Cirencestre*-Abbay litle augmentid sins the Tyme of the Foundation by Henry the first.

There be 2 Noble-Men of *S. Amandes* burjed withyn the Presbyterie of *Cirencestre*-Abbay Chirch.

And there is buried the Hart of *Sentia*, wife to Richard king of *Romaine*, and Erle of Cornwallle.

Serlo first abbot of *Cirencester*.

This Serlo made his Brother Prior of Bradene-stoke.

Ther were xxviij, or xxix Abbotes of Cirencestre after Serlo.

Mr. Blake the last Abbate builded 2 Fulling Milles at Cirencestre that cost a 700 Markes of Mony. They be wonderfully necessary, bycause the Town standith alle by Clothing.

There hath bene 3 Paroche Chirches in Cirencestre whereof S. Cecilia Chirch is clene down. It was of late but a chapelle. S. Lawrence yet standeth, but as no Paroch Chirch. Ther be 2 poor Almose Women endowed with Landes.

Ther is now but one Paroche Chirch in al Cirencestre; but that is very fair.

The body of the Chirch is all new Work, to the which Ruthal, Bishop of Dureme, borne and brought up in Cirencestre, promised much, but prevented with Deth gave nothing.

One Alice Avelling, Aunt to Bishop Ruthal by the mother side, gave an Hundred Markes to the Building of the right goodly Porche of the Paroche Chirch.

And Ruthalles Mother contributed another to the performment of it.

Alexander Necham, a great Clerk and Abbote of Cirencestre, buried in the Entring of the Cloister of Wiccestre, entering out of the Chirch into the Cloyster. King Henry the first made the Hospital of S. John at Cirencestre. Cirencestre Town hath but a Bailife to govern there.

Cirencestre is yn Coteswolde.

Cirencestre hath the most celebrate Market in all that Quarters on Monday.

Sir John Hungerford of Down Ampney, in his will dated 14th July, 1524, desires to be buried in the Abbey of Cirencester. His widow, Margaret, Lady Hungerford, also desires in her will, 6th April, 1527, to be buried in the chapel of our Lady in the Abbey of Cirencester, where her husband was buried. She appears to have bequeathed some plate to the Abbey, for prayers for the souls of her husband and herself, and others of her consanguinity. This was probably the last bequest to the Abbey, for the end of the monasteries was fast approaching.

Word count 2 552

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## HISTORY OF CIRENCESTER.

### CHAPTER VII. – THE ABBEY.

Henry VIII. having issued orders for the dissolution of the monasteries, the Abbey of Cirencester was surrendered to the King's commissioners on the 29th of December, 1539. It had existed four centuries. It was founded by Henry II. in 1117, and dedicated in November, 1127, to St. Mary and St. James. The ceremony was performed by Bartolomew, Bishop of Exeter, and King Henry was present. The architecture was of the Saxon character. According to William of Worcester, "the length of the great church contains 140 steppys, the breadth of the nave of the

church with two ailes, 41 steppys, or 24 yards. The chapel of the blessed Mary on the south part of the church contains 41 yards, with an aile adjoining. The breadth of the same antient chapel contains 21 *grassus*, with the antient aile. The length of the cloister 62 *grassus*. The length of the chapter house 14 yards, and 10 yards in breadth." If the step is reckoned at two feet the "great church" was 280 feet long. In this record there are mentioned the "great church," the chapel of St. Mary, the cloister, and the chapter-house; while in the grant afterwards made of the site mention is made of dove-houses, courts, yards, orchards, waters, and ponds. There also appears to have been an Almonry, and of the chambers within the Abbey one was called the Queen's chamber. There were at least two gates, the Almery-gate and the Spital or Spyringate. To supply them with necessaries the monks had the grange called the Almery grange and the Spital grange, and the Abbots are said to have made their property at Driffield a favourite residence, or country house. The outlying properties belonging to the Abbey were very large. The Charter of Edward III. enumerates seventeen churches in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Somersetshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Northampton-shire, besides the chapels connected with these churches, with the lands, woods, tithes, and customs. There were 152 messuages in the town of Cirencester alone belonging to them, besides two mills, St. Mary's Mill and the Barton Mill. St. Mary's Mill stood at the first bridge on the river from the church. The influence of the monks had been felt all over the place, and was shown by the erection of six crosses in various parts of the town. The largest was called the High-cross, and stood before the Ram Inn, on a pedestal about ten feet square, with four steps on each side. On this rose an octangular pillar, with a capital, over which the cross was fixed. This was called the *Nova Crux*, new cross, in a deed of the date of 1413, which would indicate that there were others still older then existing. This cross appears to have stood on the bank of a branch of the Churn, which then ran through the town, as in digging near the spot a series of stepping stones were found, and it is called in the above ancient deed of 1413, the "new cross by the river." It now stands near the Wood-house in Earl Bathurst's park. Another stood in the churchyard, another near the crossing of Castle-street and Sheep-street. One standing in Dyer-street was called the pig cross, on account of the pig market being held there. There was one also at the end of Dyer-street, near the first stream of water; and the last stood at the crossing of Leause-lane and Cricklade-street. The monks appear to have issued tokens, as the tradesmen did in after years, from a specimen which was found in 1772 in the garden of the Abbey House. It had on one side three rams heads, the arms of the Abbey, and the words "Ave Maria - Gracia - H/Plen., and upon the other a cross flory, between four fleur

de lis, and the letters G.A.G.A., perhaps for George, Abbas. The Abbot George lived between 1445 and 1461. When the Abbey was surrendered to the King's commissioners its yearly income was valued at £1,051. 7s. 1d., which however did not represent nearly the whole value, it being the custom to continue to let land at the first rent, but to exact heavy fines on the renewal of leases as the lands increased in worth. The Abbot and some of the monks had pensions granted to them, as in the following return of the commissioners - "To John Blake, late abbot, £250; Richard Woodwall, late prior, £13 6s. 8d.; William Warbot, late cellarer, £8; William Philips, vicar of the parish church of Cirencester, nothing; reason in foot note.

"Thomas Fisher, Thomas Redde, John Russell, John Walle, William More, Richard Bolle, John Straunge, Thomas Logger, Anthony Chilcoke, Henry Hawke, James Plebeien, William Smith, £6 13s. 4d. each; Richard Lane, £5 6s. 6d. Memorandum, That Witham Phillippes above-named is assigned to the Vicarage and Cure of the Parish of Circester, with the whole Tithes of Woolle, Lambe, Hey, Oblatrons, Alterages, and all other Profitts belonging to the same Churche; the Tithes of the Domayne-lands. latelie being in Occupation of the late Abbot and Convent there, only excepted. Yeldinge therefore, unto the King's Majestie, in consideration, the same Vicar shall be charged with the finding of three Preists besydes himself to mynister there, also shall finde Wyne and Wax at his propre Cost and Charges Yerely, 53s 4d. And so the said Vicar shall have a reasonable Living and a convenyant Portion of the Profitts of the said Churche, the Quantitie of the Cure there dailie considered.

"Witnesses.

" ROBERT SOUTHWELL, JOHN LONDON

" EDWARD CARN, RICHARD POULET,

" RIC. GWENT, WILL. BERNERS."

The site was granted to Roger Bassinge, Esq., with the reservation that all edifices should be pulled down and carried away. This was so well executed that the site of the Abbey is now a matter of conjecture. It has been considered that it stood on the north side of the Parish Church, and that that church was within the Abbey Cemetary. At the beginning of the present century, however, there still remained two of the ancient gateways of the Abbey, the Almery-gate and the Spital-gate, as also a very large barn. The barn and the Almery-gate have since disappeared. That gate opened on Dollar-street. In the same grant, dated 11<sup>th</sup> May, 32, H. VIII., the Grange of Spyrgate, or Spital Grange, was included, as also the Almery Grange and twenty-one acres of meadow, called Almery Close, St. John's Mead, Pulham's Barn, Dole Mead, Clyff and King's Mead, excepting the timber. The rent was £32 10s. 8d. Grants were also made of 132 messuages of the Abbey estate, lying in the town of Cirencester, to John Pollard and William Birn, A.D. 1543.

In 1547 the site of the Abbey was granted to Thomas, Lord Seymour, by Edward VI., with lands in fifteen counties, to be held *in capite*, by the service of one knight's fee, paying £1 1s. 8d., but it reverted to the crown

on that nobleman's attainder. In 1553 the same king, by letters patent dated 21st September, demised the site, with two granges, &c., to Sir Anthony Kingston, let at the rent of £19 13s 10d. Finally, Queen Elizabeth, by letters patent dated 6th January, 7th Eliz., i.e., 1565, granted the reversion of the site of the monastery, with the granges of land, and all advowsons of the rectories, vicarages, and churches, excepting the bells, and all lead upon the premises, to Richard Master, Esq., It has ever since remained in the same family. St. Mary's Mill and the Barton Mill, part of the Abbey property, were granted to James Woodford and Thomas Woodford by Queen Elizabeth, in 1560.

From the time of the demolition of the Abbey, the Parish Church, which stood adjacent, became the principal place of worship, and continued so to the present time. It contains so many monuments of antiquity as to require a separate description. The following is a list of the abbots: -

- A.D.            ABBOTS OF CIRENCESTER.
- 1117. - Serlo, fourth Dean of Salisbury.
  - 1147. - Andre w.
  - 1176. - Adam, prior of Bardney.
  - 1183. - Robert, canon of Cirencester, who died in the same year, and another Robert was elected.
  - 1187. - Richard, prior of St. Gregorie's, Canterbury.
  - 1213. - Alexander Nequam. or Necham
  - 1227 or 1217. - Walter or Richard.
  - 1230. - Hugh de Bampton, or Bathon, also called Henry.
  - 1238. - Roger de Rodmarton.
  - 1266. - Henry de Monden. The king consented to his election Oct. 10, 1266.
  - 1281. - Henry de Hamptonel.
  - 1307. - Adam Brokenbury.
  - 1319. - Richard de Charlton, who resigned.
  - 1334. - William Hereward.
  - 1352. - Ralp? de Estcote.
  - 1357. - William de Marteley, or Martelege.
  - 1361. - William de Dinton.
  - 1363. - Nicholas de Ameney.
  - 1394. - John Lekhampton.
  - 1416. - William Best.
  - 1429. - William Wootton.
  - 1440. - John Taunton.
  - 1461. - John Sodbury or Sadbury.
  - 1478. - Thomas Compton.
  - 1481. - Richard Clyve.
  - 1488. - Thomas Ashton, who resigned.
  - 1504. - John Hakeborne, or Hankeborne.
  - 1522. - John Blake, last abbot, who subscribed to the king's supremacy, with Richard Ciceter, prior, Will. Cerney, and other monks, altogether sixteen.
- Altogether there were thirty abbots of Cirencester.

The following very curious summary of the contents of a Chartulary of Cirencester Abbey was kindly communicated by Canon Jackson, the eminent antiquarian, out of the library of Longleat, by permission of the Marquis of Bath. The original document is preserved at Longleat, where it was discovered by Canon Jackson, and has been bound under his directions.

Contents of an imperfect Chartulary of Cirencester Abbey,  
belonging to the most Hon. The Marquis of Bath.

A.D. 1088-1247.

1 - (A.D. 1088-1122) - Composition between the Church of Cirencester and Wandragesil de Curcelles; in the time of John de Viltula, Bishop of Bath. (Imperfect at the beginning.)

2. - (A.D. 1136-1154) - Roger, Bishop of Sarum, gives back to Serlo, Abbot of Cirencester, and to the Abbey, the Church of Frome, co. Somerset; of Avebury, co. Wilts; and of Cookham and Bray, co. Berks; and 10 hides of land in Eston. Temp. Stephen.

3. - (A.D. 1142-84) - Jocelyn de Balliol, Bishop of Sarum, confirms to Abbot Adam of Cirencester the Churches of Cocheham (Cookham) and Bray.

4. - (1123-1147) - Hugo de Kempsey (or Kennea) to Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln; Quitclaim of Boycot, with his "villens," Toni, Edred, and Hamel to Cirencester Abbey.

5. - King Stephen to the Bishop of Lincoln and to all the King's men of Oxford; restores Boycot to the Abbot of Cirencester.

6. - Testimony of Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln, that Mathew, clerk of Rixton, co. Northampton, has quit-claimed to Cirencester Abbey all his right in the Church of Rowell, co. Northampton.

7. - Deed of Adam, Abbot of Evesham, and Robert, Prior of Kenilworth, being their arbitration in a dispute between the canons of Cirencester and William and John, Clerks, concerning the Churches of Slipston, Acley (Oakley), and Brigstock, all in co. Northampton. Adam, Abbot of Cirencester, gives up Slipston to Hugh de Bening-field, who is to pay four shillings a-year to Brigstock Church.

8. - Testimony of Saverie, Archdeacon of Northampton, concerning the payment of one bezant every year from Hacclea (Oakley aforesaid) to Cirencester Abbey.

9. - (A.D. 1180) - Saverie, Archdeacon of Northampton, testifies to the settlement of a dispute between Cirencester Abbey and the two Clerks, Hugh de Benefield and John of the Hospital, about the chapels of Slipston and Acley, and the church of Brigstock.

10. - Adam and Eustachius, Abbots of Missenden and Dorchester, concerning the church of Glendon, co. Northampton.

11. - Mandate from Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, to the Bishops of Bath, Sarum, Lincoln, and Worcester, to settle a complaint made by the Abbot and Convent of Cirencester. Theobald died A.D. 1160.

12. - Mandate from the same to Serlo, Abbot of Cirencester, not to answer, except in the Archbishop's presence, to any plea relating to Avebury Church, and the privileges granted in the reigns of Henry and Stephen.

13. - (A.D. 1129-1171) - Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, Legate of the Apostolic See, to Serlo, Abbot of Cirencester, forbidding him to render, save in the Bishop's presence, an account of the possessions which the Abbey had before the death of King Henry, and through the decease of Roger, Bishop of Sarum.

14. - The same, confirming to Cirencester Abbey all its possessions, *extra* Cirencester, in the time of Henry and Stephen.

15. – King Henry's Precept to Abbot Serlo, to enjoy all his lands. Witnessed by Robert de Curci; and dated at Woodstock.

16. – Stephen, King of England, to all Justices, &c. The Abbot of Cirencester to enjoy peaceably all lands, &c., given by King Henry. Witnessed at Hereford by Thomas, Earl "de Auco" (of Owe).

17. – The same to the same. The Abbot to hold in peace all that he had on the day on which King Henry was alive and dead. Witnessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Sarum. Dated at Radinges (Reading).

18. – Henry II. prohibiting the Abbot of Cirencester from being impleaded save before him or his justices.

19. – The same, confirming to the Abbot certain privileges.

20. – The same, concerning the wood of Acleia (Oakley).

21. – The same, confirming certain privileges. Witnessed by Ranulph de Glanville. Dated at Marlborough.

22. – The same to the Abbot, concerning desmesnes at Cirencester.

23. – The same, a brief to all justices, concerning certain "*privilegia Anglia*."

24. – King Stephen, a brief concerning the same.

25. – Henry II., a brief. The canons of Cirencester to be free from all molestation as to lands, &c.

26. – John, Earl of Moreton.

27. – Richard de Gya (?), Abbot of Cirencester. His rules about diet on the anniversaries of kings, abbots, and Reinbald, the Chancellor.

28. – Ralph Fitz Adam and Ailrie Steperanch, stewards of the infirm brethren of the hospital of St. Giles, granting a piece of land in Ludgate-street to Nicholas Faber, at 3/ a year. Among the witnesses are "Solomon Sacerdos." "Robertus Calecier." "Helias Centaurier."

29. – Deed of Robert Lebrun. To all citizens and his friends of Landun, granting a piece of land to Robert, son of Nicholas Faber.

30. – Headings of sundry deeds not given at length.

31. – A.D. 1183. Concerning the liberty of Minthy, a number of Cirencester. Richard I. wishing to confirm the religious foundations of Henry I. and Henry II., gives to St. Mary of Cirencester, to pray for the souls of those kings, also for his own and his Queen's, the whole of his manor of Cirencester, "cum villa de Minti," which is a member of the same, and Seven Hundreds pertaining to the said manor and farm; the Abbey to pay £39 a year into the exchequer, and to be released from 40/ a year which it had been used to pay. Dated at Westminster 12th Nov., 1 Richard, by the hand of William de Longchamp, Chancellor elect.

32. – The same repeated in brief, dated 13th Nov. Witness, the Bishop of Durham. Marked "De Ferma ad Regem."

33. – Inquisition by a jury as to the Abbot and convents' land at Cheltenham paying "tallagium am?onæ (market toll).

34. – 31 Henry III., A.D. 1246-7. Concerning tallage at Cheltenham, and an exchange with Winchester and Rye.

35. – A.D. 1247, Another deed dated at Clarendon, about the same.

36. – Richard I. gives to the Abbey, Cirencester manor and Minty, as held by William of Cirencester (imperfect).

37. – An imperfect deed about the lands of the Abbot and of William of Cirencester.

38. – 5 John, May 2. King John confirming his brother's grant. Witness, the Bishop of Sarum, and Savarie, Bishop of Bath and Glastonbury, and others.

39. – Letter to the Pope about Melesburne church and Abbot Serlo of Cirencester: Simon, Bishop of Winchester.

40. - A.D. 1140, Pope Innocent to the Bishop of Bath. Whereas William Fitzwaryu had held as a clerk the church of Meleburne belonging to the Abbey of Cirencester, but having abandoned the clerical office and turned soldier, he still kept the church and spent on military uses what had been given to the Abbey for the benefit of the poor; he is to be admonished to restore it, on pain of ecclesiastical censure. Dated at the Lateran Palace.

41. - Pope Eugenius to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop of Hereford, and others about Melesburne Church.

R. JEFFERIES.

Word count 2 698

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## HISTORY OF CIRENCESTER.

### CHAPTER VIII. - SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

Most of the lands in Cirencester having been the property of the Abbey escaped payment of tithes, which it has been calculated would otherwise have amounted to £300 annually. Tradition says that John Blake, the last Abbot, was buried in Driffild Church, where a large oblong stone of a dark colour, forming part of the pavement of the chancel, is still shown as marking his grave. There is no inscription, but some holes can be traced to which brasses have been attached: said to have been torn off in the Civil Wars. There is no mention of the interment of John Blake in the registers of the church, which were kindly searched for me by the Rev. T. Maurice; but he believes them to commence from a period subsequent to the latest possible time at which the Abbot could have been buried.

The next event which occurred at Cirencester gave evidence of the fierceness of the warfare raging between the theological parties in the State. The Protestants had had a success and the monasteries were overthrown; but shortly afterwards Queen Mary ascended the throne, and whilst in the pains of pregnancy exclaimed, it is supposed in all sincerity, that she could not be delivered until all the heretics now in prison were destroyed. In consequence of this a persecution commenced in which Bishop Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, was sentenced to be burnt at the stake. He was then in prison at London, but was ordered to be taken to the chief place in his diocese, Gloucester, for execution. In the course of his journey he passed through Cirencester, and stopped at one of the Inns (some say the Sun Inn) to dine. Mr. Froude, in his history of this period, gives the following narrative of the event; A.D. 1553. "On the forenoon of Thursday, the 7th, he (Bishop Hooper) dined at Cirencester,

at 'a woman's house who had always hated the truth and spoken all evil she could of him.' This woman had shared in the opinion that Protestants had no serious convictions, and had often expressed her belief that Hooper, particularly, would fail if brought to the trial. She found that both in him and his creed there was more than she had supposed; and 'perceiving the cause of his coming she lamented his case with tears, and showed him all the friendship she could.' " Hooper reached Gloucester from Cirencester at five in the evening, and was shortly afterwards burnt at the stake, affording the extraordinary spectacle of a man dying by the most awful torture in the midst of a crowd of seven thousand people, mostly friendly to him, and yet making no effort to save him.

On the accession of Queen Elizabeth, the Protestant religion was restored, and greatly strengthened; yet there were still numbers who clung to the "old superstition." The following extract from Strype's *Annals of the Reformation* under date 1560, the second year of Queen Elizabeth, shows the state of feeling at Cirencester: -

"Notwithstanding the care that was taken but the last year (1560), that all Justices and other gentlemen through the kingdom, should subscribe to the Act of Uniformity, and promise for themselves and their families duly to come to Common Prayer and Sacraments, yet the temper of their minds was the same, and many of them bore favourable hearts to the old superstition. And these did too often (where they could pick occasion) use rigor towards such as more sincerely and earnestly serve God, and read the Scriptures. There was a pious Society of these in Cirencester, in Gloucestershire, who lived quietly and without offence, and used sometimes to associate themselves, to invoke and call upon the Name of Almighty God; declaring their utter detestation of all such erroneous and execrable opinions and practices as they heard and saw too much of. This Society, for this their godly and zealous behaviour, raised up the displeasure of some chief men there against them, as one Nicholas Philips, common sergeant of the town of Cirsiter (*i.e.* Cirencester) and servant to Sir Henry Jermingham, Knight, a great man under Queen Mary, Robert Straunge, justice of peace, Christopher George, clerk of the peace, and others their adherents, to a great number. By these persons had ensued to the said honest piously disposed men, no little trouble, partly by imprisonment of their bodies, confiscation of their goods, or fear of death. They called them Tumultuous and Rebels; and so overawing them, that they dared not to confute any Doctrine or Practice repugnant to God's Word; and also heartning wicked and traitorous Papists. These hard dealings compelled these Protestants in this town to draw up and prefer a petition to the Lords of Her Majesty's Privy Council.

"Wherein they set forth all this before said; shewing also, that where the Queen's Highness with their Lordships' advice, had suppressed the tyranny of such infected Members, as tolerated, might have imprisoned a number of good subjects; yet presently remained in the said Predicament a number of corrupt hearts, and that these persuaded by a Sermon of late made by one Horton, did report the sacred word enclosed within the Bible to be false and full of error, as untruly translated, and therefore not meet among the common people to be read and taught; that these slanderous reports had wounded their consciences. And, considering the execrable doings before mentioned, whereof those persons above-named were as the chiefest, they petitioned, that it would please their Lordships to remove and weed them out from having any Authority; and through examining of them, to bolt out a number of their affinity."

Henry IV's grant to the town erecting a corporation of a mayor and two constables, with a court of staple, was cancelled in the 37th year of Queen Elizabeth, after a long exchequer suit. Queen Elizabeth confirmed the charter of the Weavers' Company which had been granted by Queen Mary. Of this more presently.

The plague made dreadful ravages among the inhabitants of Cirencester several times in the sixteenth century. In A.D. 1563, in the autumn, about twenty persons died every month of that terrible disease. In 1577 there was another visitation, when about the same number died in the month. In 1578, four hundred and ninety died in the year, of whom 370 died in the months of July to November, and 210 died in the month of September alone.

R. JEFFERIES

Word count 1 086

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#### HISTORY OF CIRENCESTER.

##### CHAPTER IX. – CIRENCESTER IN THE CIVIL WAR. THE TOWN GARRISONED AND BESIEGED.

In the history of the war between the Parliament and King Charles I. Cirencester occupies a very conspicuous position. The differences between Charles and his Parliament having at length reached an open breach, he erected his standard at Nottingham on the 25th August, A. D. 1642. Ten days before that, on Wednesday, the 15th August, Lord Chandois, of Sudeley Castle, Lord-Lieutenant of the county of Gloucestershire, having received a commission of array from the King; that is a commission to call out the Militia, attempted to put it in execution at Cirencester. But meantime the Parliament had issued an order for the enlistment of Volunteers, and it would seem had been very successful in the Cotswolds. The state of feeling in the county at that time – the extreme bitterness to which it had already arrived – and the affair that followed the attempt of Lord Chandois will be best described by the following letter, written by a townsman at the time, one John Giffard, to a member of Parliament. The Barton House it may be mentioned, was formerly called Giffard's.

“ Worthy Sir, - We are bold to present you with the passage of business yesterday at Cisseter, in our County of Gloucester. My Lord Chandois having last week sent several letters to divers of the principall Gentlemen of our County, to give him a meeting then

and there, our country-men and the Volunteers got notice of it, and apprehending that he came to execute the Commission of Array, there came at least a thousand armed men to assist the Townsmen and the Volunteers got notice of it, and apprehending that he came to execute the Commission of Array there came at least a thousand armed men to assist the Towns-men, who had with posts and chains fortified the Town to keep out Horse, and they did all purpose to keep my Lord out of the Town, if he did not promise and protest that he did not come to execute the Commission of Array; which he solemnly did to divers gentlemen that met him upon Radcomb Down, and to some of the Townsmen, who observing that he came not with above thirty persons, and those with no weapons but swords, brought notice of it to the Town; and so he was admitted in. After dinner, the Justices of the Peace and other gentlemen being in conference with my Lord, the soldiers and armed men came and burst the House where they were and demanded of my Lord, wherefore and for what he came thither? He answered that it was only to confer with the gentlemen for the peace of the County.

“Then they required him to deliver up His Commission of Array unto them, or otherwise they would bring him to the Parliament. At length, upon meditation and intreat of the Gentlemen, the souldiers were content to depart, if my Lord would put it under his hand that he would never execute the said Commission, nor any others for him, in any part of this County, but would oppose and hinder it to his power, and that he would maintaine the Power and Priviledge of Parliament, and the Laws and Liberties of the Subjects with his life and fortune: All which, being in extreme fear, he condescended unto: and a note being drawn to that purpose. My Lord, Sir Thomas Tracy, and some others put their hands to it, which did in some sort pacify the souldiers. Yet a great many not herewith content did protest that they would bring my Lord to the Parliament, and would not otherwise be satisfied a great while; yet with very much intreaty, about eleven of the clock at night they departed to their lodgings, intending to speak with my Lord again this morning. But he, being still in great fear, was conveyed away on foot very privately by Sir William Masters and other gentlemen, through his House, let out a back way, and so departed. The Souldiers coming to looke for him this morning, and finding him gone, were extreemly enraged, and had like to have pulled down the house, took his Coach and drew it themselves into the Market-place, cut it and tore it all in pieces. The Gentry and Commons of the County so declare themselves against the said Commission.

“Believe me, this is a true relation. I was an eye and ear witness of it; and the main body of our County resolve to keep their Protestation. Not having else at present,

“I remain, your obliged to serve you,  
“JOHN GIFFARD.”

“Cisseter, the 16th August, 1642.”

A short time afterwards Cirencester was garrisoned for the Parliament, Colonel Fettiplace being appointed Governor, with one Carr, a Scotchman and Low Country soldier, as his second in command. Mr. Georges, member for the borough, Sir Robert Cook and others had the direction of affairs. The garrison was composed of volunteers, and trainbands, and two or three companies out of Lord Stafford’s regiment, who might be called regulars. “Thus,” says a contemporary writer, “we continued in arms, not doing or suffering much till January, only the cavaliers, when they came within twelve miles of us to Burford, were twice beaten out of their quarters there, by some parties that went out from our garrison of Cicester, we being very impatient of such bad neigh-bours.

“On Saturday, the last of December (1642), the Lord Marquisse Hartford, with his Welch regiments and Sir John Beaumont with his forces came up from Worcester, to the towne of Stow in our county, and on Tuesday following marched thence to Burford, where finding his entertainment scanty, his lordship presently repaired to the king at Oxford, and there advised his majesty, that unless he might have contribution and quarter for his army in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, (which he affirmed would never be had till the town of Cister was taken) they could not long subsist, the stores of all places (where they were masters) being neare spent and exhausted. His lordship also, with much confidence, offered his majesty that he would take the towne, if he might be assisted with some great horse and dragoones; hereupon as he desired, a commission was granted to him and Prince Rupert with two regiments of horse, and one of dragoons, and Prince Maurice, with all his horse and dragoones was sent to the aid of him.

“In pursuance whereof his lordship with his army (as some of their owne reported) to the number of six thousand horse and foote, upon Saturday the seventh of January, about noone, drew up the forces almost round about the towne, and where they made their first stand, they made a pause for above two houres, in which time they only sent out scouts to view our guards, and then summoned those in the towne in the name of Marquisse Hartford, lord generall of those forces, by a trumpet, to deliver up the towne and arms to his lordship, upon promise of his majestie’s free pardon for all by-gone offences, with assurance of safety of their persons and estates, which if it were refused no mercy might be expected. Before the first trumpet was dispatched, a second came in the name of Prince Rupert, with the same message in effect; adding only, that they came to vindicate and maintaine the king’s rights and prerogative. The answer returned to both was the same, and in substance this, We do heartily acknowledge and professe ourselves to be his majestie’s loyal and faithfull subjects, and shall be ever as ready with our lives and fortunes to maintaine his just rights and prerogatives as they were, or the best of his majestie’s subjects; and as we are so, we ought likewise to enjoy his majestie’s peace, and the just rights and liberties of the subjects of England, according to the laws of the land, in defence whereof and the true protestant religion only we stand to our arms, and are resolved with God’s assistance to defend them with our estates and lives. This answer being returned the enemy kept their stand on all sides untill it beganne to grow darke, and then it pleased God of his mere mercy so to discourage them, that they all retreated to their night quarters in the villages round about, where they did eat up all the provision of victual, and spoiled much corne and hay. The next morning they only shewed themselves before the towne, and so departed without making one shot at

it; Prince Rupert and his troops to Oxford, Prince Maurice to his quarters at Farrinton, and Marquesse Hartford and his forces to Burford and the villages adjoining. While they lay before the tonne, our forces took Master John Villiers prisoner, who was brother to Lord Grandison, and captaine of a company of dragoons, and is still in prison at Gloucester; when they went away they took with them all the horses of the villages round about us and did threaten a sudden returne with force, and as much fury and revenge as they could send to us with the best cannon they could bring.”

Lord Clarendon, in his History of the Rebellion, Book VI, mentions this attempt of the Marquis of Hertford in the following words: - “The Marquis of *Hertford* bringing with him out of *Wales*, near two thousand foot, and one regiment of horse, intended, with the Assistance of Prince *Rupert*, who appointed to take in that town; but by the extreme foulness of the ways, the great fall of rain at that time (being about *Christmas*) and some mistake in Orders between the two Generals, that Design was disap-pointed; And the alarm gave the enemy so much the more courage, and diligence to provide for an Assault.”

The foregoing writer, continuing his account, says that after the retreat of the cavaliers - “We waited a fortnight for the return of the enemy, who we heard was marched into Northamptonshire, and in the meantime our garrison was increased, and the towne better fortified on all sides, and we had four great iron pieces sent from Bristol, besides two brasse pieces we had before from Gloucester. On Thursday, January 26, a party from Cicester of some four or five hundred great horse and dragoons (who were to meete with more strength from Gloucester and Tewkesbury, marched hence to beseige Sudeley castle, fourteen miles from Cicester, because it was reported, that certainly a strong malignant party was rising in that part of Gloucestershire, and it was feared that Sudeley castle (the strongest hold in those parts) would become a receptacle both of the malignants’ arms and treasure. On Friday our forces set down before it, and after summons assaulted it, and being reinforced from Cicester with the hundred choyse musqueteers and one brass piece, they took the castle by composition.”

Sudeley castle was the stronghold of Lord Chandois, the lord-lieutenant of the county, whose attempt to execute the commission of array at Cirencester was so rudely resisted. The expedition was undertaken by the advice of Massey, governor of Gloucester - the retreat of the Marquis of Hertford affording the opportunity. Though successful it materially weakened the garrison of Cirencester - some 600 men being withdrawn, 400 horse, 200 musqueteers, and this afterwards proved very detrimental to the Parliamentary interest. Meantime the inhabitants, under fear of the return of the cavaliers, set to work to fortify the town to the

best of their ability. The walls that had formerly encircled the town still remained in part, and the river Churn on the east and north-west side formed a fosse. The streets were barricaded with waggons, harrows, and chains, and at either end of the main street that led through the town strong turnpike-barricades were erected to keep out cavalry. Prince Rupert on the 21st of January started from Oxford to relieve Colonel Hastings, who was besieged in his own house at Ashby-de-la-Zouche, Leicestershire, taking with him five regiments of horse, his own troop of life guards, a body of dragoons and foot, and four field pieces. Hearing, however, that the siege had been raised Rupert turned his attention upon Cirencester, which writes Clarendon, was a "good town in *Gloucestershire*, which the rebels were fortifying, and had in it a very strong Garrison; and being upon the edge of *Wiltshire*, *Berkshire*, and *Oxfordshire*; shrewdly streightened the King's Quarters," (at Oxford). On Monday, 30th, Prince Rupert appeared before Sudeley Castle. The Prince, however, as the castle was considered to depend upon the town, resolved to attempt Cirencester first, and if he should succeed to turn upon the castle afterwards. Lieutenant-Colonel O'Neal with a strong body of dragoons and the Prince's own regiment, was placed on the Cirencester side of the castle to keep watch until the main body of the army came up. At night the detachment was drawn off, and the whole army spent the night in the open fields near Hawling. During the night there fell a "great snow," and the next day, Tuesday, the cavaliers "marched towards Ciseter, and quartered within seven miles of it, almost round about us. And yet this being known to our forces at Sudeley castle (who were the greatest part of our strength) they tarried there (I will not say by whose neglect it was) till the towne of Ciseter was utterly lost." This was undoubtedly a great mistake on the part of the Parliamentary garrison of Sudeley. "On Wednesday," continues one who seems to have been within the town, "Feb. 1st, the enemy was reinforced with some fresh troopes from Oxford, and two whole culverings, besides four small brasse field pieces, and two mortar pieces; and so on Wednesday some of them quartered within a mile of the towne and gave us alarms all that night." The next morning Prince Rupert, according to the account of his chaplain, received a reinforcement of dragoons, a regiment of horse commanded by Col. Slater, a mortar to throw gren-ades, and two eighteen pounders." On Thursday morning, Feb. 2nd, "they (the cavaliers) were discovered some two miles from the town, where under a hedge they staid some two hours, till all their forces drew together into one body, from their several quarters in the villages, and so they divided them-selves; Prince Rupert, and the greatest part of the army drawing neere the towne on the west and south part, and the Erle of Carnarvon and his troops, and some other forces, on the north and north-west part of the towne."

Prince Rupert reconnoitred the north side of the town about the Spital Gate, and then disposed his forces in the following order: - Colonel Lunsford with his dragoons was to attack the town about the Spital Gate, Carnarvon's regiment of cavalry was to second him; and the mortar under the direction of Monsieur la Roche was planted within one hundred and fifty paces of the Spital Gate to assist the efforts of that part of the army. The Prince then marched the greater portion of his army to the north west end of the town, and drew it up in the Barton-field. The centre was commanded by Lieutenant General Wilmot, and consisted of five hundred well disciplined men, headed by Colonel Lewis Kirke, who was supported by Prince Maurice's regiment. The right wing was commanded by Lord Wentworth, consisted of four regiments of dragoons, and was supported by Sir Thomas Byron with the Prince of Wales' regiment. The left wing was headed by Prince Rupert, and was made up of Colonel Usser's regiment, about four hundred men who had arrived that morning under Colonel Wentworth, Prince Rupert's own regiment, and his life guards under Lieutenant Colonel O'Neal, and Sir Richard Crane. Sir John Byron had the reserve. He had a regiment of horse.

To oppose this formidable array, the Parliamentarians had done all in their power to strengthen the defences of the town. The low stone walls that form so peculiar a feature of Gloucestershire made so many breastworks. The Barton House, known then as Giffard's, was well-manned, a square high garden wall was also lined with musquetry. The water-mill on the left side of the Barton, and another mill at the lower end of Gloucester-street had been strengthened with walls and other works. The streets were barricaded. Two batteries had been erected, two six-pounders on the south-west corner, commanding Cricklade way, formed one. A brass saker in Sir William Master's garden was opposed to the mortar that supported Colonel Lunsford. An iron six-pounder was planted in the Market-place. The ends of the main street leading through the town were defended by turnpikes - a kind of barricades made of beams and poles. Colonel Carr was so confident of his ability to defend the town that he is said to have declared he would keep the place against 20,000 men, and a Mr. Gregory, a minster, encouraged the garrison by assuring them that he had "begged the town of the Lord." But the defences were in one respect very defective - if one was turned the others were exposed to being flanked.

R. JEFFERIES.

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## HISTORY OF CIRENCESTER.

### CHAPTER X. – THE ATTACK

The word was “Queen Mary,” and the attack was begun by a forlorn hope of thirty musqueteers, out of Colonel Kirk’s men, headed by Lieutenant St. John, who were directed by Lieutenant-General Wilmot between the Barton House and the “great manor house,” then in the possession of the Pooles, and on the site of which the present mansion of Lord Bathurst stands. The forlorn hope came up as far as the edge of a ground between the gardens of the Barton and the manor house, and Wilmot then dispatched a messenger to the Prince, desiring the cannon to be advanced as “they were already almost in the hedge.” At the hedge St. John was shot in the leg. Soon after an additional sixty men from the same corps arrived to support the forlorn hope. Lieutenant-Colonel Layton next came up with an additional reinforcement, and now the fight really began. The firing grew warm, and the townsmen were driven from the hedge to the Barton garden wall, sharply pursued by the cavaliers, who came so close as to fling stones over the wall. Lieutenant-General Wilmot now led Kirke’s whole regiment down the hill to the Barton House, and the Prince sent Colonel Usser with four hundred men in addition to his own regiment to support him. The avenue was obstructed by a heap of bushes, but the pike men cleared it and entered the yard. Colonel Usser found the garden wall, which was lined by musquetry, too high to climb, but managed to outflank the enemy by entering the garden from behind. The Parliamentarians were firing from the windows of the house upon Kirke’s men. The cavaliers killed about fourteen on entering – the rest retreated, and the Colonel with a fire-pike set fire to the house, while the soldiers set fire to some stacks of hay and corn. The heat and smoke drove the townsmen out of the house, and they retreated hastily by Cecily-hill to the turnpike erected at that end of the town, closely pursued by the cavaliers, who slaughtered a good many. The writer whose account has already been quoted, who seems to have been within the town, gives a minute account of this action, which he makes out not altogether creditable to the courage of the cavaliers, but rather to their overwhelming numbers. “About twelve a cloke, two or three regiments of foote being kept in, and *forced on* by the horse behinde them, beganne a furious assault on the Barton, a great farme which lay not farre from the towne westward, where they were valiantly entertained by some hun-dred musqueteers that lay under the garden wall. So there continued at the Barton a very hot fight for some two howres, our men lying under the shelter of the wall, notably giving fire at them, within lesse than musquet shot, and oure cannon being little more off than

musquet shot, all the while furiously playing pointe blank on their whole body, which lay in an open rising field. Here the Welchmen were seen to drop down a pace, but still the horsemen behind them, cried On, On, and drave them forward till they had gotten quite under the garden wall. But before that the enemy had fired some barnes and ricks of corne and hay that lay quite behinde those hundred musqueteers, so that the enemy being at the wall and breaking of it downe, and the fire so behinde them, that it took away all possibility of retreating if they staid any longer, and they being so few (and yet as many as could well be spared from other guards) our men were forced out of that worke after two hours' valiant resistance of that furious charge of the enemy, during all which time we lost but one man, who after the guard was entered, could not finde his way forth through the fire and smoake. Our men retreating to the second worke, which was hard by, being so hotly pursued by the enemy, fire and smoake, which the wind drave directly upon them; they and the guards of that worke without any resistance made, very disorderly fled into the towne, and were furiously pursued by the enemy, who without quarter killed those they met withall or overtook; which so desperately intraged our men, that in the market place, and from windowes they shot at the enemy almost an houre together, purposing to sell their lives and libertie as deare as they could."

Thus was the Barton lost and won. It was the Huguemont of Cirencester – the key of the whole place. The battle, however, was not yet by any means over.

Lord Wentworth with the left wing was to have attacked the town on the south, on the right hand of Grismund's Tower, then known as Poole's Mount. Misled, however, by their guide, they came into a close on the left hand of the mount, where they were flanked by a battery, and exposed to an annoying fire of musquetry from a high wall in front. Judging it difficult to force the wall the detachment was marched to the left into a lane, where they joined Colonel Kirke's men, and both parties entered the town together through the turnpike, the townsmen having just been beaten from the side works that guarded it. The turnpike was torn down, and Colonel Usser marched through and placed a guard upon the bridge at the foot of Cecily Hill. He then marched to the left up the mill bank towards a body of Parliamentarians, who manned a work in that direction, but perceiving his approach they forsook their colours and fled.

Meantime the battery known as Poole's played upon the horse, who kept their station at the end of the town, until Colonel Innes sent Prince Rupert intelligence of the turnpike-barricade being forced. Colonel Scrimsour with a small body of life guards was ordered to enter the town, and was quickly fol-lowed by the whole troop which passed in before the

foot, slaughtering many. About three hundred foot and fifty horse were found in the Market-place. The foot got into the houses and fired out of window, but the horsemen gave spur and fled. Sir Richard Crane then advanced down Dyer-street, when a Spanish gunner ran out of the King's Head Inn to fire the cannon that had been planted in the Market-place on the Prince's troops. Had he succeeded in reaching the gun the execution would probably have been fearful, but a cavalier seeing his intention rode in between the gunner and his piece and shot him with a pistol. At the end of Dyer-street the life guards found another turnpike and a body of two or three hundred Parliamentarians in a walled close on the left. The wall prevented the mounted cavaliers from reaching them. Sir Richard Crane, suspicious lest the Parliamentarians in the close might have a bye way to get at the Market-place, and thus flank him and cut off his retreat, retired to it, and remained there until the foot arrived. Many were cut down by the cavalry in the streets. Up to this time the post at the water mills on the left of the Barton had not been attacked. The Parliamentarians had raised a pair of colours here, but finding that the town had been entered they took down the colours and fell back to a bridge and chain. The mounted cavaliers pursued them, but the Parliamentarians seeing they could not pass the chain turned and fired upon the horse. The foot coming to the assistance of the cavalry finally drove them from their post. Mr. Payne, a clothier, of the town party, was here killed with the colours in his hand. Meantime the garrison at the Spital Gate were skir-mishing with Colonel Lunsford and Lord Carnarvon. But on learning that the town was taken, they flung down their arms and hastily made their escape, together with those Sir Richard Crane had left in the close on the left of Dyer-street. Colonel Lunsford then forced the Spital Gate, and Sir Charles Lucas entered by a turnpike. The cannoneers and musqueteers on the town being entered, forsook Poole's battery, leaving the colours standing, and it is said that those who manned George's battery under Capt. Seymour forsook their colours even before they had seen an enemy. The fugitives were pursued by Carnarvon and Sir John Byron. Carnarvon pursued those who fled southward, took many prisoners, and killed a few, while Sir John Byron chased those that fled towards Cricklade. His men slew about a hundred, and took about as many prisoners, among whom were two clergymen, a Mr. Stanfield, and Mr. Gregory, minister of Cirencester. Those that fled from Poole's battery wee pursued by Prince Maurice, and some of those first overtaken were slain. Three hundred of them asked quarter, which was given, and they were made prisoners.

Colonel Fettiplace, Captain Warneford, and Mr. George (one of the members for the borough), were taken prisoners.

Of the cavaliers, about twenty private men were killed. Major Hutchinson was killed, and Lieutenant St. John shot in the leg. Colonel Layton's horse was shot through the neck, and Major Windebanke had his killed under him. On the side of the town it was considered that at least about three hundred were killed, and twelve hundred taken prisoners, of whom one hundred and sixty were wounded. The Prince sent his surgeon, doctor, and chaplains on the following day to attend to them. Quantities of arms were taken out of the houses, and drawn out of the river, where they had been flung for concealment, to the number of 3000. Five pieces of cannon were also taken. General Wilmot was considered to have distinguished his judgment and valour in the affair.

The Byrons mentioned as commanders among the cavaliers are said to have been ancestors of the poet.

"Thus," writes the historian within the town, "Thus, about four of the cloke the towne was wholly wonne, and shooting was ended on all sides, and then they tooke prisoners, and fell to plundering that night, all the next day, and on Saturday, wherein they showed all the barbarous insolence of a prevailing enemy, and I am confident, they (it seems being grown more skilfull in mischief) not only acted ever, but out-did their former cruelties and spoyle of Braineferd, and Marleborough; they spared not to plunder their best friends, for I can assure you some of the notorious malignants were the most notably plundered of all the towne. I tremble to write of their blasphemies: they tauntingly asked some godly people, Where is now your God (you round head rogues?), you praied to the Lord to deliver you, and ye see how He hath delivered you, ye rebels, &c. The number that the enemy lost is altogether un-known, by reason none durst goe forth to see the slaine. Of the town forces, both townsmen and countrymen, there were not above twenty kill'd, as can yet be learn'd. It is much feared they slew a very godly minister, who was seen taken by them, and yet cannot be heard of. There lay some of our men naked four daies after they were killed, near the place where the enemy after the taking of the towne kept the utmost guard, and none durst bury them. The number of persons that they tooke and carried to Oxford was betwixt eleven and twelve hundred, among which there were some gentlemen of eminent estates and affections to their country, two very godly ministers, divers commanders, and others, which were very religious and of good account. They stript many of the prisoners, most of them of their utmost garments. They were all turned that night into the church, and though many of them were wounded and weary, yet their friends were not suffered to bring them a cup of water into the church that night, but what they thrust in at the backside of the church, having broken the windows: and the like cruelty I hear was shewed unto them when they lay in Witney church, in their passage to Oxford. They tied all

the prisoners, gentlemen, ministers, and all in ropes, and made them all goe afoot through the streets and way to Oxford, which in regard to the many horses, was up to their knees sometimes, and in this manner they used a very worthy gentleman, who had beene very lately high sheriffe of our county, an aged gentleman, of infirm health, though of an undaunted courage in this cause. They shame-fully abused the two ministers, reproachfully imitating their manner of preaching, &c. The Captaine, who tooke the ministers, upon the earnest solicitation of their friends for their releasement, promised them that for fifty or sixty pounds a-piece he would release them: which money being procured and paid them, he scoffingly answered that they might well pay him as much more to him for not killing them, as he might have done, as they deserved; and so after that they were more strictly imprisoned, and worse used; and one of their friends that had a free pass promised him into the town with the money, had very much adoe to escape killing or imprisoning. We lost five pieces of cannon, neare upon twelve hundred musquets, and other armes, fourteen colours, and some amunition, for most of our powder and bullet was sent unto them before they entered the town. The value of the pillage of the town is uncertain, but very great, to the utter ruin of many hundreds of families, and besides the burning of some particular men's houses, which were purposely set on fire after the towne was wonne. The Barton Farme, with very much building in it, and all the corne, hay, and other goods and cattle of one gentleman, which amounted to three thousand pounds and upwards, was burnt to the ground. On Friday they went into the country, and took away all the horse, sheepe, oxen, and other cattle of the well affected that inhabited near Cicester. On Saturday, February 2nd, they took away cloth, wooll, and yarne, besides other goods from the clothiers about Strondwater, to the utter undoing, not only of them and theirs but of thousands of poore people, whose very livelihood depends on that trade. Now Sir, before I close up all, I shall give you a hint of what I conceive, besides our sinnes, concurred with the irresistible will of God, to hasten our ruine. 1. The want of our horse, which made them confidently brave our men at their very workes, as also the want of cannoniers, which were at Sudely Castle. 2. The slow raising of monies out of the country, which made some of our men, for lack of pay, to depart the towne, and left many of the rest heartlesse, and our works but thinly manned. 3. The treachery of our malignant gentry round about us, who constantly gave the enemy intelligence and entertainment in their house, made provision for their armies, and some of them appeared in armes before their neighbour towne, which they could endure to see both fired and spoyled." The above is taken from "A Relation of the taking of Ciceter in the County of Glocester, on Thursday, Februe 2, 1642 (?) by Seven Thousand of the Cavaliers, under the

command of Prince Rupert, Prince Maurice, the Earls of Northampton, Carnarvon, Denbigh, and Cleveland, the Lord Digby, Lord Andevour, Lord Wentworth, Lord Taffe, Lord Dillon, Lieutenant Generall Wilmot, Sir John Byron, Colonell Gerrard, Colonell Kyrke, Colonell Dutton, and Captaine Legge, and divers others. Sent to a friend in London, by one who was present at and some days after taking ot it. Published because of the many false reports that were in print concerning the businesse. Printed in London 1642 (Feb. 20th.)”

Lord Clarendon in his History of the Rebellion, thus mentions the taking of Cirencester. After the Marquis of Hertford’s unsuccessful appearance before the town, “In the beginning of *February*, Prince *Rupert* went on the same design with better success; and at one and the same time, storming the Town in several places, their works being not yet finished though pertinaciously enough defended, enter’d their Line with some loss of Men, and many hurt, but with a far greater of the Enemy; for there were not so few as two hundred kill’d upon the place, and above one thousand taken Prisoners, whereof *Warneford*, and *Fettyplace* (two Gentlemen of good Quality and Fotune near that Town, and very active in the service), Mr. George, a Member of Parliament who served for that Burrough, and two or three Scottish officers of the Field, whereof *Carr* the Govenor was one, were the chief. The Town yielded much plunder; from which the undistinguishing Soldier could not be kept, but was equally injurious to Friend and Foe; so that many honest Men, who were imprison’d by the Rebels for not concurring with them, found themselves at Liberty and Undone together; amongst whom *John Plot*, a Lawyer of a very good reputation, was one; which being freed from the hard, and laborious imprisonment in which he had been kept, when he returned to his own House found it full of Soldiers, and twelve hundred pounds in Money taken from thence which could never be recovered. The Prince left a strong Garrison there, that brought almost all that whole County into contribution, and was a great enlargement to the King’s Quarters, which now, without interruption, extended from *Oxford* to *Worcester*.”

The sufferings undergone by the prisoners are vividly described in the following account: - After they had taken us, we were led into a field about half a mile from the town, where the chief commanders were, that they might take a view of us, who threatened to do execution upon us all, and there the common souldiers stript and wounded many of us, and then drove us to the Church in Cirencester, where we remained almost two whole days and two nights in all, which time they allowed us no sustenance wherein that to live: till just as they drove us towards Oxford they gave each of us a small piece of bread and cheese, and then bound us all with match (*i.e.*, the thin tarred rope used for lighting the firearms then used), and so drove us along without stockings on our legs, or shoes

on our feet, or hats on our heads, many of us having no doublets, and some gentlemen of good qualitie without breeches: and so we came to Burford Hill, where the Cavaliers gave each of us a little piece of bread, which was all the reliefe they gave us in our way between Cirencester and Oxford; and for this we waited a long time upon the hill, the wind blowing very cold, and we standing barefoot and bareleg'ed in the snow. Then we came to Witneigh (Witney), where we lay in the church, and from thence were drove to Oxon. And about a mile from the city, His Majestie, with the Prince and Duke of Yorke, came thither to see us drove along more like Dogs and Horses than men, up to the knees in mire and dirt along the horseway, and abundance of the Soellers much rejoicing at our misery, calling and abusing us by the names of Rogues and Traitors. And when we came to Oxon we were put altogether in the Church, and there we received, for the most part of us, a piece of bread that night. The next morning they separated the Volunteers from the Trainebands, and cruelly used us to force us all to take the Protestation.”++

It must be borne in mind however, that at the beginning of the war the Royalists looked upon the Parliamentarians as rebels, and not as soldiers, and treated them as such. Some of the prisoners were afterwards placed in a very critical position. In May 1643, William Yeoman, George Yeoman, Robert Boucher, and Lord Dacres, having entered into a conspiracy to open the gates of Bristol to the Cavaliers, were discovered, tried by courtmartial and sentenced to death. The king made great efforts to save them, threatening if the sentence was carried into effect to make reprisals upon Mr. George, Captain Huntley, and others taken at Cirencester. Despite of this Alderman Yeoman and Boucher were hanged by the Governor of Bristol, but the King did not carry out his threat.

As if in confirmation of the account handed down of the furious fight at the Barton, about two years ago in digging gravel near the house, five skeletons, apparently those of young men, lying side by side were found. There were no arms or ornaments discovered with them – which strengthens the supposition that they were skeletons of those who fell in fight, stripped of all valuables and hastily interred.

R. JEFFERIES.

Word count 3 514

HISTORY OF CIRENCESTER.  
CHAPTER XI.  
CIRENCESTER IN THE CIVIL WAR. – PETITION FROM THE TOWN  
TO THE KING. – ESSEX SURPRISES THE GARRISON. - CHARLES II  
AT CIRENCESTER

Not long after the taking of Cirencester by the Cavaliers, certain of the inhabitants of the town got up a petition which was presented to the King, praying to be readmitted into his favour. It ran thus –

The Petition of the Inhabitants of Cyrencester, whose names are hereunto subscribed, presented to His Majesty, at Oxford; with his Majestie's answer thereunto. Printed by His Majestie's command at Oxford, Feb. 28, by Leonard Lichfield, Printer to the University, 1642.

*To the King's most excellent Majesty, the humble Petition  
of the Inhabitants of Cyrencester.*

Dread Soverayne, -

We, your poore subjects, the inhabitants of the miserable distressed Cyrencester, having undergone all the heavy effects of your Majestie's justly incensed army, doe prostrate ourselves at your Majestie's feet, not to excuse, or in the least to extenuate our ill deservings. We acknowledge us inexcusably faulty, but to appeale unto your mercy, and to beg your pardon. That as we have been through all your kingdoms the first example of your justly deserved rigor, and the terrour thereof working its due effects upon all others, to deterre them from provoking your like displeasure, we may remaine your most remarkable object of your mercy, the most glorious and resplendent gemme of your crowne. Oh, Sir, the God of Heaven hath given you unto us our God upon the earth. We have grievously sinned against him by our undutifull carriage against you his vicegerent. Behold us now lying before you, acknowledging and from our hearts detesting the foulnesse of our offence, and ourselves for committing it, and most humbly beseeching your Majesty in imitation of that divine virtue, the most lively character of his image in you, to pardon us, and to receive us into your protection. In the assurance whereof, we may securely return to and abode at our severale homes, begin to go on in our formér trades and occupations, and, by God's blessing upon us, in them many hundreds of people of our towne and adjoining parts of the countrey, who have no other livelihood, may be againe set on work and relieved, and we have the hope in time, upon our after care, to endeavour to expresse the sincerety of our true returne to the duties of our allegiance, to joy us in the recovery of your wonted favour, and all of us, all our lives long, and our posterity after us, bound to acknowledge the height of your mercy, to pray to Almighty God to blesse your Majesty with all the happinesse which he hath promised in his Sacred Word, to all that shall shew mercy: -

Andrew Sollace  
Row. Freeman  
Robert Iles  
Thomas Dutton  
William Willis  
Edmund Freeman

Thomas Gibbs  
More Gwilliam  
Edward Causton  
William Chance  
John Beaton  
Edmund Ferribee

Edward Pratt  
John Kirby  
Thomas Tipping  
John Petty  
James Armand  
Thomas Maysey

|                |                 |                  |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| William Taylor | Michael Sharp   | Richard Mathew   |
| George Stone   | William Groves  | John Flacher     |
| Amos Dansey    | Thomas Man      | Richard Sollace  |
| Virgill Cripps | John Portlocke  | Thomas Man       |
| John Pratt     | Thomas Carter   | Richard Aucatt   |
| Edward Scovell | Richard Masters | Thomas Allen     |
| John Francklin | Samuel Spencer  | Walter Portlocks |
| Henry Webb     | Richard Evans   | Richard Man      |
| James Burge    | William Burge   | Michael Hartred  |
|                | George Lawrence |                  |

Some of the names attached to this petition are familiar sounds to this day in Cirencester. Masters, Cripps, Lawrence, Freeman, are names well known. The petition met with a very favourable reception, as the following reply from the King manifests: -

*His Majestie's gracious answer to the foregoing petition, at the court at Oxford, the twenty-fifth day.*

His Majesty graciously accepts the submission of the petitioners, and is himself sorry that the rebellion and disloyalty of that place hath brought so great a measure of sufferings upon any of his subjects; which was not in his Majestie's power to prevent. He is well pleased that the inhabitants of that towne of Cyrencester return safely to their houses, and live securely in them, from all violence by any of his Majestie's souldiers, that the trade and wealth of that place, may (by God's blessing) be again renewed. And his Majestie's will is, and he doth hereby give precise order, that no violence or injury be henceforward offered by any of his Majestie's garrison or souldiers to any of the petitioners, or any of the inhabitants of Cyrencester, they demeaning themselves with that duty and obedience to his Majestie's just and necessary commands, as the condition of the present time, and his Majestie's necessities require. And his Majestie's expresse command is, that the governour of Cyrencester for the time being, and all other his Majestie's officers and souldiers of that his garrison, take order and conform themselves accordingly.

EDW. NICHOLAS.

Charles I. passed through Cirencester on his way to the siege of Gloucester, in 1643, and slept one night at the Abbey, Sir William Master's, on Tuesday 8th August. A garrison was maintained in the town, and it would appear that the governor was Sir Nicholas Crispe, whose character is thus given in *Floyd's State Worthies*: - "The polypus puts not on more shapes to deceive the fisher than Sir Nicholas did to escape those who laid snares for him. One while you would meet him with thousands in gold; another, while on his way to Oxford, riding a pair of panniers, like a butterwoman going to market. At another time he was a porter carrying a letter on his Majesty's business in London. He was a fisherman in one place and a merchant in another; nor was he less valiant than prudent - his heart being as good as his head." There is an order in the vestry book to the overseers, to levy a rate to provide bread for the King's leaguers. Cirencester was now an important post, covering the communication of the King's army employed in the siege of Gloucester, with head-quarters at Oxford. Colonel Brett, in command of a

part of the King's forces, marched through the "Forest of Deane, and (writes Clarendon) fixed a Quarter which contained his whole Body at the *Vineyard*, the Bishop of *Gloucester's* Palace within less than half a mile of *Gloucester*. And by that means, there being only a long Bridge over the *Severn* by which Men could come out or go into *Gloucester*, he fully Block'd up the Town on that side, expecting that Prince *Maurice*, from *Cirencester*, should take equal care to distress it on the other; which he did to a good degree. But Sir *William Waller*, with a light Party of Horse, and Dragoons, near two thousand from the Earl of *Essex's* Army, had made a quick march through *Wiltshire* (after his taking of *Chichester*), and taking with little loss and trouble a small Garrison of the King's, consisting of about six or seven score, at *Malmesbury*, before it was fortified, or provided, made a face of looking towards *Cirencester*; where, when he found he was expected, by a suddain night march, in which he was very dexterous and successful, he posted to the River of *Severn*," and crossed it, when the Welsh army raised by Lord Herbert for the King were so greatly alarmed that they surrendered upon grant of quarter. Afterwards the King proposed a cessation of hostilities, and the Parliament offered to agree to it under several restrictions and limitations, the fourth article of which ran thus: - "4. That no siege shall be begun, or continued against *Gloucester*; and that his Majesty's Forces, now employ'd in the siege, shall return to *Cirencester* and *Malmesbury*, or to *Oxford*, as shall be most for their convenience." The Parliamentary forces were to remain in *Gloucester* or to retire near Windsor as they saw cause. The Treaty did not last long. The siege was at length raised by the city trainbands, under the leadership of the Earl of *Essex*, who marched from London on the 8th of September, 1643. The Earl's army consisted of about 12,000 men. Meantime, Charles, who was staying at Sudeley Castle, pressed the siege of *Gloucester* vigorously, Lord Wilmot with a body of horse being appointed to watch *Essex* about Banbury, and Prince Rupert with his cavalry waiting on the hills about *Gloucester*. *Essex* marched for *Gloucester*, the King's horse retiring before him, until the siege was raised, and Charles' army compelled to retire from before the city, whose defenders were actually reduced to a single barrel of gunpowder. *Essex* remained three days in *Gloucester*, while Charles removed from Sudeley to Evesham, in order to open a way for *Essex's* retreat, which it was considered must speedily take place from want of provisions. *Essex* then marched to Tewkesbury, and from the want of vigilance on the part of the King's horse, left that town twenty-four hours before the King heard of it, "for," writes Lord Clarendon, "he (*Essex*) took the advantage of a dark night, and having sure Guides reached *Cirencester* before the breaking of the day; where he found two Regiments of the King's Horse quartered securely, all which, by the

negligence of the King's Officers (a common and fatal crime throughout the War on the King's part) he surprized, to the number of above three hundred; and, which was of much greater value, he found there a great quantity of Provisions, prepared by the King's Commissaries, for the Army before *Gloucester*, and which they neglected to remove after the Siege was raised, and so most sottishly left it for the Relief of the Enemy, far more apprehensive of Hunger than of the Sword; and, indeed, this wonderful supply strangely exalted their Spirits, as sent by the special care and extraordinary hand of Providence, even when they were ready to faint."

This circumstance is said to have happened from the temporary absence of Sir Nicholas Crispe, the governor. The attack is thus described by a London apprentice, serving in the trainbands, and writing to his friends:

-  
"On Thursday (the 14th of September) we caused a bridge to be made over the Severne, and sent some forces to Upton bridge, in policy, as if we intended to march for Worcester, which causeth the enemy to draw all his forces together for the defence of that place, planted their ordnance, and thought to tickle us by the way; but the fools were cozened. For on Friday morning we went cleane another way, marcht all day and the greatest part of the might from Tewkesbury to Cirencester, 18 miles, where we took 200 and odd of them napping in their beds, though we thank God their horses were feeding in the stables.

"On Friday night we thought to have quartered in the fields, but having intelligence that such a party was there, we pluckt up our spirits, drew up a forlorn hope of about six hundred musketeers, and so we marcht hastily for Cirencester. We drewe neare it about one o'clock in the morning, and because we expected some knocking work, for we heard that Prince Maurice, with two thousand men was there, we had all white handkerchiefs on our hats, and the word 'God' in our mouths for distinction."

R. JEFFERIES.

*(To be continued.)*

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