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Sir I am right glad of *your* masters health & of *your* good hope of his
spedie retorne and yet at his *depar*ture I wold have thought
Michaelmas as long tyme as for many cawses it is, God guide hym,
blesse hym, ^{^and^} prosper hym, and I pray you in *your* retorne of writing vnto
hym to besech hym for me to accept my humble Comendacons and to
retaine his wonted opinion of my redines to doe hym all the services
that I am hable, and my continuance in hartly praier for hym/
Touching the matter of *your* letter for the course that king henry kept in
dissolution of abbies, I am sorie I am so little hable to satisfie, for
therof I have vtterlie no notes or writings whervpon I am hable to
ground any instructions./ But what I am hable I will set downe as I
have vnderstoode by that *which* I have red & heard.

The first entrance was a present given by Cardinall Wolsey who vnder
pretence and for better habilitie to build his sumptuous Colledge dissolved
Certaine smale howses and by that doing of hym self (I dout not
with good warrant from Rome) he dyd make lese in other the conscience
toward those howses.

After hym ther came to the kings service Mr Cromewell who had served
the Cardinall in those former doinges



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That Cromwall was the man that by his zeale his wisdom and his

Courrige was godes instrument to carry all to good effect. These

meanes he vsed.

He first found meanes to *perswade* the king that it lawfully might be done

That for his Crowne and state in safetie it was it was [sic] necessarie to

be done, for that he made appere to the king how by their meanes the

Pope and clergie so great aucthoretie reuene alliance and prinsipallie

captiuacion of the soules, and obedience of subiectes that they weare

able to putt kinges in hazard of their will.

That for his revenue and maintenance of his estate wares & affaires

both in warr and peace, at home and abrode with others it was

most profitable to disolue them for augmentation of his tresure

He allied the king so strongly with mighty forens in Germany,

and that leauge [sic] of religion so as with their forces & his treasure

and the consideracion of common *perill* by their comon enemy the

pope he was hable to with stand and encountre any foren princes so

at the Popes irritacion and *prostituting* his kingdome to the

occupanti wold make any attempt against hym[.] This aliance

was both by leauge [sic] with Saxonie and other and the mariage with

the sister of Cleue.



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The Emperour and french king were so in hostillitie that eyther of them was glad to wine king Henry to his *part*, wherby either of them feared to irritate hym lest he coyning with the other might make to hard a match against the invader, wherby I thinke that the same hostillitie was cherished by Cromewells Pollicie, whervpon grewe the play in france wherin were shewed the Emperor and the french king playing at tennise and the king of England paying for the balles, beside that though they had not bene in hostillitie, yet wither of them durst suffer the other to overgrow by impropriating to hym self anie thing in England, and so the Emperor hymself was glad to sit still allthough the *principall* ground in shewe of the quarrell touched hym in honor for his Auntes repudiacion.

Cromewell caused *preachers* to go abroade & mainteined them to instruct the people and to *perswade* the subiectes consciences to stand fast to the king with feare of the Popes curse or his dissoluing of ther allegiance.

He caused to be placed in the Archebishops seate Cranmer and in diuerse other bishopricks & hie places in the Clergie diuerse *protestantes* by meanes wherof he was hable to execute great thinges among themselues, and they were not hable so mucche as to enter into any full and



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*perfect counsell against hym, muche lesse to putt any thing in
publike denuntation and execucon as against the former kinges of
this realme.*

He knew that the clergie had in king Richard the secondes tyme
suborned another with Collor of a next attempting the like with the
Marques of Excester, he cawsed the heades of that faction
to be cutt of: suche as the howse of guise is now in ffrance who
kepe the lorrane title of Caroloningians in breath against the
Capiningians or hugonetes.

He *perswaded* the king by mainteyning of equ[.]ins and by holding
Towe the over eminent power of such great ones as in tymes past
had like bellwethers led the shepish flockes of England against
their prince to be knit fast to hym the love of his comons and
specially of the Citie of London./

He placed Abbotes and priors in diuerse great howses many lerned
men and men *perswaded* against those supersticions, *which* men were
redie to make surrender of their howses at the kinges
Comaundement./

He caused the king to restraine all *paymentes* to Rome & all *resortes*



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of his subiectes that he for sutes appeales faultes & other causes
wherby both he kept treasure and held yt from his enemies &
restrayned his enemies from flying to forreine partes or conference
with them, he six visitacons to be made of all the religious
houses touching their ~~con~~ conuersation, whervppon was returned
the booke called the black booke expressing of euery suche house
the vile lyves and abhominable factes in murde^{rs}ing of their
bretheren in Sodomies, in whordomes in destroying of children
in forging of deedes & other infinite horrors of lyf in so muche as
deuiding all the religious persons of england into three partes, And
of these partes at the least weare Sodomites and this
Appeared in writing with the names of their parties & ^{their} factes: This
was shewed in parliament and the villaines made knowen and
Abhorred.

He caused the king of the Abbies possessions to make such dispersion
as it behoued infinite multitudes of their owne intrest to wyne
with the king in houlding them downe which he did by diuerse menes
and these among other vz. founding diuerse Bishopprickes and
Colledges with these possessions selling many of them to many men
for reasonable prices exchanging many of them with the nobility
and other for their auncient possession to their great gaine which
whome he exchanged preferring many sufficient persons to the



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kinges service who were sone rayzed to Nobility ~~and~~ and some
to worshipp and good callinges and all indowed with maintenance
out of the revenues of Abbies/

Here is all that I can remember

Ther was allso vsed for the manner of the disolution first diuerse
Abbottes and other that could be thervnto *perswaded* or were some of
them for that *purpose* placed by the king made surrender of their
howses and Conveyed them to the king by order of law. and
had Competent pensions both them selues and their company
during their liues/

Some being detected by the said visitation to have the kinges favor
not to punishe them with reigor nor to publish their infamie for ther
vile factes were likewsie Content to surrender

ffor all the rest (*which* were then not many) the *parliament* being
made acquainted with their vile lives were redilie contented
both to confirme their surrenders and to give their consentes to the
giving of all the rest to the king./

Now by whome you may lerne the rest I will enforme you/



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Mr Chauncellor of the duchie was then the *Lord* Cromewells servant
and I thinke can say muche./

My Lord Treasurer by recordes in secrete tresurie and by collection
of monumentes of knowledge and by such other meanes as he hathe
Counsaile most of all men and best direct this to his naturall
Course./

Butt of a private man no man in England is in myne oppinion
Comparable to the recorder of london I am sure he canne deliuer
vs by bookes and writinges remayning *with* hym very many
thinges and I suppose sufficient for this question.

I meane to hast to london the rather to further you in this
matter by some Conferrence *with* you I propose to be ther on
~~m~~ monday I wold presently have come but that I had before
Appointed some Attendance here one my *lord* Cheyney ~~and~~ and
other for her *maiesties* service/

I have nothing to forward this matter at London more then I
haue here for touching this course: Omnia mea mecum porto /



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Mr Milles I am *your Masters*, *yours* and all his

I Comend to you the towne of Iernemouth [i.e., Yarmouth] so farr as they wilbe well
aduisd for they are honest men. So farre you well

At Sharpenhow in Bedfordshire iijor myles beyond Luton xij
myles beyond St Talbones this I write because you may know
whether to send an other tyme I wold you had a *profitable* occasion to
Come and see This last of august 1581.

Yours assured

ffor the residue I must referr you to the Statutes

Endorsed:

A copie of Thomas

Nortons Letter



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