by misfortune, have left the town and others have perished in plagues and epidemics or have gone away with their families, and the artificers and workmen who might take their places fear to come on account of the poverty of the town, so that now there are only four parishes there inhabited and the same number of churches maintained, the benefices whereof are however so poor that they will have to be left unserved unless the king give speedy aid, there being in the town no more than the forty-four hosts or householders (lares foventes) whose names are specified in the inquisition. Also the buildings have so fallen into decay that for the future not more than 10l. a year can be paid as farm without the final destruction and exile of the whole population. Wherefore the present mayor, burgesses and commonalty have besought the king to discharge them from the said farm of 42l. from 19 November, 16 Henry VI, and to cause the town with all the privileges, liberties and franchises, granted on account of the said farm, to be taken into his hands; saving to heirs and purchasers their inheritance and purchases. The king, therefore, commissions the said earl of Suffolk and John Cotesmore to take the town into his hands on the surrender of the present mayor, burgesses and commonalty, to discharge them from the said farm of 42l. a year, and to treat with them to have the same again at a suitable farm, or failing that to demise all the lands, tenements, rents and profits accruing to the king through the taking into his hands, to his best avail, or entrust them to some person to administer and account therefor.