

From this time the court seems to have remained generally at Westminster as usual, except for a short stay at Berkhamstead early in October. It remains, however, to account for these few days : 21, 25, 26, 29 June ; 9, 11, 14, 17, 21, 25 July ; 21, 27, 31 August ; 2, 10, 11, 17, 19, 21 September. W. H. B. BIRD.

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*Robert Bale, the London Chronicler*

MR. RALPH FLENLEY in his *Six Town Chronicles*<sup>1</sup> was unable to add anything to the wordy notice of Robert Bale contained in the *Catalogus* of John Bale, who described him as 'iurisperitus in urbe Londinensi, in qua natus fertur, tantam est apud prætorem, tribunos ac cives adeptus gratiam, ut publicus civitatis notarius et in causis civilibus iudex haberetur'. Tanner, professedly on the authority of Francis Thynne, made Robert Bale recorder of London, and stated that he died in 1461. Mr. Flenley had no difficulty in showing that Robert Bale was never recorder, and suggested that the date 1461 should be 'claruit' not 'obiit'. But he had to add that 'we can find no trace of him in published records of any description'. The Chronicler may, however, be probably identified with a Robert Bale who figures in several documents in the Early Chancery Proceedings at the Public Record Office.

The first series of these relates to a suit by Robert Bale, and Agnes his wife, against Nicholas Marchall ; it contains Bale's petition (in duplicate), the answer of Nicholas Marchall (fragmentary), the replication of Bale, and the rejoicing of Marchall ; the petition is endorsed with the decision in the suit on 15 November 1457.<sup>2</sup> It appears that Robert Bale married, before 1438, Agnes, daughter of John Haunsard. By the desire of his wife's uncle, Thomas Haunsard, they were married at St. Thomas of Acres. Thomas Haunsard gave them 100*l.* for the marriage, and the money was invested in tenements and houses at Southwark ; all the feoffees died, with the exception of Thomas Haunsard, who was alleged to have sold part of the property, and during sixteen years to have failed to pay the rents to Bale and his wife. Furthermore, Robert Bale had of his great trust delivered to Haunsard 100 marks, and divers jewels and stuff of household to the value of 40*l.*, to the use of his wife with remainder to his daughters. Thomas Haunsard, who was 'aged and continued many years feble', was estranged from his niece and her husband by Nicholas Marchall, who after his death pretended

<sup>1</sup> pp. 67-70.

<sup>2</sup> Early Chancery Proceedings, 25/105-9—these are printed in *Select Cases in Chancery*, pp. 143-50 (Selden Society) ;—see also 17/218.

to be executor and withheld the money. Apparently Marchall alleged that Bale had received 100 marks of Haunsard. Bale replied that 50 marks was 'for costis and charges doon be the saide Robert at ye seide mariage' (perhaps in his legal capacity), and that the rest was in part payment for money due. Bale in the end recovered 194 marks, viz. 50 marks for the lands sold, and 144 marks for rent. Nicholas Marchall is described as an ironmonger, and may be identified with the alderman of Castle Baynard Ward from 1463 to 1465, who was one of the first Wardens of the Ironmongers' Company. The decision in the suit was given in 1457, but there had been a preliminary action in the mayor's court before Stephen Forster, who was mayor in 1454-5. Thomas Haunsard therefore died in or before 1455.

The second suit, which is dated between 1465 and 1470, was a petition of William Meborne of London, grocer, arising out of an action of debt, brought by him against Robert Bale of London, 'scryvener', in the Exchequer.<sup>3</sup> Meborne obtained judgement for 130*l.*, and Bale being 'in execucion in Flete for the same' paid 20*l.* 19*s.* in part discharge. Afterwards, Meborne sent one John Kellam, gentleman, to obtain payment. Then Robert Bale 'untruly and disceytefully, in the prison of Flete aforesaid, forgid an obligacion', specifying that he and others were bound to Kellam in a 100*l.* parcel of the balance of the debt, and with untrue witnesses and record deposed before Kellam that the bond was duly sealed and delivered. Kellam was taken in, and induced Meborne to give credence and send Bale a general acquittance. Bale succeeded by this means in obtaining his discharge in the Exchequer to the undoing of Meborne, whc, now that the bond was found to be a forgery, sought his remedy in chancery. What came of the suit, and whether Meborne's allegations were true, does not appear.

A third case in which Bale's name appears was an attachment at the suit of John Brewester, gentleman, of gunpowder and other goods in the hands of the complainant, Thomas Whitby, but late of Robert Bale, scrivener; it was stated that the gunpowder was held to the use of the duke of Gloucester, and the other goods on behalf of Robert and William, children of the said Robert Bale. This was between 1473 and 1475.<sup>4</sup>

There is nothing in these proceedings to identify Robert Bale, scrivener, with the Chronicler. But since the Chronicler seems to have been a professional lawyer (his Chronicle suggests that his interests lay in this direction), the identification is at least plausible. At all events the Robert Bale of these Chancery

<sup>3</sup> Early Chancery Proceedings, 32/281.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 4<sup>o</sup>/110.

Proceedings is the only person of the name who has so far come to light, who was a Londoner, a lawyer, and a contemporary of the Chronicler.

The biographical facts do not amount to much. As Bale seems to have married Agnes Haunsard some time before 1438, his birth may be placed about 1410. He probably did not die much before 1473. For the rest we learn that he was a man of some means, of a possibly chequered legal career, and the father of several children. It may be doubted whether John Bale had any better authority for stating that Robert had a high repute as a lawyer, and became a judge in civil causes, than his own rhetorical sympathy for a namesake. C. L. KINGSFORD.

### *The Lord Keeper's Speech to the Parliament of 1592/3*

THE speeches delivered on the second day of the parliament of 1592/3 as inserted in D'Ewes' *Journals*, and the greater part of the opening speech of the first day, were derived from an anonymous journal taken by a member of the house of commons in that session. Of these speeches, the reply of the lord keeper, Sir John Puckering, to the Speaker's customary demand for privileges, includes the following statement: 'Priviledge of Speech is granted, but you must know what priviledge you have, not to speak every one what he listeth, or what cometh in his brain to utter that; but your priviledge is I or No.'<sup>1</sup> A literal interpretation of these last words is belied by the actual proceedings in the house of commons. Furthermore, a doubt is cast upon the trustworthiness of the anonymous journal for this day, since the Speaker's claims, as the writer records them, contain a petition, 'That your Majesty will give us your Royal Assent to the things that are agreed upon'.<sup>2</sup> The queen's assent could not be sought in advance to the business of the session, and it is not surprising that the lord keeper's reply omits any reference to it.<sup>3</sup> Curiously enough, one, but one only, of the several manuscript copies of the anonymous journal extant in the British Museum gives a variant text. In place of the clause defining the Commons' privilege as: one of *Aye* or *No*, it has 'your priuiledge is for such speech as shall be used with Iudgement and sobrietye'; whilst in a marginal summary, which is one of a series peculiar to this copy, it reads, 'Lower houses liberty in priuiledge of free speakeing is

<sup>1</sup> D'Ewes' *Journals*, p. 460.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* D'Ewes notes this inaccuracy. He also states that the petition for freedom from arrests was omitted, but this, possibly, was merged by the compiler of the journal into the first petition, which reads in the manuscript journals, 'that liberty of speeche and the auncient priuiledge of parliament may be graunted unto your subiects'.