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An Annotated Translation of the Life of Saint Thomas, the Archbishop of Canterbury By William, a Monk of Canterbury

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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF THE LIFE OF SAINT THOMAS,
THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

BY

WILLIAM, A MONK OF CANTERBURY

BY

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Vita

Sister Mary Annette Bocke, O. P., was born in Quincy, Illinois, March 25, 1915.

She was graduated from Notre Dame Academy, Quincy, Illinois, June, 1933, and attended Quincy College from 1933 to 1934.

The Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Latin was conferred by Loyola University, June, 1939.

From 1940 to 1946 the writer has been engaged in teaching Latin and French at Routt College High School, Jacksonville, Illinois.
The Latin text for this life of St. Thomas of Canterbury by William of Canterbury is that of James Craigie Robertson who, in 1875 under the direction of the Master of the Rolls, edited the life as Volume I of the series entitled "Materials for the History of Thomas Becket." For the most part Canon Robertson used the thirteenth century Winchester manuscript and collated it with other valuable manuscripts in the British Museum. The following translation of Volume I, Book II, was suggested and undertaken in an endeavor to produce a first English translation of this volume as has been done recently with other books in this series.

The translation itself was begun only after a comprehensive study of the life and times of Thomas Becket and Henry II. In many instances the interpretation or illustration of doubtful passages was facilitated by information gleaned from numerous biographers, critics, and editors, of whom the more important are here appended. An attempt was made, however, to work independently of the knowledge and impressions derived from previous reading so as not to inject a personal opinion in the work in advance of a thorough philological mastery of the text. My endeavor has been to render as accurately as possible the exact ideas contained in the Latin text. Yet it is not always easy to know what William of
Canterbury exactly means. This fault of his is quite consistent with the tenor of the quarrel between the Primate and the King. The entire controversy was characterized by obscurity and misunderstanding. However perennial the discussions, many of the statements cannot be taken at their face value while others defy an exact interpretation because of ambiguous references and obscure syntax. By way of example notable passages in Sections 8, 9, and 14 may be cited. But much of this obscurity possibly is due to the fact that the monks for whom William wrote the work understood the full implication of the references, whereas present day readers do not.

As for the annotations, I have essayed the utmost brevity as far as was consistent with a satisfactory treatment of identities or real difficulties. Citations possessing only erudite or curious interest which may sometimes prove an annoyance rather than a help to the reader were not admitted into the footnotes. With four or five exceptions, it was possible to identify the persons and places mentioned in the text, and those that could not be identified are considered of insignificant importance.

In undertaking this work I have received constant help and encouragement from the members of the Classical Department of Loyola University and especially from the Reverend James J. Mertz, S.J., whose kindly interest in the work has been a source of great inspiration.

I append here a list of works on Thomas Becket and his times.
I do not pretend this is a complete bibliography. It merely indicates works, beside numerous encyclopedias, which I have consulted from time to time with more or less profit in translating and annotating the life.


INTRODUCTION

The principal source material for the life of William of Canterbury is found in his "The Life, Passion, and Miracles of Thomas of Canterbury," a tribute to his dead master. Except for the scanty references he has there supplied concerning himself, his personality is practically obscure. Gervase of Canterbury refers to William as "Cantuariensis monachus", but there is lack of evidence that he was a native of Canterbury. Robertson suggests that "the horror he occasionally expresses at 'barbarous' English names of places may indicate that he was of Norman rather than of English blood." Additional weight is given to this argument by his name, William, the most common and popular name among the Normans. Because William reports many miracles that happened in Ireland, and also because he protests against Henry II's Irish War, it has been likewise argued that he was a native of Ireland. Abbot agrees that

2 Ibid., 176.
3 Ibid., xxviii.
4 There is an illustrative story told by Migne, Patrol. clx, 514: At a Christmas celebration in Bur the young King Henry ordered that no one who did not bear the name "William" could dine in a certain room; and when all the others had been sent out a hundred and seventeen knights remained, all bearing the name "William."
5 Robertson, op. cit., 180, 181.
"he certainly has a Celtic faculty of fluent and versatile speech, and is master of methods of variety," but adds that "in part this may arise from a long study of classical literature." 6

William tells us that he was a monk of Christ's Church, Canterbury, one of the many admitted during the Archbishop's exile, but the only one approved by the Archbishop on his return. He alone was raised to the diaconate in December, 1170, while the others who had been admitted without Thomas' permission were deferred for reasons of discipline. He describes himself as present at the beginning of the altercation between Becket and the murderers in the cathedral, but admits with contrition that his new-born devotion to the Primate was too weak for him to share his death. Conscious of his own sins and feeling unfit for martyrdom, he fled to a neighboring altar when he heard the words of Fitzurse, "Strike! Strike! 8

Until recently William was repeatedly confused with other Williams who lived about the same time, and whose identities were not clearly established. The tradition that William of Canterbury was sub-prior of Canterbury is practically disproved by Canon Robertson, but "if he ever attained that dignity, we can hardly suppose he was the William Brito (or Le Breton) who is addressed in several

7 Robertson, op. cit., 2, 119.
8 Ibid., 133, 134.
letters by John of Salisbury as sub-prior during the exile, at a time when the biographer must have been recently admitted into the monastery, if indeed he had then been admitted at all." The first of these letters was written in 1166, and William entered the monastery no earlier than 1164 when the Primate's exile began. It is now generally admitted that William of Canterbury cannot be the same person as William Fitzstephen who also wrote a biography of Becket.

Seventeen months (May 1172) after the martyrdom of St. Thomas (December 1170) William began to write his book of Miracles. Apparently he was attached to the martyr's tomb in some official capacity for he seems to have been entrusted with the duty of receiving pilgrims and of listening to their stories. Encouraged by three visions of St. Thomas and with the help of Benedict of Peterborough who was already engaged in a like endeavor, William completed his book of Miracles which he subsequently presented to Henry II in compliance with that King's own request. Abbot remarks that this was shortly after Benedict was removed from the Abbacy of Peterborough (1177). At any rate, it was before 1189, the year of Henry's death. It is difficult to imagine the King's reception of the book, since, as has already been mentioned, William repeatedly denounces Henry's invasion of Ireland in no gentle language.

9 Ibid. xxix.
10 Ibid. xxx.
The Life of the Archbishop, at least in part, was written after the Miracula. This is evident from the second page of the Preface, "Nam cum miracula ejus, quae in schedulis occultabat incorrecta et imperfecta, rogarentur a fratribus exponere transcribenda, ait ei in visu noctis, 'Elige tibi quod vis. ...'" The date of its completion is a matter of conjecture, although it is certain that in 1199 it was incorporated in the "Quadrilogus," a harmony of four lives of Becket written by John of Salisbury, Alan of Tewkesbury, Herbert of Bosham, and William of Canterbury, and in the account of the "Passion" a fifth is added, that of Benedict of Peterborough. This "Quadrilogus" or "Historia Quadripartita," as it is sometimes called, was first printed in Paris in 1495 and later in 1682 was published in Brussels by Lupus.

Among the many noteworthy lives William's is regarded as representative of the monastic life of the Archbishop, who, by his death made the monastery of Christ Church the most famous in Europe.  

12 Garnier's book is the popular life for the people, while Fitzstephen's lays stress on preserving the fame of Thomas as the greatest of London's citizens. William of Canterbury, on the other hand, writes as a monk for monks. Preference was shown his work by the fact that it was chosen by the monks as the one to be presented to the King.

12 Garnier de Pont-Sainte Mazence, Vie de Saint Thomas, written in verse.
13 William Fitzstephen, Vita et Passio Thomae.
The style of William's work, on the whole, is scholarly and precise and gives evidence of careful writing. His frequent references to Scripture and the classics and his use of Graecisms indicate his position among the learned men of Christ Church. We find him referring to such personages as Doeg, Chusai, Semey, Thrasos, and the like, and using such unusual words as synaxi, athleta, agonothetes, garciones. In the line "more bidentium, non murmure resonat, non querimonia" (Sec. 44) it is clear that he made a conscious attempt to use the Aesolepiad meter.

Frequently he is blunt and forceful, but he can employ a subtle combination of exposition, argumentation, and sharp invective which is even more powerful. To be sure, the monks were most daring to send this work to Henry even though they were assured of his repentance for instigating the murder of the Archbishop. Many a time the reader is tempted to think that William is ruled less by policy than by prejudice. The many long digressions show his fondness for irrelevant comment which no doubt he considers scholarly and profitable. He himself is aware of this fault for he admits at the end of Section 34, "Digressi sumus; revertamur ad propositum." Indeed, this section is so great a digression and so far out of sequence that Dr. Giles ascribed it and the preceding section to Benedict rather than to William.

The point at issue between Thomas Becket and Henry II and the respective character and merits of the dignitaries connected with the feud have for long been subjects of controversy. Their
reputation has suffered equally at the hands of friends and enemies. On the one side there are those--like James Anthony Froude--who qualify Becket as proud, fanatical, and quarrelsome, Henry as dishonest and hypocritical, Pope Alexander as vacillating and scrupulous, and the high dignitaries as ambitious, scheming, and wicked. On the other hand there is the verdict of the Catholic Church that Thomas lived a saint and died a martyr; therefore, those who opposed the principles and the cause for which he lived and died were in error. Thomas stands as a symbol of the unceasing conflict between the world and the Church—the principle of God against Caesar. It is sometimes extraordinarily difficult to define the borderline between matters of Church and State. Especially was it so when the Archbishop of Canterbury was not only a Primate of the Church but one of the chief personages of the State as well, when Bishops were more like barons than prelates, when secular courts were contending to usurp the rights of ecclesiastical courts, and when religion was becoming more or less a department of the State. However, with singleness of purpose and unshaken constancy in advancing the glory of God and the rights of the Catholic Church, Thomas Becket saw clearly the stand he must take against Henry II and his principles, even at the price of falling from favor to disgrace, from disgrace to exile, and finally, from exile to a violent death.
LIFE OF ST. THOMAS
By
WILLIAM, A MONK OF CANTERBURY

Here begins Book Two

(1) Concerning the Archbishop's preparations to return to his country.

In 1170 A. D. when most-benign Alexander was reigning over the Holy Roman Church, when the schismatic, Frederick, was ruling in Germany, and Louis, beloved of God, was the glorious king of France, Thomas, the shepherd of Canterbury, of blessed memory, was on his return from exile. Seven years after his departure from England he came to that part of the sea which lies between Dover and Witsand. While he was walking on the shore observing the weather conditions, as is the custom for those contemplating a voyage, he noticed a certain Milo, the Dean of Boulogne, approaching. Smilingly he anticipated the Dean, who was hurrying as if to collect the boat-fare.

1 Alexander, Pope, 1159-1181 (Orlando Bandinelli). The adjective, serenissimus, is very apt. Alexander's great strength consisted in a patient and indomitable tenacity which enabled him to humble the pride of Frederick and to obtain from Henry, without ban or interdict, every right for which Becket died. It has been said that he excelled Becket in the arts of diplomacy yet he equalled him in firmness.
2 Frederick Barbarossa, c. 1123-1190.
3 Louis VII, called Le Jeune, 1120-1180.
4 Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury
5 Dover, a seaport in Kent, England, situated on the Strait of Dover.
6 Witsand, or Wytsand, or Ouessant, in the territory of Boulogne.
"I am not coming to collect the fare," said the Dean advancing, "but to execute a commission. My master, the Count of Boulogne, says, 'Be on your guard. There are those who seek your life. They are holding the opposite shore to take you as you leave the ship, either to murder you or imprison you.'" The Archbishop answered, "Take my word for it, son, not even if I were torn limb from limb, would I abandon my proposed journey. Neither fear, nor force, nor torture will any longer restrain me who left my flock. You will grant, I am sure, that seven years is sufficient for the Lord's flock to have lamented the absence of its pastor. This is the last prayer which I prayerfully ask of my people--there is nothing more obligatory on men than the fulfillment of a last wish when nothing more can be hoped for--that they be not inconvenienced in carrying me, when I am dead, to my church from which I have been kept in life, if God wishes at the present time to call his servant from his mortal body. The library which I had intended to entrust to this country I am compelled by varied and unexpected circumstances to take along with me, so that the possessor, whom past merits do not recommend, may by virtue of his possessions be received with greater joy for burial."

For a short time the English Church was living under the threatening yoke of servitude. Now at length after much time and

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7 Count of Boulogne, perhaps the Matthew of Boulogne mentioned in the Miracula of William of Canterbury, p. 264.
trouble and weariness Canterbury was beginning to rise out of its slavery because the English Moses was leading his Israelites into the waves of the sea. What a joyful day do you think it was when sons received fatherly consolation, the outlawed regained their property, oppressed citizens their liberty, and evacuees returned to their country; when mindful of the past the Church as an outstanding tympanist would once more take up its timbrel and sing its song of liberty and freedom to the Lord, when peace restored would be perceived by eyes grown dull in hatreds and be proclaimed by documents marked with a royal seal?

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8 Durobernia, the ancient name of Canterbury, was supplanted at an early date by Cantwaraburg, meaning "the stronghold of the men of Kent." See Edmund McClure, British Place Names in Their Historical Setting, London, Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1910, p. 38.
(2) Concerning the conspiracy formed against the Archbishop.

While the Bishops, Roger of York, 1 Gilbert of London, 2 and Joceline of Salisbury, 3 were waiting on the coast planning an appeal or some other sinister plot, the Archbishop decided to turn into the port of Sandwich 4 for a time. Here he would be received by his friends and avoid the fury of his enemies. For Reginald of Warenne and his associates, Gervase 6 and Randolf de Broc, whom the Archbishop had previously excommunicated, had conspired against him either through someone else's suggestion or through their own malice. Together with the

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1 Roger of York, Roger of Pont l'Evêque, the Archbishop of York, 1154-1181. He played a prominent part in the events which ultimately led to the termination of Becket's career and life. John of Salisbury (Ep. 305) charges him with the most abominable crimes. He was especially remarkable for the tenacity with which he asserted his supposed rights against all whose claims came into collision with his own.

2 Gilbert of London, Gilbert Foliot, Bishop of London, d. 1187. Among all the English clergy Foliot had obtained the greatest reputation and influence. He was first Prior of Cluny, afterwards of Abbeville, and in 1139 was raised to be Abbot of Gloucester. After nine years he advanced to the bishopric of Hereford, and in 1161 or 1162 he was selected to succeed Richard as Bishop of London.

3 Joceline of Salisbury, Joceline de Balliol, 1142-1184. In 1162 Becket suspended him for having admitted John of Oxford to the Deanery of his church on the King's nomination without a canonical election and against the Pope's command.

4 Sandwich, in Kent, England, eleven miles north of Dover. In the Middle Ages it was considered the most important of all English seaports.

5 Reginald of Warenne, brother of William, Earl of Surrey. He was of a great family which Becket had provoked by preventing the marriage of one of the daughters with the King's brother, William, on the ground of consanguinity.

6 Gervase of Cornhill, Sheriff of Kent.

7 Randolf de Broc, an old and persevering enemy of the Archbishop. The original cause of the enmity may have been a claim raised by Becket to the castle and lordship of Saltwood which the King had bestowed on Randolf. Randolf was the chief instrument in the measures issued by the King against the Archbishop. See James C. Robertson, Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury.
aforesaid bishops and with armed retainers they held the coast. Neverthe-
less, the Primate, untroubled through it all, dismissed his council
and his guards. Entrusting himself to the Angel of the Great Council,
he paid little heed to the assemblies of the scoundrels. They seized
Robert, keeper of the treasury of Canterbury Cathedral as he reached
the shore of Dover because he had dared to break in upon the King's
land without procuring a pass-port from his royal clemency. When he
answered that he had been sent in advance by his Master, the Primate,
to provide what was necessary for welcoming the exiles, they said,
"Surely he isn't coming!" He answered, "Indeed he is. Tomorrow will
bring him if the sea permits." They added, "It would have been better
for you to have come under more favorable auspices, so that in view
of the decree of his royal serenity, you would not appear to be here
unauthorized, or name in a favorable way another leader of this trip.
We wish, therefore, that you guarantee on your word of honor or by
oath that you will return when the weather affords the very first op-
portunity for the voyage." When he had given his word, he was dis-
missed. Behold the beginning of reestablished peace! In truth, if
this peace were free of all deceit, if no injustices were involved, it
would give the Primate, restored to his country, its first allegiance
and would respect the Lord in his servant. On the following day hos-
tilities broke out; the Archbishop himself did not yet venture on the
sea, but he sent his goods across. It was impossible any longer to
conceal the malicious designs adopted from the very beginning. They
attack with drawn swords, thinking to pour forth on the shore the blood which was to be shed in another place and at another time. The victim had to be brought into a holy and consecrated place and be reserved for the festive days, the days dedicated to His Highest Majesty, so that from another sacred spot a tomb might be prepared and the enormity of the crime might be made manifest from both these actions.

Behold, another injury is done and though beaten down he is invited to retaliate. After that, let no one be surprised if in provocation he retaliate for the injury done him and the whole Church.
(3) Concerning the messenger who delivers the letters of suspension and excommunication to the Bishops.

While the Bishops, fully armed, were waiting on the coast, a page who had been despatched to Dover delivered, sooner than was expected, the letter of suspension to the Archbishop of York in the Oratory of Blessed Peter, so that he might receive the sentence of condemnation in the presence of Him whom he had offended so often by his enormous transgressions.

At the same time the page gave into the hands of the Bishop of Salisbury the letter of excommunication addressed to him and to the Bishop of London; the following is its text:

1 Giles suggests that this messenger is probably Idonea, the nun to whom Becket had previously written a letter. See J. A. Giles, The Life and Letters of Thomas Becket, London, Whittaker & Co., 1864.
2 Archbishop of York, Roger de Pont l'Eveque, See p. 13.
Letter of Pope Alexander to the Bishops.

Alexander, Bishop, servant of the servants of God, to the venerable brethren, the Bishops Gilbert of London, Joceline of Salisbury, Bartholomew of Exeter, Richard of Chester, Walter of Rochester, Godfrey of St. Asaph, and Nicholas of Llandaff, health and apostolic benediction.

When first our dearest son, Henry, your King, under pretence of regal dignity and fidelity proposed to you and sought to have confirmed by writing and an oath, these laws which clearly enough suppressed the liberty of the Church and the esteem of the priestly office, it behooved you to direct your eyes heavenward and to rise from a worldly to a spiritual viewpoint so that the prestige of the Church might not suffer shipwreck as you silently looked on. Indeed, if any just interest for the pastoral welfare had prompted you, you would have known that you, above all peoples and powers, ought to tear out the roots of vice in

1 Ep. v. 66, ed. Lup.; Thom. ep. 272, ed. Giles
2 Bartholomew of Exeter, 1161-1184, Bishop of Exeter. He was the only bishop who escaped excommunication for his share in the coronation of the young King.
3 Richard of Chester or Ilchester, d. 1188.
4 Walter of Rochester, Bishop of Rochester, 1147-1182. He was the brother of Archbishop Theobald. John of Salisbury wrote to him during the exile requesting assistance for the Archbishop and reproaching him for not sending any. See Letter 256 of John of Salisbury.
5 Nicholas of Llandaff, Nicholas de Gurgant, Bishop of Llandaff, 1148-1183. He was a successor of Uhtrid and was twice suspended for supporting Henry.
6 Henry II, King of England, 1133-1189. His conflict with Thomas Becket is the most memorable event of his reign and one of the most important phases in the history of mediaeval theocracy.
lesser as well as in greater matters, and to plant a seed pleasing to the Lord. Now, however, because you value more the esteem of an earthly sovereign than the fear of God and the respect of episcopal authority, we regret to say that for the paltry food of the lentil you have contemned your birthright with Esau and you have fulfilled in your regard what Jeremias, lamenting, says was verified in the people of Judea, "The ancients of the daughter of Sion sat upon the ground, they held their peace, and sprinkled their heads with ashes." To be sure, if terror-stricken with fears and threats, you had proceeded to the point of accepting and confirming those inimical Constitutions, was it not proper for you after such a length of time to resume the firmness befitting a bishop and to protest strongly against such calumnies by your priestly repentance of past offences? But, adding obstinacy to the abominable deed, you persist in the continuance of those usurpations, and you seem to follow the will of the aforesaid king in the subversion of the Church to such an extent that the ecclesiastical laws for the most part appear now to be proscribed from your kingdom. But until now We hoped that Divine Grace might visit the heart of the King either through your mediation or through God's inspiration and Our patience, and make him a lover of God's glory rather than of his own. On the other hand, it had been frequently suggested to Us, (and it seems fully desirable for the exigency of the times) that his severity might be mitigated by patience and meekness. But,

7 Gen. 25.31-34
8 Lamentations 2.10
although until recently we expected correction and repentance of his past conduct, he improved not at all his previous harshness, but, unmoved, persisted in those oppressive constitutions. How long did Our venerable brother, Thomas of Canterbury, your Archbishop, who, although at first he may have seemed to comply with those usurpations from a weakness of the flesh, yet did wish to resist them, live in exile together with his priests and associates away from the Church entrusted to his care? You know this without Our mentioning it. Would you had suffered with him from a feeling of charity which was due him in this cause. However, you have not only withdrawn from him your fraternal support, but over and above, you have added to his sufferings. For recently when the said King wished his son to be crowned, and it was asserted that this right belonged to the Archbishop of Canterbury, you disregarded the authority of this brother of Ours and the deference you owe him and the Church, and you offered your consent to the coronation; no care was shown for maintaining the Church's liberty, and, as it is said, you were not even concerned about it. Rather, you maintained that his oath to preserve the customs of the realm was preferable. We endeavored oftentimes to accomplish a reconciliation between them through letters and Our representatives, as well as through many other men who were deserving of attention, and whatever hope may have been given to Us, besides the empty array of words, We could gain nothing at all. Yet We do not mean to say that whole We were in France that King's generosity and faithfulness in many regards did not come
to Our notice. But, in the interests of God's glory and his and your salvation, as well as Our solicitude for justice, We should not thus withhold Our opposition to such gross offences. Therefore, because the remissness of the laity concerns no one more than the indolent and careless prelates who often prolong a great pestilence by neglecting to administer the required remedy, and, because, despite Our patience, you feel no sorrow, no opposition against those unreasonable usurpations, We, by the power bestowed on Us by the Lord, by the authority of the Apostolic See, which by God's will We exercise, unworthy though We be, do suspend you from every episcopal office; those among you, namely, the Bishops of London and Salisbury, who, in consideration of the favor received from Us, should have labored more for reconciliation and refrained from the oppression of the said Archbishop, if they did offer their approval to the coronation, We again place under the sentence of anathema, and We command that they be avoided as excommunicated persons. Concerning the Bishop of Salisbury and Geoffrey Ridel, the Archdeacon of Canterbury, who, although they are more greatly indebted to the Church of Canterbury, are said to regard the Archbishop with less respect and deference, and since the former, that is, the Bishop of Rochester, was at the coronation, and the latter scorned the sentence of excommunication placed upon him by the Archbishop, We decree that, without any appeal, you obey what had been canonically

9 Geoffrey Ridel, d. 1189. As Archdeacon of Canterbury he was a good friend of King Henry, but Becket referred to him as 'archidiabolus noster.' He became Bishop of Ely in 1173.
decreed by the Archbishop. For as those who give their consent seem to offend more grievously, so do We judge them more harshly. In addition, whatever the Archbishop decreed or shall reasonably decree in the future against Robert, 10 the Vicar of the Archdeacon of Canterbury, who spurned his sentence, We order by precept to be kept inviolably and faithfully with no right of appeal. But as for the clerks of Count Hugo, Nicholas, Thomas, and William, and the others who, though excommunicated by the Archbishop, dared to solemnize divine worship, if this be true, We command them to be bound by the sentence of anathema and their association be avoided as that of the excommunicated ones.

Given at Ferentino, 11 September 16.

10 Robert, perhaps Robert Ridel, brother of Geoffrey, but biographers do not mention his last name.
11 Ferentino, Italy, in the province of Rome.

Alexander, Bishop, the servant of the servants of God, to the venerable brethren Roger, Archbishop of York, and Hugh, Bishop of Durham, health and apostolic benediction.

Though in very many ways you are dear to Us and are to be commended, and though We embrace you in all love, We must not, however, neglect an investigation and a zealous correction of those deeds, which, when committed and left uncorrected, cause death. Remember what the Lord says in the words of the prophet, "If when I say to the wicked, 'Thou shalt surely die,' thou declare it not to him, nor speak to him, the same shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand." The suppression of the English Church and the lessening of its liberty (which is well known to have been brought about by your King, either of his own accord or through someone else's suggestion) has for a long time been a source of worry to Us and has inflicted upon Us no small amount of anguish and grief, since the King should have thought of correcting the errors which his predecessors had committed. But, heaping wrong upon wrong, under pretence of royal authority he proposed and enforced extremely unreasonable laws. By virtue of these laws the liberty of the Church was lost and the

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2 This is perhaps the Hugh de Puisel mentioned in the Miracula, p. 419, and in William Stubbs, Seventeen Lectures on the Study of Mediaeval and Modern History, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1900, p. 156.
3 Ezch. 3.18.
precepts of apostolic men, as far as he was concerned, were deprived
of their power. Neither did he believe that it was enough if during
his reign the divine laws were silenced and abrogated in the kingdom
of England. He would even transmit the sin to his successors, and
cause his kingdom to remain without ephod and superhumeral for a
long time. Thus it happened that without exception he caused those
iniquitous laws of his to be confirmed by your oath, and that of Our
other bishops and brethren, and he declared that whoever should pre-
sume to oppose those unreasonable constitutions would be considered an
enemy. Proof of this is the exile of Our venerable brother, Thomas,
Archbishop of Canterbury; proof of this is the lamentable proscription
of his clerics and relatives and of those who still depend on their
mother’s breast and cry in their cradles. And the fear of death is
incurred if anyone takes a stand against this action and wishes to
obey the divine laws in opposition to those statutes. We, by whose
judgment those wrongs had to be corrected and punished, were hard
pressed to confirm them under pretext of the unsettled conditions;
and We strove with no mean effort to direct the force of apostolic
authority against those usurpations, although they had not yet been
clearly made known to Us. This is the action We took from the out-
set. In the course of time, however, when the said Archbishop was
living in exile as a penalty for his pastoral office, and when he
sought from Us the usual assistance of the Roman Church, We sent to

the aforesaid King some of the more influential of Our brethren. We also sent other ecclesiastical embassies and arranged that his harshness be overcome by Our humility and kindness, and that it might happen as Solomon said, "By patience a prince shall be appeased, and a soft tongue shall break hardness." But, making sport of Our endurance by the diversified cunning of his legates, he seems to have hardened his heart against Our admonitions to such an extent that he does not allay his violence against the said Archbishop nor permit any mitigation regarding those wicked laws. In fact, he punishes the See of Canterbury by greater damage to its property, and he deprives it of its former rank in the Church. For recently when he wished his son to be crowned, he defied the Archbishop, to whom by ancient right this office is said to belong, and he had you perform the coronation in another province of the kingdom. Yet, in this coronation no precaution for the preservation of the Church's liberty was taken, nor, as they say, was it even considered; but rather, it was established on oath that the customs of the realm which they call ancestral and under which the dignity of the Church is jeopardized were to be preserved at all times. Although the violence of this King disturbs Us a great deal, yet We can be more troubled because of your fickleness and that of Our other fellow-bishops who, we regret to say, "are become like rams that have no horns, who are gone away before the face

5 Prov. 25.15
of the pursuer." For although, brother Archbishop, this might per-
chance have been permitted to you in your own province, still, We can-
not discover from reasoning or from the laws of the Holy Fathers
how it was lawful for you in another province, and especially in the
province of him who chose to live in exile for justice's sake and to
go forth almost alone and give glory to God. If in excuse for such
a wicked deed anyone maintains that more grievous and more enormous
crimes are perpetrated in other kingdoms, We can truthfully reply
that as yet We have found no kingdom in which there is such contempt
for the divine law that it has caused equally palpable offences to be
corroborated by the signatures and the oaths of the bishops; unless
someone may be imprudent enough to mention what schismatics and those
separated from the communion of the faithful later committed in un-
heard-of and damnable arrogance. According to the words of the pro-
phet the wrong you committed in allowing those infringements was greater
than that of all the provinces. After giving force to such unreason-
able laws by an oath you have not even applied yourself to taking up
again the shield of faith with which to stand before the house of God
on the day of battle. Nay, you have cast yourself to the ground to
provide a passage way for the enemy. Lest by Our prolonged silence,
We be involved with you in the sentence of damnation, by the authority
of the Most Holy Roman Church which We exercise by God's command, We

6 Cf. Lamentations, 1.6. The reading of the Vulgate is slightly dif-
ferent from William of Canterbury's quotation.
7 Cf. Ezek. 5.5-11.
do now suspend you from every right of the episcopal office, hoping at least that, placed under discipline and fraternal castigation, you may return to your senses and concern yourself with the defence of liberty. But if you do not thus become zealous in the exercise of the episcopacy, We shall do what by God's command is Our duty. See to it that it be not said of you what the prophet said of a certain person, "Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will reject thee, that thou shalt not do the office of priesthood to Me." For because by God's good pleasure We are distinguished to hold the place of him (Peter) who could not be restrained from preaching the word of God either by scourge or chains, We ought not under a wavering hope of peace lay aside in a napkin the wealth of the divine word entrusted to Us, and keep it bound up until the time of profiting passes away, and the creditor comes to agree upon rendering an account. Given at Ferentino, September 16.

8 Osee 4.6
Concerning the letter carrier who is sought for death.

When these sharp injunctions of His Apostolic Majesty's letter had been read, they looked for the letter carrier to kill him; he, however, at the encouragement of certain friends, fled and thus escaped death. That damnable Randolph, one of the hangers-on, rushed about madly, ran to and fro with drawn sword, disclosing hiding places. Prevented providentially from marring the holy and venerable solemnity of the day by not finding the one whose blood he would have spilled, he received the bishops in the inn and the satellites in a fortress which was near the town. Here they conferred about the abuses which should be inflicted upon the exiles and the means of annuling the conditions imposed. This may be learned from the Lord of Canterbury's letter.

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1 Randolph de Broc, see p. 13
(7) Letter of Archbishop Thomas to Pope Alexander. ¹

To the Reverend Father and Lord in Christ, dearest Alexander, the Sovereign Pontiff by the grace of God, Thomas, the humble minister of the See of Canterbury, health and whole-hearted obedience with the greatest affection.

We believe it has come to your notice both from our own report and that of many intermediaries, how just and how honorable were the conditions under which we made peace with our Lord, the King of the English, and how that same lord withdrew from his pacts and promises. Yet, we believe this fact should be attributed not so much to him as to the priests of Baal ² and to the sons of false prophets who from the beginning were the instigators of every discord. But the prime movers of all of them are that notorious York and the Bishop of London who upon their recent return from you with some other people of Sens ³ did not fear to seize our possessions. This they did though the King had neither been consulted nor had he heard that we were present at the feet of your clemency in the court. It was clearly evident to them that two cases of appeal were presented to you, namely, that we had been summoned by the Archbishop of York and we in turn had summoned him and his co-bishops. When, therefore, these ensign bearers of the Balaamites

1 Ep. v. 73. ed. Lupus; Ep. Thom. 27, ed. Giles.
2 Baal was worshipped by the Israelites in the days of King Ahab (Cf. 4 Kings 3:10.) He was the chief divinity, the sun god, of the Chanaanites and the Arameans.
3 Sens, France.
had heard that we had made peace with the lord King, they summoned the 
Bishop of Salisbury and his accomplices, and they moved heaven and earth 
to rescind the agreement of peace which had been drawn up, persuading 
the lord King and his counsellors either personally or through others 
that harmony in the kingdom would be useless and dishonorable unless the 
King’s grants to churches in our See remained immutable and we be forced 
to observe faithfully the customs of the realm over which the contention 
among us arose. To such an extent did they succeed in their perversity 
that by their instigation after peace had been made, the lord King with- 
held our revenues and those of our relatives from the feast of Saint 
Magdalen⁴ to the feast of Saint Martin.⁵ At length he gave us empty 
homes and demolished granaries. Moreover, his clerks, namely, Geoffrey 
Ridel, our archdeacon, and Nigel still hold our two churches which they 
received from lay hands, and the King himself refuses to us and to the 
Church many of the Church’s possessions which he had promised to return 
on the restoration of peace. Although in other ways he was influenced

⁴ Feast of Saint Mary Magdalen, July 22. 
⁵ Feast of Saint Martin of Tours, November 11. 
⁶ It is sometimes difficult to know how to translate this word ‘clericus. 
Giles says, "The reader is here cautioned against supposing the word 
clerk to mean a clergyman in every case. The word is indiscriminately 
applied to priests, deacons, and a host of inferior officers 
and classes of men amongst whom were included students, men of letters, and 
generally such as could read or write. It is unnecessary to point out 
the calumnies to which the clergy specifically have been liable from 
⁷ Nigel de Sackville, one of the royal chaplains who was excommunicated 
for retaining the Church of Harrow.
contrary to his promises, as is well known to many, yet we, seeing the enormous and irreparable losses of the Church and seeking to avert more serious ones, decided by your advice and that of the council of the lord cardinals to return to our mutilated and ruined church, so that if we could not reanimate and reform it, at least by dying with it, we might with greater confidence breathe forth our spirit for it. When those friends of ours in fear and trembling had received more definite information, it is not certain what plan they entered into with the officers of the King and with that most wicked son of perdition, Randolph de Broc, who in abuse of the powers of the state has for seven years raged in an unrestrained manner against the Church of God. They determined, therefore, that a vigilant guard of soldiers and satellites with weapons in hand should keep close watch over the ports where they surmised we would land, that we might not be able to enter the land without careful scrutiny of all our goods and a removal of the letters which we requested from your Majesty. But by divine power it happened that their plans were made known to us through friends, and this shamelessness of theirs, rising from over-confidence, was not permitted to be concealed. The aforesaid Bishops of York, London, and Salisbury commanded and directed the procedure of the satellites who, we have said, were wandering, fully armed, over all the coast lines. They had selected for the execution of their malicious design those whom they

8 The text reads, "cum officialibus regis et sceleratissimo illo filio perditionis Randulfi de Broc." Evidently, however, the word should be Randulfo in apposition with filio.
knew were most especially hostile towards us, namely, Randolph de Broc, Reginald de Warenne and Gervase of Kent, a Viscount, who threatened publicly that they would behead us, if we dared to land. The oft-mentioned bishops had come to Canterbury, so that is the satellites of the state authority were not sufficiently infuriated, they might goad them on. Accordingly, when we had investigated their scheme more thoroughly, we sent our letter one day before we set sail. And there was also delivered the letter in which the Archbishop of York was suspended and the Bishops of London and Salisbury were again placed under the sentence of anathema. On the following day we boarded the ship and, after a favorable journey, reached England. We tood with us, by order of the lord King, John, the Deacon of Salisbury, who viewed not without shame and sorrow the armed forces whom we mentioned above hurrying to our ship to inflict their violence upon those who were arriving. Thus, the aforementioned Deacon, fearing that it would increase too much the ill repute of the King's house if any evil befell us or our people, met the armed forces and ordered them in the King's name not to injure us or our people because this would be branding with the mark of treason that King with whom we had made peace. He then persuaded them to approach us

9 John, the Deacon of Salisbury, John of Oxford, d. 1200, had presided over the Council of Clarendon, and was often employed by Henry in political business. Later he was excommunicated for usurping the Deanery of Salisbury, contrary to the commands of the Pope and the Archbishop, and for communicating with the schismatics and those whom the Pope had excommunicated. In 1175 he was consecrated Bishop of Norwich. It was surprising that the Archbishop should be given this bitter enemy of his as an escort for the journey.
unarmed. Yet, because we had taken with us Simon, Archdeacon of Sens, who had decided to visit friends in England, they demanded of him an oath of fidelity by which he would bind himself to our rulers in opposition to all others, neither you nor any one else excepted. But we did not allow such a pledge to be made since we feared that if our servants took oaths of this kind, the clergy of the kingdom would be forced to similar ones. Because, undoubtedly, the said York, together with the Bishops of London and Salisbury and their accomplices aim at the weakening of the Apostolic See and the lessening of its power in the kingdom. But the magistrates who had exacted the oath were too few to force us to anything against our will. The reason for this was that the people, rejoicing at our return, were a stronger match should force be shown. Going to the church from there, we were received with great devotedness by the clergy and the people although the bold intruders still remained in our churches, among whom were the leaders in every destruction and distress of the Church, namely, Geoffrey Ridel, our Archdeacon, and Nigel de Sackville, his clerk. One of these, namely, Geoffrey, occupies the church of Otteford, the other, Nigel, the church of Harrow, together with their revenues. By our command they had to return these to us and to our clerics to whom they belonged. You have

10 Harrow in the County of Middlesex, ten miles N. W. of London.
directed the lord of Rouen\textsuperscript{11} and the Bishop of Nevers\textsuperscript{12} to absolve them on taking the oath according to the custom of the Church, and to order them on your authority to resign to us our churches and the revenues thereof. When we came to our church, the intemperate officers declared in his name (as if the lords of York and London and the Bishop of Salisbury had informed them) that we absolve the suspended and excommunicated bishops, because what had been done against them had appeared as an offence against the King and an infringement of the customs of the kingdom. They promised that the bishops of our province would come to us and that they would willingly obey the law saving the honor of the kingdom. However, we answered that it was not the affair of an inferior to lift the sentence imposed by a superior, and it is permissible for no man to invalidate what the Apostolic See has decreed. Yet, because they vehemently urged and threatened that unless we should acquiesce, the lord King would take extraordinary and excessive measures, we told them that if the Bishops of London and Salisbury would swear before us in ecclesiastical form to obey your commands, we, for the peace of the Church and out of respect for the King, with his advice and that of the Lord of Winchester\textsuperscript{13} and of the other bishops, would lift their sentence; we

\textsuperscript{11} Archbishop of Rouen, Routrou de Beaumont, 1165-1183. He was formerly Bishop of Evreux and was also kinsman of the Earl of Leicester. John of Salisbury styled him "the most firm pillar of the Church."

\textsuperscript{12} Bishop of Nevers, Bernard of Nevers, of whom not much is known except, as Robertson says, the fact that he wrote a letter to the Pope in behalf of the English King. Robertson, op. cit. p. 231.

\textsuperscript{13} Bishop of Winchester, Henry of Winchester, 1129-1171. He was a noble minded man who incurred the odium of many of the King's friends by sending money and necessaries to Becket during his exile.
would do whatever possible, saving your honor, and love them as brothers
in Christ and treat them with all kindness and humility. When this was
reported to the bishops by intermediaries, the Archbishop of York, seek-
ing his colleagues of the sedition and the instigators of the schism,
answered that an oath of this kind ought not to be taken, especially
not by bishops, except it be in accordance with the will of the King,
because it was contrary to the dignity of the sovereign and the customs
of the kingdom. Our answer to this was that the same bishops had been
excommunicated before by us and had not obtained absolution until they
had taken this oath, although they had begged us with a great deal of
solicitation. And if our sentence could not be dissolved without an
oath from the bishops, much less yours which is far stronger and binds
with a force incomparable to ours or any other mortal's. At this an-
swer (as those who were present told me) the bishops were so much moved
that they decided to come to us and receive absolution according to the
custom of the Church, not deeming it safe to oppose and impune the Apos-
tolic decrees for the sake of preserving the customs of the realm. But
that enemy and disturber of the Church, the Archbishop of York, dis-
suaded them, advising them rather to go to the King who had always de-
fended them and to send messengers to the young King to convince him
that we intend to depose him. God is our witness, if he were well-
disposed to the Church, we should prefer that he possess not one realm
only but the largest and greatest of any king on earth. Our Archdea-
con was the ensign bearer of this legation. The Archbishop of York and
the two bishops quickly crossed the sea to influence the King—which
God prevent--and excite his anger against the Church. And they caused to be summoned six clergy of the vacant Sees that by their counsel, contrary to the canons, in the King's presence and in a foreign land, in the absence of their brethren, they might elect the bishops of our province. But if we were unwilling to consecrate those so elected, they think they have an occasion of sowing discord between us and the King. For there is nothing which they fear more than the peace of the Church, lest perchance their works should be seen and their excesses corrected. Our messenger will supply many things which for the sake of brevity we have not included in this letter. May you favorably hear our petition, if it so please you. Our dearest Father, may your Holiness fare well for all time.
Concerning the preparation of armed soldiers to attack the Archbishop Thomas who was about to land, and the demand of an oath from the clerks.

1 Early at dawn of the first day of Advent, they carefully calculated the ebb and flow of the tide, and as soon as they learned that the Primate had reached the port of Sandwich, they collected a group formed in battle line, and murmured furiously against the Primate. "This sedition is his doing. He has scarcely entered the port and, behold, he has thrown the country into confusion. The King was most benign and peaceful since he abated all his wrath, all his injustices, and all his dissension, and, behold, in thankless compensation, the Primate revived the hostilities that had been placated, broke the contract that had been entered into, and cut off from our midst the greatest and most eminent personages on whom depends the status of the kingdom. By a blighting curse which may fall back upon his own head he deprived them of free speech and intercourse as if they were base and contemptible. As long as he lives this kingdom will never enjoy permanent stability. Therefore, by shedding his blood, let him expiate the destruction of the country, the discharge of the bishops, the disgraces of the noblemen, and the repeated affronts toward the Kings, father and son." Then, armed, they hurried on their way to Sandwich.

Three men led this company. 2 Randolph, of seared conscience, from

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1 The first day of Advent in the year 1170 was on December 1.
2 Cuneus, wedge, translated as company.
the first day of the confusion in the English Church until the day of the return of the exiles had increased the state treasury by robberies, revenues, taxes, and proscriptions. For a long time he had been inflicting serious injuries on the Lord Archbishop. Another leader, to whom Kent was subject, looked to two-thirds per cent and one per cent monthly interest rather than justice and righteousness. A third in charge was of a more illustrious line but carried the mark of infamy in his heart. He was a brother germaine of Earl William who aided King Louis of France long ago when he was setting out for Jerusalem to subdue the enemies of the cross of Christ; he had died in captivity. This man was as illustrious by the virtue of generosity as he was distinctive by his birth. These three, confident in their numerous retainers, hurried to the appointed place. The exiles' ship was standing with its prow on the shore. With knees still trembling, Thomas had scarcely collected his small amount of baggage and was being welcomed in the inn, when it was announced that the enemy was close at hand. The exile found hope in his assurance of divine reward, if only he might be permitted to end his exile at this point before favorable circumstances should smile upon him and good fortune diminish the merit of his life. But John, the Dean of Salisbury, vexed at their rash audacity and filled with indignation, rushed on horseback to meet them. "Why do you madmen and disgraceful

3 Gervase, Sheriff of Kent, See p. 13.
4 Reginald de Warenne, See p. 13.
5 Earl William of Surrey, See p. 13.
retainers dare again to act against the policy of the most august prince? Because his clemency promises impunity to your acts, which he overlooks out of kindness, your madness, presumptuous enough to put it mildly, is the result of unbridled passion and makes you mad with lust. It is a common saying, 'A kind master makes his servant bold;' he made peace for you who were planning those schemes. He himself incurs the brand of treason for you who are devising this malice, for you to whom he gave peace. For in the case of an offence committed in behalf of a master, the offence is imputed not to him who does it but to him who is the instigator of it. If the exile must be killed, if he is to be insulted, I, his companion and leader, must be treated likewise. I have been commissioned by the Lord King to see that the Primate have peace and be safely reinstated in his original position. If you are bringing the mandate of your appointed king, there will be an opportunity for a conference when you have laid aside your weapons." And so, acquiescing, they stood before the Primate, anxious to greet him as he was still seated. It was not fitting for him to rise in the presence of those whom a wicked conscience had thrown from the throne of their dignity. When he returned their greeting, they said that they had been delegated by the Lord King as guards of the country and considered as suspects certain foreign clerics who had come to their notice, since foreigners and natives, and especially those of religious orders, were prevented by royal decree from either entering or leaving the port without

6 "Familiarity begets contempt."
dismissorial letters; they wished to take precaution against any possible damage by exacting of these clerics an oath of fidelity. They said this because of Simon, Archbishop of Sens, whom the Primate had taken with him, from whom he had procured both homes and land for himself and his followers in the environs of Sens. The Primate answered that not one of his clerks would take an oath of this kind, lest such an oath should come to be a precedent, and that he himself would invalidate all oaths which were made and exacted indiscriminately as a harmful act against the Church.
(9) Concerning the reception of Thomas returning from exile, and the
absolution of certain brethren who had consulted with the excommunicated
bishops.

After they were thus repelled by the word of authority and the peo-
ple and clergy were crowding around on all sides, receiving their father
with tears and the proper marks of respect, he arrived at the gate which
leads into the cemetery of Christ Church at Canterbury. There, bare-
footed, he was welcomed in songs and acclamations by the faithful ser-
vants of God. When he entered the monastery and prostrated himself, he
displayed the appearance and humility of an exile. Finally he welcomed
with tears and with the kiss of peace all his brethren from the least
to the greatest. For he had heard when he was abroad that some of them
had consulted with the excommunicated bishops, who, while administering
their duties, in no wise considered their own misdeed. They had in an
imprudent and indiscriminate manner interfered when and where it was
not proper for them to do so, respecting neither the communion of the
saints nor the sacrifice of the Mass. Therefore, through his leader
and co-exile, John of Salisbury,¹ who had been sent one month ahead of
him, he had delegated to brother Thomas,² a venerable man, the power
of absolving and of removing whatever sin might possibly have been con-
tracted from the scurf of the heretics in the company of the brethren.

¹ John of Salisbury, 1120–1180, an eminent scholar and statesman, and
an ardent friend of Becket. His collection of Letters testify to his
literary merit. He became Bishop of Chartres.
² Thomas of Maidstone, Confessor to the Archbishop.
The next day the bishops made an appeal through their representatives. But because an appeal of this kind did not absolve those who were excommunicated, nor have any force because of their obstinacy, they and the aforementioned officials of the King were sent to threaten the Primate. Then, ranging themselves on opposite sides, they argued in turn. Some maintained that their sentence resulted from a distorted evidence wrested from the lord Pope. Others constantly added the threats of the conspirators to the arguments they presented. "Inasmuch as you have determined this day to give us an answer, we have come to learn what you are going to do about the suspension and excommunication of the Bishops, you who have contemned the lord King and weakened the authority and the customs of the realm. Unless they are restored to their office, disasters unheard-of and too great to mention will take place. What security do you promise yourself, you who brandish an axe, who excite those whom you ought to calm? The royal majesty can find no suitable person on whose approbation it can depend, whose conversation it can enjoy, when in repeated and uncontrollable degree it removes all power and ability to speak. What remains to be taken except the kingdom? If you think any action is expedient for you, try it; either wait or pretend you are waiting. A wise man yields on occasion so that he may have peace temporarily. That the ties of good will successfully begun, as you maintain, be

3 The text uses the historical present in this paragraph.
4 Spiculatorum, a form of speculatores, a Greek word used in Mark 6.27 of the executioner sent by Herod to behead John the Baptist.
not broken, absolve those whom you have bound. This same advice which
we ourselves offer we give also at the King's bidding, lest you desire
it too late when it is no longer possible." Randolph also adds these
remarks to their statements, "You cannot take away the crown from one
already on the throne."

To this the Primate answered, "It is not the scope of an inferior
to be solicitous for those whom the lord Pope has struck with the sword
of excommunication. Our humble self does not absolve those whom the
apostolic censorship binds." And when they added that this action of
the Pope proceeded from the influence of the Archbishop, he replied,
"If he who has the care of all the churches avenges our injuries and
those of our shattered church, and lifts the burden from our shoulders
which a long exile has weakened, he devotes his attention, as he should,
to his pastoral office and it pleases our littleness to support the en-
deavors of such a lofty person. Those acts which legally are directed
against the defiant are not done in contempt of the King. For when in
the restoration of peace, we complained of the disobedience of our suf-
fragan bishops, the lord King permitted the offence of the guilty ones
to be punished and what was done against us to be brought to due satis-
faction by the intervention of justice. It is not surprising if the
sword of excommunication is used against those who must be corrected by
a pronouncement of justice after so many fraternal warnings, after such
long hopes of repentance, though he exacts less than is due. Yet why do
you say we wield the sword? Do you not know that, by virtue of the
pastoral office, we carry a spiritual sword which neither fear of bodily sufferings nor even death can make us hesitate to thrust at those requiring punishment for sin? For who will separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or poverty? or persecution? or hunger? or nakedness? or danger? or a sword? But we so control our actions that we temper the severity of justice with the kindness of mercy toward the obstinate. They whom you are not ashamed to defend could have avoided this kind of sword if only they had not gathered together, according to their custom, to avoid a summons. They are not ashamed to increase this disorder to such a point that all are ruined; since they refuse to come to their senses we must say, "He who is filthy let him be filthy still.” Let these things happen in accordance with God's will. And yet even if they give up their haughty position and wish to turn to the heart of Mother Church and promise to amend, swearing in ecclesiastical form and at the command of the lord Pope, that they will obey the law, we are prepared to extend to them our heartfelt mercy even in our straightened position. For we ought not to reject anyone who is repentant, and we ought to place on our own shoulders the burden which belongs to a superior, so that even at our own expense the superior may avoid the danger. But in this case we shall use the advice of the lord Bishop of Winchester and of the other brethren of approved life and of decreed authority." What was added later did not deserve a reply for it was said maliciously.

5 Cf. Rom. 8.35.
6 Cf. Apoc. 22.11.
 Concerning the Archbishop of York who dissuades his associate Bishops from seeking a pardon of the Primate.

When the two bishops had heard these words, they decided to beg pardon and mercy of the Holy Father. But the Archbishop of York dissuading them is reported to have said, "Our treasury still has eight thousand pounds of ready money, thanks be to God, and it must be depleted to the very last cent if necessity demands such expense to restrain the obstinacy of Thomas and to break down his pride which is greater than his courage. I entreat you, brothers, let him not distress your conscience. Rather let us go to the lord King who up to the present has followed with a strong defense the cause which has been contested between us for a long time. As for any other controversy, unless it is your fault, let it be ended. If you adhere to the Primate and withdraw from the one whom he considers his adversary, the King will rightly consider us deserters (for never after so many and such unpardonable injustices will good will be restored). If the King deals strictly with you, he will deprive you of your possessions to the very limit of the law. What are you then going to do? Tell me in what lands will you go a-begging when you are deprived of all your possessions? If on the contrary you stand by the one with whom you have always stood, what more is he going to do who has already condemned you? He did what he could; he gained a sentence against you through perverted evidence." Persuaded by these and like remarks, they crossed the sea.
(11) Concerning the Primate who dispatched a messenger to the court and the flight of the clerks who had assembled to elect bishops without the Primate.

Several days after his return, the Primate who wished to go to the court of the young King, sent ahead Richard, 1 prior of Dover, a venerable person. Arriving at Winchester, he found the King where he had assembled the nobleman of the kingdom, several Archbishops, and abbots, that from among them he might send to his father six of each as representatives of the vacant churches. By their advice, without the sanction of the Primate and the presence of the other Bishops of Winchester, Oxford, 2 Worcester, 3 and Norwich, 4 they were to go on with the election of the bishops outside the province; they recalled the Fourth Council of Carthage 5—"It is pleasing to all that without consulting the Primate of the province and without his command no one easily assume the right to appoint a bishop in any place, although this right is permitted to many bishops. If, however, it were necessary, three bishops in whatever place they may be, ought to appoint a bishop acting on the order of the Primate." 6 And again, "The

1 Richard, Prior of Dover, d. 1184. He had been a monk of Canterbury and afterwards a chaplain in Theobald’s household, at the same time with Becket, whom he eventually succeeded in the primacy.
3 Bishop of Worcester, Roger Fitz Count, 1164-1179, son of Robert, Earl of Gloucester, half brother of the Empress Matilda, mother of Henry II.
4 Bishop of Norwich, William Turbe, 1146-1175.
5 Fourth Council of Carthage, A. D. 397.
6 Gratian 1. lxv.5.
appointment of the bishops ought to be made with apostolic authority by all the bishops who are in the same province. But if all cannot come together, let them cast their vote by means of letters so that they may not be absent in spirit from the election." Quoting the decree again, "Let every election of a priest, or bishop, or deacon made by the noblemen remain invalid according to the rule which says, 'If any bishop using secular power obtained it through the churches themselves, let him be deposed and segregated as well as those associated with him.' This repeal of the authority of the church of Canterbury had been contrived by that Archbishop of York, who, while he solicitously gratifies his new master, does not remember his old friend, his foster mother. He was also abetted by two others who like natural twigs cut from an olive tree were grafted on the most bitter shoot to degenerate into a fruit cluster of the heresy. This man who was married four times and given to Satan when he was forcibly thrust into the Church of Otteford was ordered by the Bishop of Nevers with apostolic authority to restore its resources. Yet, he preferred to remain in his damnable position rather than give up what he wrongly possessed. These men and their accomplices thought they had the right of voting and they based their argument on the Councils of Nice and

9 corimbos, cluster of grapes or fruit generally.
10 Cf. Rom. 11.24.
Gandra which are not now effective. In these councils it had been decided that for the purpose of electing a bishop the choice of the Mother Church was sufficient. They had thus disturbed the peace of the older king and believing that they could break down the innocence of his successor, they had grown so bold as to leave it to the suffragans to choose the bishops without consulting the Primate. Blind leaders of the blind, why do you ruin a new dough with the leaven of malice? While the youthful king is capable of learning, while he does not yet spurn the advice of teachers, he should be instructed in charity, so that, when he enters upon his inheritance, the Church might receive a genuine leader, and in the boy Henry it might admire the old Valentinian. Ecclesiastical History relates that after the death of the Arian teacher Auxentius, who like a wolf tore to pieces the Milanese Church when he wished to be consecrated bishop there, Valentinian came from the East to the West and summoned the bishops, saying to them, "You know full well, you who are wise in divine love, what sort of man a bishop should be, and that subjects should be ruled not by word only but also by goodness of life. It behooves you to show yourself an example of every virtue and consider a good life as evidence of knowledge. Appoint, therefore, such a man for the

11 Cf. Matt. 15.6; 1 Cor. 5.8.
12 The Emperor Valentinian, 321-375, who made some endeavor to treat Christians and Arians at least impartially.
13 Auxentius of Milan, d. 374, who was made Bishop of Milan through Arian intrigue and convicted of error by order of Valentinian.
Pontifical See to whom we who exercise authority may also sincerely bow our heads, and whilst, like all men, we do wrong, we receive his advice when necessary as the medicine of a physician."

When the envoy came to the court, he addressed the guardians of the King and announced himself as a messenger sent by the lord Primate seeking access to the King for a conference. Though the clerks who had come for the election instantly dispersed, the tutors of the King, William of St. John, William, son of Aldeline, Hugh of Gondreville, and Randolph, son of Stephen, asked, "What, pray, are the messages you bring? Before they are brought to the attention of the King they must be made known to us. For he does what we do; he says what we say. The word of the pupil depends upon the answer of the guardians, before whom all plans are made, business negotiations are discussed, decisions are weighed, if, indeed, they are peaceable, and conduce to the harmony of souls. If, on the contrary, your words are filled with threats and bitterness, and start enmities and excite anger, it is expedient that they be restrained under silence rather than be made public and troubles be increased. What is the meaning of these letters set with a seal? If they contained a peaceful message, they would be open and without seal. We can conjecture the present from the past. Because of the Archbishop we have for a long time been troubled. Under present circumstances we are afraid that he may again trouble us."

14 Cassiodorus, Hist. Tripart. vll. 8; Gratian. l. lxiii. 3.
(12) The answer of the messenger sent by the Primate.

The messenger answered, "He comes peacefully and does not plan any trouble. Your father and pastor, the father of the country, the father of all, embraces you all affectionately in the Lord. He comes with the peace and love of Him who sent him, and he will not dishonor this good-will even though he is insulted. What he declares in speech he will likewise prove in deed; for his letter does not mean one thing, and his conversation another. If he openly spoke with pleasant words and interiorly designed destruction or some other evil for the Church, he would be guilty of the sin of treason and in thankless compensation he would set forth to crucify Him whom he eulogized in his letter."

But they disagreed and said, "His word means one thing and his actions another. For although he has promised peace, through his recent excommunication and suspension he introduced paganism to those expecting nothing save charity. He disturbs the status of the kingdom and to the extent of his powers as an assailant he tears away the scepter from the ruler." The messenger answered, "Just as dukes, consuls, and governors are subject to kings, so metropolitans, bishops, and archdeacons are subject to Primates. In the secular jurisdiction those who hold possessions in the name of others are considered obligated in proportion to the size of the estates, to the villenage service, extra service, or any other work that is tendered when they are planning expeditions or

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1 The messenger was Richard, the Prior of Dover. See p. 45.
seige operations. If, however, they withdraw these services, they are cited and made answerable; and if they are merely unwilling to obey the law they are harassed by war and are forced to the hardships of slavery. But in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction when inferiors have rebelled against the authority of their superiors or when one has usurped the rights of another, for lack of complaisance they are punished by summons, suspensions, or excommunications. Would a king bear it calmly if a soldier usurped the throne or published an edict? Would a metropolitan bear it calmly if an assistant bishop assumed the pallium or sent a formal or dimissorial letter? Will the Primate not be justly indignant if a metropolitan crowns a king and dare to perform a regal consecration which is none of his business? Who, I ask, considers himself such an object of contempt today that he renounces his rights? If it is judged a crime to demand what is due, then let lawsuits cease, let quarrels be settled, and let courts be severely condemned."

After they entered and conferred with the King on what they had heard, the messenger was introduced before the throne. Paying homage, he said, "Thomas, the Primate and legate of the Apostolic See, to his master and King, Henry, greetings. The lord Primate says these words: Your father and I have been reconciled through the mercy of God, through the united prayers of the faithful, and through the propitious merits of the saints now at rest in the Church which I, all unworthy, zealously serve at God's command. Though I believe it does not escape the notice of your Highness, yet I have tried to make known my gratitude
for permission to return, imploring that no malicious person separate those whom God has united, and that no lying tongue sow the cockle of discord where grow the sprouts of peace and love. It is written, "Do not believe every spirit." I know that some people, who are prejudiced against my return and therefore are desirous of disrupting the bond of peace, say that I attempted to nullify your coronation. They speak with an evil intention to enkindle useless hate. For I call upon God as witness 'to whom no secret is hidden and every desire is made known,' that, since you rule some kingdoms by His law, if I could add more at the cost of my flesh and blood, I would readily do so provided I would not endanger my soul. Thus may the Triune God bless my most recent attempts; thus may the whole assembly of the heavenly court be favorable.

How then is it in accordance with reason that I should wish to bring about the disinheritance of him whom, I confess, to be my lord, my king? In my judgment, no one more than he, has the right of succession as heir to this kingdom; after your father, God is my witness, I love him above all others with paternal charity; by his kindness, God granting, I have ascended to this high honor. I am concerned over this fact alone, that following the customs of the Church of Canterbury it is not I who place the diadem upon your head, the others having fore-stalled my action. May it please you to send me word when and where I

2 I John 4.1.
3 These words are from the collect which is the original of the "Collect for Purity" in the opening of the English Communion Office. See Pamer, Origines Liturgicae, 2, 26, ed. 2.
may come for a conference with you concerning these matters."

As soon as he was silent, some of them made disparaging remarks about the Primate and denied that he was a legate of the Roman See. The King thanked the messenger although he had not deserved thanks for the embassy; yet the sovereign did it because some time ago the messenger had hospitably welcomed his mother, Queen Eleanor, and his sister who was to be married to the Duke of Saxony.

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5 His sister, Matilda, married the Duke of Saxony in 1168.
6 Duke of Saxony, Henry the Lion.
(13) Concerning the delay of the King's answer.

Meanwhile he postponed any action on the injunctions laid down by the legate until he could consult with Geoffrey Ridel and the Archbishop of Poitiers who were to set sail from the port of Southwark.

1 Archdeacon of Poitiers, Richard of Ilchester, d. 1188. He was Archdeacon of Poitiers from 1162-1173, and became the Bishop of Winchester in 1173.


Geoffrey advised, "I know the will of your father, King Henry; I shall never be privy to any plan by which permission is granted the Archbishop to see the Prince whom, as I know positively, he has been eagerly striving to deprive of inheritance.

1 The text here reads discernatur, but the editor questions its use in preference to decernatur.
(15) Advice to the Earl of Cornwall.

After the various advisers of the King had expressed conflicting opinions, Reginald, the Earl of Cornwall, said, "As we are appointed judges, our decision should be so justly balanced on the scales of justice lest, while we proceed less vigorously with the important points of the case, we be all marked with blame. For as we are the representatives of a higher tribunal, it is necessary that the issue be cleared up by a more serious investigation. We cannot conceal our actions since the distinction of our lofty office makes them known. A judgment pronounced out of court, if it condemns, gives evidence of a grudge or an impulse of temper; if it absolves, it gives evidence of a favor received or a bribe of filthy lucre. But when an investigation proceeds carefully in due order, it does not leave an opportunity for complaint to the one against whom it is pronounced. Therefore, let us consider why, when, and by what authority he about whom we are conferring returned to this country. For if he returned without a lease, without a pardon, without a letter stamped with the royal seal, without hope of restitution of lost property, it could be ascribed to the heedlessness of a man who would attempt rashly to enter foreign territory at a great hazard and against his master's will. If he had brought a troop of armed foreign soldiers, he could justly have been held under suspicion by our

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1 Reginald, Earl of Cornwall, d. 1175, was the son of Henry I and the uncle of Henry II.
people. But now, satisfied completely with a few friends of a religious community, leaning on his pastoral staff, proposing peace and promising peace, he begs to see his lord in person. He is prepared to show to him as to a master whatever submission is due a master, and, as if he is swearing on an oath, he esteems no other mortal on a par with him. Therefore, I do not see how in good grace he should be denied admittance. I do not perceive why he who was permitted to be recalled from exile should not be allowed an audience." In like manner, after others had made known their decisions according to their individual opinions, the one who said he did not know the will of the king across the sea succeeded in his argument. And so, they ordered the messenger to return home because an answer would be sent to the Primate through their own messengers.
Concerning the two soldiers sent to prevent the Primate from going through the King's cities.

After the legate had withdrawn, two knights, Thomas of Turnebuhe, and Joscelin, brother of the late queen Adelicia, were sent out. This was when the land in its aging attitude \(^1\) sorrowed less over the childish excesses of its citizens, when each one rested quietly under his vine and fig tree, when there was no man who gave anyone cause to fear. \(^2\)

When the two soldiers came to London and found the Primate approaching the court, they accosted him saying, "This is the King's will and mandate. Under present circumstances you are not to have an audience with me. Once you return to your church, you are not to pass again through my cities and hamlets." The Primate answered, "Does he distrust me?" They answered, "By no means." The Primate said, "He is determined to forbid me to perform the duties of my pastoral office when he prevents me with such unheard-of orders from entering his cities and hamlets. How shall I be able to visit my diocese which is scattered through his cities and villages if passage and entrance is forbidden me? May the Lord provide. The King does not permit churches scattered here and there to be dedicated, or young virgins to be consecrated; he deprives of holy admonitions and exhortations convents that are desolate and removes the shepherd so that the wolf may seize and disperse the Lord's flock." \(^3\)

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1 canis sensibus: with grey feelings.
2 Cf. 4 Kings 15.31.
3 Cf. John 10.12.
in their turn said, "We come to deliver the orders, not to discuss them."
To this he added, "Perhaps you will report my orders to your King?" They
answered, "By no means. There are several of your rank through whom
these orders may be sent more appropriately and confidentially." "And,"
he said, "will you give them guidance and protection?" But they stepped
forward and accused some noblemen because as companions of the Primate
they had come dressed as soldiers. Thereupon, they departed.

Yet, in compliance with the realm's laws, the Primate revoked his
plan of going on and decided to bear the renewed attack within the walls
of his own church and the limits of his holy prison until he was given
aid from on high. Thus Semei (if it is fitting to compare a man Belial
with a good man) was held bound by royal precept not to go out of the
gates of the city of Jerusalem. This he endured for many days while
secretly suspecting the injustice of the dead King and the cunning of the
living King. Finally, weary of his wide prison, without regard for the
order and forgetful of his promises, he would wipe out the old curse and
the new transgression. The King, learned and beloved of God, had pa-
tiently awaited the break in the endurance of the transgressor, not wish-
ing to kill unjustly his own and his father's enemy, however guilty, un-
til a new fault had to be considered for punishment. In this way, the
departure of the exile from the city could be awaited, if only our pre-
sent day people understood his way of acting. Because of his crime he

4 Cf. 3 Kings 2.36-44.
might be seized as one who contemned his Majesty, the King. But now, obedient to the King's orders, the Archbishop is innocently slain, and while they seek a wicked traitor, they discover a monk living in retirement.

(17) Concerning the two legates sent to the court by the Primate.

When the King's envoys left, the Archbishop of Canterbury again sent as legates to the court the venerable man whom we mentioned above, and the abbot of the Monastery of St. Alban, with a clerk hailing from London.

1 Abbot of St. Alban, perhaps Abbot Simon (1166-1183).
Concerning the envoy sent to Earl Reginald.

The Archbishop called one of his household and said, "You are to go to the Earl of Cornwall; there you will be of great help to us. As another Chusai \(^1\) you will bring to our knowledge whatever is secret and whatever you learn in the King's court. Let us provide in turn swift messengers. The Earl is suffering from ulcers; he has earnestly asked that a doctor be sent to him. By going to him you will cure his body and relieve our mind." Although the servant greatly opposed this action, \(^2\) he proceeded to the city called Breamore and was received by the Earl. After receiving an answer to his question concerning the whereabouts of his lord, the Earl said openly to his servants, "He has greatly disturbed the country; he will bring it to perpetual disgrace if the Lord does not interfere. As yet he is within bounds but we shall all be dragged to the depths by him." The next day the King sent some game to the Earl with his compliments. But the retainer, the bearer of the gift, stood looking attentively at the servants in the house, as happens, and also at those standing beside the Earl. He asked, "Isn't this William of Archbishop Thomas' household that I see?" The one with whom he was talking denied this and explained that he was the doctor who was caring for his master. "For a long time I've known William, the intimate friend of the Archbishop of Canterbury." Then the Earl, considering a warning more important than his own cure, said aside to the

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1 Cf. 2 Sam. 18.21.
2 Breamore, near Fordingbridge in Hampshire on the Avon.
doctor, "Leave at once and get far away. You will tell the Archbishop to be on his guard and take care of himself. There is no security. This same warning concerns John of Salisbury, 3 John of Canterbury, 4 Gunther and Alexander of Wales; wherever they are found they will be killed with the sword." With warnings of this kind and an injunction of fidelity not to publish the obligation placed upon him, he dismissed the doctor. The latter arose at night and in fear and weariness covered a long way and came before the Primate. When he told him the Earl's warning, he moved to tears John of Salisbury, the only one he wanted present for this conversation. But Becket's self-possession precluded any idea of fear. With the palm of his hand he lightly struck his outstretched neck and said, "Here in this spot the hirelings 5 will find me."

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3 See p. 40.
4 John of Canterbury: this is probably John of Poitiers, a native of Kent and later of Canterbury, a fellow student with Becket in the household of Archbishop Theobald. He became Bishop of Poitiers in 1162 and in 1181 Archbishop of Lyons. See William Stubbs, Seventeen Lectures on the Study of Mediaeval and Modern History, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1900, p. 150.
5 garciones, a word that is not mentioned in any standard dictionary or in Forcellini, but Du Cange says, "Lixa, mercenarius, garcio, qui sequitur curiam et portat aquam in castris exercitus; garciones pro famulis, maxime iis, qui castra sequuntur."
(19) The envoys bring the Archbishop's grievances to the court.

Meanwhile the appointed envoys met with the King's guardians (for admittance to the King's presence was not allowed) and the Abbot explained the case, "The lord Primate and legate sent us to your Highness; in his name we make these charges."
(20) The first grievance, concerning the clergy oppressed by secular courts:

The complaint of the clergy oppressed beyond all limit has come to us; nay more, it has reached the ears of divine goodness itself. For certain ones, without being admitted to a civil court, are held in prison and in chains by the violence of laymen. Certain others are dragged from the ecclesiastical courts as if offences are punished less severely under the ecclesiastical discipline, and they are subjected to various sorts of punishment in accordance with the varied opinion of the secular courts. Seeing such abuses, we who under the divine mercy have the care of the churches are moved by a sense of fatherly duty and we sadly deplore them. Is a father not sorrowed if a robber slays his son in his presence? Is a shepherd not moved if a wolf tears a sheep to pieces in his presence? We ask, therefore, that inasmuch as ecclesiastical business is separated from secular business, you permit this division to be recognized whenever it is necessary. Let the plaintiff in an action follow the court according to custom, so that, as ordered by decree, a cleric or layman arraigned for a crime or a legal suit may have his appeal heard nowhere except in his own court. ¹ Let those who are in prison be released; we are ready to deliver, when and where we should, those who are under our jurisdiction. May the Lord's chosen people be led away from the mud and the bricks lest Egypt be struck with a new plague as in the case of Pharaoh's obstinacy. ²

¹ Cratian 11. causa xi. qu. 1. c. 48; cf. c.16.
² Exodus 5.7.
The second grievance, concerning the Archiepiscopal See which was not restored to its former position.

There is something else about which we are forced to make a complaint. When peace was restored, the King promised that he would restore the rightful dignity to the Church of Canterbury in the case of Saltwood and also the Archiepiscopal See to the same condition it enjoyed three months ago before we went abroad. And since one's words should be truthful, and promises reliable, how is it that the King's words do not have the weight of immutability? It does not befit the royal dignity to withdraw from promises made orally or in writing. Behold, our tumbled-down houses scarcely admit an occupant. The enclosures are broken by wild animals, groves are laid waste, land is heavily taxed, farms are plundered, orphans are disinherited. These are proofs of obvious cruelty and of hidden deceit. The things which are stolen from the ministers of the mysteries of God constitute an offence against God. Let the things that are God's be restored to God so that those whom God is calling in long patience and who fail to repent be not suddenly snatched away to punishment.

1 Saltwood Castle, near Hythe, thirteen miles from Canterbury.
The third, concerning the wine that was seized.

What shall we say about our wine? That thief, Randolph, seized it so maliciously that the act could not be brought to a hearing without a personal attack against the King's name. For when he had removed the wine from our ships, he broke up the masts, the sailyards, and other fittings of the ships, and then sunk them. So it happened that the unfortunate skippers just as if they had suffered shipwreck were unable to stay or to return. And, honored judges, did not a wicked retainer damage his lord's name by plundering someone else's property which his lord himself had brought into the country at his own expense? If the lord King had regard for his own reputation, he would punish the man who made him disreputable, lest impunity be taken for tacit consent and thus sanction the deed.
(23) The fourth grievance, concerning the churches which are wrongfully kept.

Among the following grievances we believe there is no less an excess. For when we were traveling abroad, some intruders, who with Sennacherib leave things deserted, occupied our churches and even now retain them against our will. Since we alone have the right of preaching in them, they possess them dishonestly and under an unjust title. This alone would suffice to condemn them because they have not entered through the door which is Christ. For if, with truth as witness, they are thieves and robbers who climb up another way, how will they, elevated as they have been by the hand of a layman, go in and go out and find pastures?

1 Cf. 4 Kings 18.19.
3 Cf. John 10.1-10.
(24) The fifth grievance, concerning the clergy who were forbidden to cross the sea.

"We allege the same complaint concerning the closed ports. For when those of our own land are not permitted to leave, or those of foreign lands are not allowed to cross over to our shores, what else is this if not limiting the liberty of the English Church with a prison guard so that it cannot be subject to the jurisdiction of St. Peter's successors; what else is it but a lessening of the power of the Roman Pontiff so that he cannot perform his duties with the usual mandatory methods. It is necessary that, where we cannot be present, our business be settled by an administrator whom we appoint and the one thus appointed for the emergency carries out our business. Therefore, we strongly beseech you to annul those edicts which prevent a legation beyond the customary limit, which militate against the success of many undertakings, and disturb the status of the Church. We ask that permission be granted to leave and to return, as formerly, without a dispensation."

When the Abbot had said these words, the clerk charged with the same instructions, added, "The lord Primate says, 'Let a man so account of us as of ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God.' Unless these things are done and done as they should be done, without doubt we shall pursue the course that is incumbent upon us and that pertains to the priestly duty."

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1 1 Cor. 4.1.
(25) The opinions of the nobles and the threat of Hugo.

Reginald of Warenne said, "Bows are being drawn very tightly on both sides." The Earl of Cornwall added, "Before the middle of the Lenten season we shall perform the fatal deed." Being of upright character, he did not say this of his own accord but rather because the notorious vengeance of the court gave him reason to suspect that a plot threatened the Primate. These events took place at Fordingbridge.¹

Thereupon, the legates received answer that, though it seemed many abuses had to be corrected, the petitions of the Primate would in no wise be heard as long as he persisted in his obstinacy and opposed the King and the nobles. When they were leaving the assembly one of the courtiers, (Hugo), retaliating to a threatening priest, said that unless he would report in the presence of the King, he would be severely punished. He claimed that the Archbishop had presumed to terrify the nobles as if they were degenerate characters instead of showing deference to them.

¹ Fordingbridge in Hampshire on the Avon, fifteen miles south of Salisbury.
(26) Ordination of the clerics.

Meanwhile the Primate had returned, and since it was the Ember Week of December, he promoted to higher orders many from his provincial monasteries and churches. But there were very few from his own monastery, only one subdeacon and three priests. Returning from abroad, he ordained one and only one deacon from among those whom he found had taken the monk's habit in his monastery after his departure, namely, the one who described his return in a limping narrative. But he postponed ordaining the others at the time because they had entered the monastery without consulting him. Without setting any time limit he excluded all from the chapter, lest, if he was not on guard, a precedent be established for others at some other time of presuming to exercise usurped authority on matters over which they had no jurisdiction and lest pastors themselves, absent because of exile or for some other reason, lose the privileges of their position.

He did not want the postponement of the dispensation he granted to resemble an act of cruelty. Thus, when the feast of the Lord's Nativity was drawing near, he ordered those whom he had excluded before to be introduced into the chapter and to seek again the permission to function in the Church of Canterbury. Having the permission of the head and the members, others might not be prejudiced. Therefore, after the customary petition, he sighed and added, "We grant to you, dearest

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1 Namely, the author, William of Canterbury.
brothers, this mercy which no doubt exceeds the hope and the expectation of many. You are of our creation and you are bound to remember that we do this willingly and from a feeling of love. May the Lord give you His grace and blessing!
(27) Concerning the solemn excommunication of the two and the effect of the excommunication.

On the holy Christmas Day itself after he had delivered the customary exhortation to his people, the Archbishop publicly excommunicated the vicar of a certain Nigel and also Robert de Broc with his servant, the former because he was keeping the keys of one of his churches, the latter because he was keeping a church obtained by lay hands. Since we, however unwillingly, once more recall to his better senses this man to be shunned, and since his sentence had some effect on him, we absolve him for the present. When he gave a banquet for some of his friends in the house which had been constructed according to his plan from timber cut down at random on the Archiepiscopal estates of Canterbury, the dogs rejected the bread which his hands had touched, yet they greedily ate everything offered by another. It was surprise to all when they mixed this man's crumbs with those of others and saw the dogs draw away from both as if from a sense of contamination.
(28) Concerning the Primate's Confession.

Four days after the Lord's Nativity, December 29, the Primate went from one altar to another in his usual manner, beginning with the first, and made long and earnest supplications in memory of the saints. And recalling the counsel of St. James, "Confess your sins one to another, and pray for one another that you may be saved," he called Brother Thomas and he himself assumed the role of a penitent. He thus humbled himself by confessing to his subject. He revealed his sins in such humility and contrition that the one who received his repentance was astonished and terrified. Afterwards when the tables were set by an aproned servant, he ordered the food to be served. For he knew that the sword menaced his life and the time of his sacrifice was near. Now we shall narrate briefly how the champion of God was martyred.

1 James 5.16.
2 Thomas of Maidstone, the Archbishop's confessor.
(29) Concerning the letter sent to the King about the disturbance in the kingdom.

After Roger, the Archbishop of York, and others guilty of the same error had crossed the sea for an audience with the King, they dispatched a report of their own plight. Upon learning the tenor of these letters, (I should like to have said saving his peace) the King was for a while provoked beyond the propriety of regal dignity. And having somewhat checked himself, he replied that "he had supported lazy men, men who knew nought of activity, and that there was not one among his friends who mourned the lot of the King." Since he had acted in an unfitting manner, his servants who heard him complain about them said, "Why this sudden sadness? Even though you had lost children or wife, or half your kingdom, (Heaven forbid!) a King ought not lament like this. If adverse reports are announced, let those be heard who can speak directly, and let them testify to what they have heard and seen. It is not fitting to put faith indiscreetly in all talk and in doubtful rumors. Behold, we are ready to fortify cities and camps as strongly as possible to pursue or withstand the enemy amid dangers of soul and body. We see sorrow, but we cannot understand the cause of the sorrow. If as lovers of ease we were to avoid work, if we were to smile on good days and turn our backs on evil days, then a complaint would be in order. We want nothing more than that you make known your mind to us." The King replied, "For many days now you have known my will and my grief which has grown to such an extent that my very vitals are disturbed with a
growing malady. A fellow who has eaten my bread has raised his heel against me.\(^1\) A fellow abusing my favors dishonors the whole kingly line, and without an avenger tramples down the whole kingdom. A fellow who first burst into the court with a small purse and a crippled mule overthrew a whole lineage of kings and now exults in triumph upon the throne, while you, the companions of my fortune, look on!" Thus the rumor spread among the royal clientele that they were accused of idleness, that they did not concern themselves about the injuries inflicted upon their lord, and that they concealed the insults in order to maintain peace. They conceive violent feelings, their anger is aroused, they encourage hate by gossiping, and unanimously they are inflamed against the Primate.

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\(^1\) Cf. Psalms 40.10; St. John 13.18. The text of Robertson reads, "Unus homo qui manducavit panem meum levavit contra me calcaneum suum," and almost the same words are to be found in the King James Version. The Douay Version reads, "qui edebat panes meos, magnificavit super me supplantationem." In its literal sense the psalm applies to the treachery of David's friends against him. Cf. 2 Kings 17.27. Our Lord applies Verse 10 to Himself in connection with the treachery of Judas.
Concerning the bishops who accuse the Primate.

Meanwhile the prelates came and prostrated themselves at the feet of their lord. With sorrowful mien they put before him their complaint and lying thus prostrate they called for redress. They were told to stand and they obtained favor because of their sorrow; but before they made their plea, they discussed the cause of their sorrow. "Lord King," said York, "I alone am permitted to speak in whispers. No one is allowed to talk to my two companions who were banished without being involved in that same sentence of condemnation inflicted upon them which that ungrateful Archbishop, disregarding the permission granted him to return, imposed upon them and all who agreed to the coronation of your son. But now, since he is once more in possession of his own country, he is on his guard not to be proscribed in the future. Attended by a great retinue of cavalry and foot soldiers who precede and follow him as a guard, he goes about asking to be received into the garrisons. These constant offences, my lord King, great as they are, do not disturb us, neither do our labors weary us, nor do the enormous losses worry us. About all these we care very little so long as we remain faithful and please you, the lord King. But the repeated dismissals, the wounded dignity of our office, the depreciation of our reputation put at hazards, these do disturb us. We are made a public spectacle as if we had committed a crime, and we are condemned for the deed although we ourselves do not doubt the purity of our intentions." The

1 Cor. 4.9-15.
King answered, "If all those who agreed to the coronation of the King are subject to excommunication, then, by God's eyes, I am not exempt." The former chimed in, "The tempest which you cannot avoid must be endured quietly, so that with a calm mind and a due measure of tolerance you may merit to appear as the one attacked and the one who bore the injuries. This can easily be done if you can ignore what was inflicted upon you in the present circumstances, and dismiss the guilty one under the impression that he is safe."

2 "Par les yeux de Dieu!" Henry II's favorite oath.

(31) Concerning the letters read in the presence of all.

The next day the letters were read in the presence of all the courtiers and of others who according to time and circumstances could be assembled. One can conjecture but not understand with what fury, with what threats and reproaches they raged when they heard the names of those marked with the brand of condemnation, they who are easily aroused by what they hear, who have never learned to suffer affronts, since they know more of court life than of discipline.
(32) Concerning the conspiracy of the princes.

Determined to carry out their evil design, on the very night of the Lord's Nativity, which fell on Thursday, they met together to conspire against the Lord and against His anointed, so that as soon as the Lord would be born into the world, they themselves might die to the Lord. First they took an oath directed against the Primate, then bound themselves more closely by a mutual pledge. After these cautions for their common safety, they set off to the sea with that speed with which those who are out to commit a crime usually move. They took possession of the various ports and, fearing lest a means of escape be open to the Primate or anyone else in case he got wind of the plot, they agreed, after crossing the sea, to blockade carefully the harbors on this side. We quote these facts from the report of one who was present as an eye and ear witness. Let no one involve his royal Majesty in any knowledge or connivance at such a misdeed. For with regard to the murder of the martyr, the King vindicated his own innocence in the presence of great men and those of prescribed authority, namely, the cardinals and legates.

1 "quae lucescit in sextam sabbati," which dawned on the sixth day from Saturday, that is, which fell on Thursday. Cf. Matt. 28.1.
2 Cf. Psalms 2.2.
3 Cf. J. C. Robertson, Becket, a Biography, p. 267. "The four set out for England and hurried to the coast, whence, embarking at different ports, two of them were conveyed to Winchelsea and the others to a harbor near Dover....by various routes they all reached the same destination within the same hour."
4 conniventa here has the meaning of feigning ignorance or of giving assent to wrongdoing without actually participating in it.
of the Apostolic See, Albert and Theodine. Of his own will he swore on the Holy Bible placed before him that he neither commanded nor willed the Archbishop's death, and that when the news reached him, he lamented it very much. And we can believe him for if he had been guilty, he would not have denied the accusation on such a solemn oath and in such solemn fashion, especially since he was not compelled to do so. He could have hushed up the matter by a bribe or by some other method without incurring his own condemnation. For who willingly kills himself if he be of a sound mind?

5 Albert of St. Lawrence in Lucina (afterwards Pope Gregory VIII). Theodine or Theotwin of St. Vitalis.
(33) Excuse of the King.

Let us hear the excuse which the King alleges for this deed. When he heard that the Primate had died by the sword of his retainers, he despatched two clerks a few days later bearing the letters. On their arrival at Canterbury they said to the brethren assembled, "The misfortune which has fallen upon you, my brethren, has grieved the lord King to such an extent that for three days he has refrained from entering the Church, and from the day when he heard the news until the third day after he has eaten no food except almond milk. He would not be consoled nor appear in public, knowing that whatever is done through the malice of his retainers redounds to his own dishonor; he could not be easily persuaded that it did not look as though he had sought the life of the Primate whom he had so often grieved by his decrees, and the one alone who, he felt, stood in the way of his governing ecclesiastical affairs in the kingdom. Yet the horrible and unheard-of deed was accomplished. He is considered as having been less conscious of the deed in proportion to the undoubted fact that up to the present time he has maintained his innocence. There is one thing which causes him remorse of conscience. For when he and all who were present for the coronation of his son received the decrees of excommunication, he was not able to conceal his sorrow because he thought all the disturbance caused by anger and hostile attitudes had been laid to rest by

1 Almond milk, amygdalinum, is an emulsion of blanched almonds, gum arabic, sugar, and water.
the agreement of peace. Having called his immediate retainers, he stated his complaint about the renewed injury; they compassionated with him in his sorrow and they were greatly disturbed by the fact that he was taking action against the one whom he had promoted. ² Not realizing this, he set out for Argentan ³ to talk with the bishops and archbishops of the various provinces whom he had summoned to discuss these difficulties. Intending to avenge the King's injuries and thinking that they were pleasing him in this way, the four who committed the crime silently left the court. Hearing of this and knowing that they were the cruelest and worst of all men living within the boundaries of his kingdom, the King feared that the deed would redound to his own dishonor. Forthwith he sent his swiftest men ⁴ to seize the ports and prevent the madness of the sons of Belial. But as if the winds in compliance were blowing for our misfortune and the dishonor of the royal name, these four, crossing the sea, committed, without the King's knowledge, a deed which will never be forgotten. For on that day he thought his retainers

² William is referring here to the incidents related in Section 29.
³ Argentan, France, in the Province of Normandy.
⁴ These were William, Earl of Mandeville, Sayer de Quincy, and Richard de Humet, justiciary of Normandy, who were ordered to arrest the Archbishop and overtake the four knights. The first two "went only as far as the coast where they were halted, but the latter passed over into England and sent orders to Hugh de Gondreville and William Fitzjohn, the young King's tutors at Winchester, to march as privately as possible with the household troops of Canterbury. Meanwhile he remained on the coast to seize the Archbishop if he should attempt to escape." J. A. Giles, The Life and Letters of Thomas a Becket, II, p. 316.
were in his house. We have been sent to make this known to you, Brethren, so that you may not have any sinister thoughts about the dignity of such a leader; but if he has incurred any blame from the fact that he may have challenged the rioters to undertake the crime, it is fitting that it be expiated by your prayers. And now he orders that the body be given honorable burial and be placed near his predecessors. For although the King considered the Archbishop troublesome in life, he does not persecute him in death. Hence, whatever fault the Primate has committed, the King forgives. He does not look back upon his own displeasure. He does not remember the injuries inflicted upon him as lord, king, and patron." From these certain facts it would seem to some that his innocence is vindicated if, however, the speeches of the courtiers had not brought suspicion on his highness.
(34) Concerning the insulting language of the soldiers.

When William of Mandeville came to us from across the sea, he said, "If I had met the Primate, I would have sharply taken him to task for matters aiming at the royal sovereign; if the Archbishop had graciously agreed to the demands, there would have been peace; but if he dared to persist in his stubborn obstinacy, beyond doubt, he would have been compelled to yield by force." Others also made similar threats that if by a rash attempt we had hidden the traitor to the King, all our secret hiding places would have been destroyed like a log which falls into the fire, so that we would deliver the one to be punished by death, the one whom, as a criminal of the royal sovereign, we had protected to our own disaster. Some of them forbade us even to mourn that seditious fellow who had disturbed the whole kingdom, lest with him we likewise be led to grief. We have digressed; let us return to the main topic.

1 William, the Earl of Mandeville, who had been sent to overtake the four knights.
The crossing of the four conspirators.

While all the aforementioned hurried to the sea, four arrived before all the others, perhaps those more anxious to carry out the deed. They were Reginald, Hugo, William, and Richard. Without any hindrance from the sea or ships or any other usual delay, they came to England. Thinking from this that heaven and earth were favorably disposed toward their crime, they became prouder and bolder because of their success, and they flattered themselves in the favorableness of the elements. They came that same night from different ports and entering according to their agreement into Saltwood Castle they spent the night in subdued talk and whisperings. Randolph de Broo with a great retinue had come to meet them, leaving his wife at home. The whole sea coast was thrown into confusion. When day had dawned, the soldiers in the town and neighboring provinces were ordered to show that they were armed and without any excuse to be ready to carry out the King's mandate. Leaving only two servants in the castle, they repaired with full speed to the city of Canterbury and stood before the Primate, demanding an interview with him.

1 Saltwood Castle, near Hythe, thirteen miles from Canterbury.
(36) Description of the conspirators.

The first is Reginald, who, as they say, fears no crime and inherits his brutish cruelty from his father, Ursus. Next is Hugh of Morville, the villa of death or of the dead. However you say it, it means a village of death. His mother, so the story goes, was ardently in love with a young man, Lithulf. When he rejected her lawless passion, with the carefully planned subtlety of a woman she asked him to draw his sword in sport and drive his horse before her. As he did so, she cried out to her husband passing along, "Hugh de Morville, ware, ware, ware, Lithulf heth his sword adrage." This in Latin reads, "Hugo de Morvilla, cave, cave, cave, Lithulfus eduxit suum gladium." Whereupon, the innocent youth, as if he had stretched forth his hand to shed his master's blood, was sentenced to death, boiled in hot water, and thus was martyred. What shall we expect from a brood of vipers? Do we gather grapes from thistles, or a fig from a thorn? If an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, with Truth as witness, it follows that a harmless sprout does not spring from a poisonous root.

1 Reginald Fitzurse was descended from a great Norman family of the time of the conquest and came to the West. Ursus means bear.
2 Hugh of Morville was a landowner, the custodian of Knaresborough Castle and justiciary of Northumberland.
3 Hugh of Morville, beware, beware, beware, Lithulf has his sword drawn.
4 Cf. Matt. 12.34.
5 Cf. Luke 6.44; Matt. 7.16.
William, named de Tracy, is the third one. Although he may have acted bravely on the field, yet it was the result of his associations that for offences demanding payment he has merited to fall headlong into committing murder or some other crime.

Richard, the Breton, is the fourth. On account of his perverse life he acquired the name Brutus from Brittany, and while he was contending in the church, he incurred in place of this name the surname of the recruit Thraso.

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7 William de Tracy, d. 1173, was from the west-country where he possessed large estates and was of royal blood on both sides. It is said that in reparation for his crime he went on a pilgrimage to Rome and Jerusalem and built a church in Devonshire that still bears his name.

8 Richard le Breton was of a Norman family who also settled in the West. He was an intimate friend of Prince William, the King's brother, and was probably related to Gilbert Foliot.

9 i.e., while he was participating in the murder of the Archbishop.

10 Thraso is the name of a braggart soldier, a recruit, in Terence's play, The Eunuch.
(37) The conversation of the Primate and the conspirators.

Up on their arrival the four sought an interview with the Primate. He asked, "Do you want it in public or in private?" They answered, "As you please." When he had led them into a more remote section of the house, the servants were commanded to leave. But the Archbishop with a certain presentiment of future events recalled the words of the Evangelist, "Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew all men," and he called back his servants who had left. Then Fitzurse said, "In obedience to your King and your lord go and present yourself and pay your submission to him." The Archbishop answered, "I did what I was obliged to do and I do not remember that I neglected any of the duties for which I am held responsible." "No?" they say; "you have not yet absolved the bishops and the clerics whom you excommunicated." He added, "The excommunication was not pronounced by me." They retort, "It is just the same as if it had been pronounced by you since it was done at your instigation." The Archbishop's reply was, "I consider it valid and thankworthy if the protector of the churches vindicates my injuries and those of the Church which I zealously serve. You, Reginald, were present and (if the matter needs witnesses) there were present several hundred soldiers when, after making an investigation of those attacks which had disturbed the status of the Church, the lord King permitted me to

1 John 2.25.
correct the abuses and in satisfactory manner to punish the bold effron-
teries. Indeed, unless the repentance of the guilty ones can be looked
for, I would of necessity be compelled to take action against the in-
juries inflicted upon me in abundance at the present time. For the wine
which was brought from across the sea with the keep and care of the lord
King's servant is seized. In contempt of my name my mule was deprived
of its tail as if by injuring my animal they can insult me; and even to
the present time the churches that were seized are held by the usurpers." Putting aside their hidden purpose, they add, "We are not witnesses of
this permission. But if you must complain about the injuries that were
inflicted, why do you not place the complaint before his royal majesty?
You might have presented it to the examination of the lords and obtained
reparation according to the nature of the offence." The Archbishop said,
"I do not have to run to the court for every trifle; the sword of excom-
munication must be drawn when and against whom it is due." Springing up
at this statement, they exclaim, "Threats! Threats! Lord monks, we order
you in the King's name to guard that man carefully. If he leaves, he will
be demanded from your hands." He answered, "Let this be known to you; I
do not come to escape, but to await the fury of the thieves and the mal-
ice of the wicked. With the help of God I place little value on your
threats." "They are not merely threats," they say, "but something else
as well." And accompanying the rioters to the door, he detected in the
muttering of one of them that the King had distrusted him.

2 Cf. Ezech. 3.18.
The invasion of the Primate's house and the entrance of the swords-
men.

Having planned to ruin the house, they go out at once and receive
those whom they had called together for the crime. Under a branching
mulberry tree they cast aside the coats that had covered their breast-
plates, and with drawn swords they dash against the outer doors of the
building which the frightened attendants had barred. Seeing themselves
repelled there, under the guidance of that most wretched of clerks,
Robert, who knew the narrow passages, they rush forth through the shrub-
bery and find the broken steps of a back door where the carpenters (as
it seems) had left their tools when they departed for their meal. They
use this opportunity to break open locks; they climb by means of ladders
in place of stairs and force an entrance with no one to resist them.

1 ad curtim: either an adverb, at once, or perhaps a noun, into the
courtyard.
2 Robert de Broc had become familiar with the place while his brother,
Randolf, held the custody of it during the Archbishop's exile.
3 architecti in the text. Robertson says, "Fitzurse ... completed his
equipment by snatching an axe from a carpenter who was engaged in re-
pairing a wooden staircase."
4 necessaria; the necessities of life, which could mean their meal since
we are told that "the Archbishop was sitting after meals with his
clerks and attendants ... when the events happened." Giles, op. cit.
p. 318.
(39) The Primate's vision at night.

The supreme champion of God, all untroubled, was awaiting the hour of his passion. He hoped the day was at hand on which he might find rest from his labors, a rest which long ago he had foreseen in a vision while he was spending his days of tribulation and exile in a convent of Pontigny; living as a monk with the monks, the dispossessed and the exile found the Lord whom as a rich man he would have lost, and he advanced toward martyrdom through his mortification of the flesh, through his own proscription and that of his friends, and through the care of the clerk whom he was protecting. This was the course of the martyrdom.

Consequently, he could not be moved from the spot by exhortations, prayers, or the tears of his friends, until suggesting that the choir must chant vespers, they brought force against him, and wrenching open the bolted door which leads into the cloister, they urged him on though he was reluctant.

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1 Domino monstrante, hence, in a vision.
2 Pontigny was a Cistercian Abbey or Monastery about twelve leagues from Sens and it appears to have been chosen by the Archbishop himself as a retreat. He remained nearly two years taking the habit and living a life of penance.
3 Infringo: to break open, to dash to pieces. But here the word does not have such a strong meaning if we judge from the number of stories connected with this scene. Some say the lock fell off at the first touch as if it had been glued to the door, while others claim there was no miracle at all but that the two cellarers had run to the cloister side and laboriously pulled off the lock.
4 obseratam must be a printing error since it evidently should agree with ostium.
Thereupon, step by step and at a slow pace he advanced as if voluntarily he was awaiting death. Two servants ran through the midst of the brothers who were fulfilling their obligation, the choral recitation of vespers, and they announced the attack of the enemy more by their frightened attitude than by their words. Then some of the brothers continued their prayers, some sought a means of escape, some wished to help the Primate, and some of them went out saying, "Come in, father, come in and stay with us that, if necessary, we may suffer and be glorified together. Let your presence console those who were so downcast by your absence." He answered, "Go, finish the Divine Office." And standing near the door, he said, "As long as you hold the entrance, I shall not enter in." When they drew back, he stepped into the monastery but stood in the doorway. Forcing back the people crowded around him as if for a spectacle, he asked, "What does that crowd fear?" The reply was, "The armed men in the cloister." "I am going out to them," he said. But when the brothers prevented him from going forth, he attempted to oppose those round about the threshold; and when he was advised to advance and betake himself to the Holy of Holies that out of reverence for the place respect might be shown him, he did not acquiesce. As the clerics meantime were making a great disturbance and some of the brethren were fastening the iron bolt, he said, "Away, faint-hearted ones; permit those wretched blind men to rave. We command you in virtue of obedience not to close the door."

1 Cf. Rom. 8.17.
(41) The invasion of the conspirators into the monastery.

While he was yet speaking, behold, the lictors who had searched the palace of the church rushed en masse through the cloister. Three of them carried hatchets in their left hands, one a two-edged or two-pointed axe, and all brandished drawn swords in their right hands. Where are you running, men of Belial, heirs of Dohec? Where are you running, Thrasos, newest of recruits, unacquainted with military expeditions, unaccustomed to camps? This is not a camp that must be stormed, protected as it is by its location and its natural character. It is not a city surrounded by walls nor by bulwarks or towers or a garrison of soldiers. The anointed of the Lord who must be feared because He is Christ the Lord, because of his own sanctity, because of the honor of the priesthood, is assailed with those very weapons. Behold, he stands in plain view; he does not seek base hiding places. Protected by the armor of justice and the shield of faith, he does not yield to the force of the battering ram; he does not fear the ballista or the other implements of war. After the lictors burst through the open doorway, they are separated from each other at the middle doorpost on which rests the weight of the arch. Fitzurse occupies the right side, the other three the left. But steadfast in body and in mind, the superintendant

1 Dohec or Doeg was an Edomite and chief of the herdsmen of King Saul. He slew fourscore and five priests and the inhabitants of Nob because Ahimelech gave aid to David. In Hebrew the word means "fearful." Cf. 1 Kings 22.18.
2 See note 10 on page 84.
3 Cf. Eph. 6.14-16.
of God's games in a dream he had seen himself crucified, as it is said, having on his left his cross which preceded him, behind him a wall, in front of him an icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and around him the remembrances and relics of the saints. In rushes Fitzurse and asks of someone whom he meets, "Where is the Archbishop?" Forestalling the answers of all of them, the Archbishop replied with a slight motion of the head, "See, here I am. Reginald, Reginald, I have bestowed many favors on you. Do you come to me armed?" "You will find out," he says. "Aren't you that traitor of the King? You will now depart from this place." And he struck off the Archbishop's skull cap with his sword's point. "I am not a traitor," answers the Archbishop. "I will not leave, abominable sir." And he shook from Reginald's hand the edge of his pallium. Then Reginald thunders, "Flee." The Archbishop replies, "I will not flee; you shall satisfy your malice here." Repelled by these words the assassin leapt back two or three steps. Indeed, he was about to strike, but he stopped either because he was gathering his strength, or, because mindful of past favors, he was for sparing a while his master, through whom, after his promotion, he had obtained his acquaintance with the King. Meanwhile

4 Agonothetes. In ancient Greece this was the president of the public games. At first he was the one who instituted the games, but later he was variously called "regulator," "arbitrator," "steward of the games." 5 Thomas had refused to move unless his cross went before him. It was Henry of Auxerre who carried it this time in place of the absent Alexander Llewellyn who was sent off with Herbert of Bosham on a mission to the French King and the Pope.
the other three rise up insulting him, "You shall die presently." He says, "If you seek my life, I forbid you under the threat of anathema to harm any of the by-standers. I willingly embrace death provided the Church obtains liberty and peace in my blood." He spoke and adjusted his head which was thrust forward for the blows. These were the last words he spoke, "To God and to the Blessed Mary, to the martyr Dionysius, and the patron saints of His Church I commend my spirit and the Church's cause." But Fitzurse hurrying to carry off the trophy from the first blow and profit from the speedy crime, leapt forward and with all his might inflicted a wound on the outstretched head; and he exclaimed as though triumphing over a conquered enemy, "Strike! Strike!"

(42) The dispersion of the monks.

At this word, I who speak thought (as did the others also) that I likewise should be struck with the sword, and feeling conscious of my sins and not fitted for martyrdom, I quickly turned my back and ascended the stairs, clapping my hands together. 1 Immediately certain ones still standing for prayers dispersed. For the Lord struck upon all not a slight fear but a great terror, a fear that could fall upon even the most steadfast. For what mitigation does one promise himself under fire, and what security under a brandished axe? Felling the green wood will they pass by the leafless dry wood? 2 Doubtless Divine Providence was acting in behalf of its martyr dispersing the sheep after the shepherd had been struck. 3 Even if one person had fallen with him, no matter for what cause the person may have been struck, the subsequent miracles would afterwards be ascribed to that person and not to the martyr himself; and with ill-will continuing and the Isaurians still contradicting him after his martyrdom, the martyr would be marked with the brand of treason forever. It is for this reason that care is taken for the martyr's

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1 Classical writers recognize this action of clapping the hands as indication of great agitation. It is called theatrical by Quintilian, 11.3.123: "complodere manus scaenicum est."

2 Cf. Luke 23.31. The word "inconcussum" does not occur in the Scriptural passage, however, and the first meaning (unshaken) hardly fits here.


4 Isauria is in ancient geography a district of Asia Minor. The people are said to have been a daring, lawless race who owed allegiance to either Persian or Macedonian monarchy. They were reduced to submission by the pro-consul, P. Servilius, but they were practically incorrigible. The word is used here to depict the wicked, incorrigible nature of the Archbishop's enemies.
reputation and alone he falls. Then, the murderers, instigated by the minister of the confusion, heaping wound upon wound, dashed out his brain.

5 This seems to be Fitzurse, though William may have meant Satan.
Concerning the clerk who was wounded and the monk who was struck.

A clerk, English by birth, Edward by name, sympathizing with his father out of affection, received a blow when he thrust out his arm; and fearing further wounds and more serious injuries after these serious enough ones, he turned aside to an altar very near by where many of the brothers fearing for their life had taken refuge. He did not know from whom he had received the blow. But we can draw a conclusion concerning the author of the wound from this fact, that when his accomplices in Saltwood Castle were relating how each one had vented his wrath upon the martyr and was boasting about the crime, William said also that he had cut off the arm of John of Salisbury.

Moreover, one of the brothers near his father had shown opposition in his desire to sympathize and suffered a blow. But the prayer of the good shepherd imitating the true Shepherd who said, "If you seek me, let these go their way," brought it about that he alone fell with no loss to the flock. Consequently, struck with the flat of the sword, he received a stunning blow on the head.

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1 Edward Grim, (fl. 1170-1177) was a native of Cambridge who had been admitted into the Archbishop's household a day or two before. His life of Becket ranks among the best. He died before Herbert of Bosham finished his work, at latest 1189.

2 The scene was confused. Grim, the receiver of the blow, as well as most of the narrators, believed it to have been dealt by Fitzurse, while William de Tracy, who is known to have been the man from this boast, believed that the monk he wounded was John of Salisbury.

Concerning the death of the Blessed martyr Thomas.

Already the weakened knees of the martyr totter and already his house of clay is verging toward a fall. During the course of the killing his mind prays in silence; he sings psalms in his mind and in his heart, but exteriorly his voice is not audible. He is struck with their swords after the manner of sheep; not a murmur is heard, not a complaint, but in his silent heart his mind, fully conscious, preserves its patience. However, one of the murderers, having attacked the martyr as he was falling or rather lying prostrate struck the point of his sword on the stone pavement. By shattering the blade the Lord indicated that the Church was triumphing in the martyr's blood and that malice was overcome. Indeed, Christ is the rock, the guardian of innocence, shattering all the designs of pride so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against the Church of which He is the foundation. Not yet was their impiety sated; for after the four others had attacked him, one renewed the crime and cruelly assailed the dead body, then fixed his sword's point into the empty crown of the head. In truth the martyr triumphed as a result of

1 Cf. Acts 8.32.
2 Richard le Breton, see note 8, p. 84.
3 Cf. Eph. 2.20.
4 Cf. Matt. 16.18.
5 Hugh of Horsey, a subdeacon, known by the characteristic name of Mauclerc. He was attached to the household of the de Brocs. It was thought he was eager to pay off some old score. Herbert of Bosham is the only one who attributes this deed to someone else, to Robert de Broc.
the previous blow and lay motionless as one prostrate in prayer. The beauty of his countenance remained unchanged. He exhibited by his appearance in death as much happiness and sincerity as he cherished in mind, so that he seemed not to have died, but by his fresh color, his closed eyes and lips, he seemed to be falling asleep. There was no stiffness in his body, and to those who kept guard throughout the night there appeared to be no liquid flowing from his mouth or nostrils. The flexibility of his fingers, the position of his body, the cheerfulness and beauty of his countenance proclaimed that the man was glorified, even if his life or the cause of his suffering was silent. Thus, the Primate and legate of the Church suffered in behalf of the Church on the fourth day before the Kalends of January, about the time of Vesper services, while the monks round about sang psalms, and the clergy and the crowd of people stood by, and while Our Lord Jesus Christ to whom be honor and glory forever ruled over all. Amen.

So ends the passion of the glorious martyr Thomas, on the fourth day before the Kalends of January.
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The thesis submitted by Sister Mary Annette Bocke, O.P. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Classical Languages.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

January 22, 1946
Date

[Signature of Adviser]