

THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES

SIR THOMAS MALORY (1400?-1470)

LE MORTE DARTHUR

BOOK XXI. CAPITULUM IIIJ

Than were they condended¹ that kyng Arthure and Syr Mordred shold mete betwyxte bothe theyr hoostes, and everyche of them shold brynge fourtene persones; and they came wyth thys word unto Arthure. Than sayd he, "I am glad that thys is done." And so he wente in to the felde. And whan Arthure shold departe, he warned al hys hoost that, and² they see ony swerde drawn, "Look ye come on fyersly,³ and slee that traytour Syr Mordred, for I in noo wyse truste hym." In lyke wyse Syr Mordred warned his hoost that, "And² ye see ony swerde drawn, look that ye come on fyersly,³ and soo slee⁴ alle that ever before you stondesth, for in no wyse I wyl not truste for thys treatyse;⁵ for I knowe wel my fader wyl be avenged on me." And soo they mette as theyr poyntemente⁶ was, and so they were agreyd and accorded thorouly; and wyn was fette⁷ and they dranke. Ryght soo came an adder oute of a lytel hethe⁸ busshe, and hyt stonge a knyght on the foot; and whan the knyght felte hym⁹ stongen, he looked down and sawe the adder, and than he drewe his swerde to slee the adder, and thought of none other harme. And whan the hoost on bothe partyes¹⁰ saw that swerde drawn, than they blewe beamous,¹¹ trumpettes, and hornes, and shouted grymly.³ And so bothe hoostes dressyd¹² hem¹³ to-gyders.¹⁴ And kyng Arthur took his hors and sayd, "Allas! thys unhappy day," and so rode to his partye; and Syr Mordred in like wyse. And never was there seen a more dooffuller bataylle in no Crysten

¹ agreed ² if ³ fiercely ⁴ slay ⁵ treaty ⁶ appointment ⁷ fetched ⁸ heather ⁹ himself ¹⁰ sides ¹¹ trumpets or horns ¹² arranged, arrayed ¹³ themselves ¹⁴ together

londe; for there was but russhyng and rydyng, fewnyng¹ and strykyng, and many a grymme worde was there spoken eyder² to other, and many a dedely stroke. But ever kyng Arthur rode thorough-oute the bataylle of Syr Mordred many tymes, and dyd ful nobly as a noble kyng shold, and at al tymes he faynted never, and Syr Mordred that day put hym in devoyr³ and in grete perylle.

And thus they faughte alle the longe day, and never stynted⁴ tyl the noble knyghtes were layed to the colde erthe; and ever they faught styлле tyl it was nere nyghte, and by that tyme was there an hondred thousand layed deed⁵ upon the down. Thenne was Arthure wode⁶ wrothe oute of mesure, whan he sawe his peple so slayn from hym. Thenne the kyng loked aboute hym, and thenne was he ware,⁷ of al hys hoost and of al his good knyghtes were lefte no moo on lyve⁸ but two knyghtes, that one was Syr Lucan de Butlere, and his broder Syr Bedwere; and they were ful sore wounded. "Jhesu, mercy," sayd the kyng, "where are al my noble knyghtes becomen? Alas! that ever I shold see thys dolefull day, for now," sayd Arthur, "I am come to myn ende. But wolde to God that I wyste⁹ where were that traytour Syr Mordred that hath caused alle thys mescheyf." Thenne was kyng Arthure ware where Syr Mordred lenyd¹⁰ upon his swerde emonge a grete hepe of deed men. "Now gyve me my spere," sayd Arthur unto Syr Lucan, "for yonder I have espyed the traytour that alle thys woo hath wrought." "Syr, late¹¹ hym be," sayd Syr Lucan, "for he is unhappy; and yf ye passe thys unhappy day, ye shalle be ryght wel revengyd upon hym. Good lord, remembre ye of your nyghtes dreme, and what the spyryte of Syr Gauwayn tolde you this nyght, yet God of his grete goodnes hath preserved you hyderto; therefore for Goddes sake, my lord, leve of¹² by thys,¹³ for blessyd by¹⁴ God, ye have wonne the felde;

¹ foining, thrusting ² either ³ duty ⁴ ceased ⁵ dead ⁶ crazy ⁷ aware ⁸ alive ⁹ knew ¹⁰ leaned ¹¹ let ¹² leave off ¹³ at this point ¹⁴ be

CAPITULUM V

for here we ben thre on lyve,¹ and wyth Syr Mordred is none on lyve. And yf ye leve of² now, thys wycked day of desteynye is paste." "Tyde me deth, betyde me lyf," sayth the kyng, "now I see hym yonder allone, he shal never escape myn handes; for at a better avaylle³ shal I never have hym." "God spede you wel," sayd Syr Bedwere. Thenne the kyng gate hys spere in bothe his handes, and ranne toward Syr Mordred cryng, "Tratour, now is thy deth day come." And whan Syr Mordred herde Syr Arthur, he ranne untyl⁴ hym with his swerde drawn in his hande. And there kyng Arthur smote Syr Mordred under the shelde wyth a foynne⁵ of his spere thorough-oute the body more than a fadom.⁶ And whan Syr Mordred felte that he had hys dethes wounde, he thyrst⁵ hym self wyth the myght that he had up to the bur⁷ of kyng Arthurs spere. And right so he smote his fader Arthur wyth his swerde holden in bothe his handes, on the syde of the heed, that the swerde persyd⁸ the helmet and the brayne panne,⁹ and therwythall Syr Mordred fyl¹⁰ starke deed to the erthe. And the nobyl Arthur fyl in a swoune to the erthe, and there he swoune ofte tymes. And Syr Lucan de Butlere and Syr Bedwere oftymes heve¹¹ hym up; and soo waykely¹² they ledde hym betwyxte them bothe to a lytel chapel not ferre¹³ from the see syde. And whan the kyng was there, he thought hym wel eased.

Thenne herde they people crye in the felde. "Now goo thou, Syr Lucan," sayd the kyng, "and do¹⁴ me to wyte¹⁵ what bytokenes that noyse in the felde." So Syr Lucan departed, for he was grevously wounded in many places. And so as he yede,¹⁶ he sawe and herkened by the mone lyght, how that pyllars and robbers were comen in to the felde to pylle and robbe many a ful noble knyghte of brochys and bedys, of many a good ryng, and of many a ryche jewel; and who that were not deed al oute,¹⁷ there they slewe theym for theyr harneys¹⁸ and theyr rychesse. Whan Syr Lucan understode thys werke, he came to the kyng assone as he myght, and tolde hym al what he had herde and seen. "Therefore, be my rede,"¹⁹ sayd Syr Lucan, "it is beste that we brynge you to somme towne." "I wolde it were soo," sayd the kyng.

¹ alive ² off ³ opportunity ⁴ unto ⁵ thrust ⁶ fathom ⁷ handle ⁸ pierced ⁹ skull ¹⁰ fell ¹¹ raised ¹² weakly, weak ¹³ far ¹⁴ cause ¹⁵ know ¹⁶ went ¹⁷ entirely ¹⁸ armor ¹⁹ by my advice

"But I may not stonde, myn hede werches¹ soo. A, Syr Launcelot," sayd kyng Arthur, "thys day have I sore myst the. Alas! that ever I was ayenst² the, for now have I my dethe, wherof Syr Gauwayn me warned in my dreme." Than Syr Lucan took up the kyng the one parte, and Syr Bedwere the other parte, and in the lyftyng the kyng sowned,³ and Syr Lucan fyl in a sowne⁴ wyth the lyfte, that the parte of his guttes fyl oute of his bodye. And therwyth the noble knyghtes herte braste.⁵ And whan the kyng awake, he behelde Syr Lucan how he laye foomyng at the mowth, and parte of his guttes laye at his feet. "Alas!" sayd the kyng, "thys is to me a ful hevvy syght to see thys noble duke so deye for my sake, for he wold have holpen me that had more nede of helpe than I. Alas! he wold not complayne hym, hys herte was so sette to helpe me. Now Jhesu have mercy upon hys soule." Than Syr Bedwere wepte for the deth of his brother. "Leve thys mornyng and wepyng," sayd the kyng, "for al this wyl not avaylle me; for wyte⁶ thou wel, and⁷ I myght lyve my self, the deth of Syr Lucan wolde greve me ever more, but my tyme hyeth⁸ fast," sayd the kyng. "Therefore," sayd Arthur unto Syr Bedwere, "take thou Excalybur, my good swerde, and goo with it to yonder water syde, and whan thou comest there, I charge the⁹ throwe my swerde in that water, and come ageyn and telle me what thou there seest." "My lord," sayd Bedwere, "your commaundement shal be doon, and lyghtly brynge you worde ageyn."

So Syr Bedwere departed, and by the waye he behelde that noble swerde, that the pomel and the hafte was al of precyous stones; and thenne he sayd to hym self, "Yf I throwe this ryche swerde in the water, therof shal never come good, but harme and losse." And thenne Syr Bedwere hydde Excalybur under a tree. And so as sone as he myght he came ageyn unto the kyng, and sayd he had ben at the water, and had thrown the swerde in to the water. "What sawe thou there?" sayd the kyng. "Syr," he sayd, "I sawe no thyng but waves¹⁰ and wyndes." "That is untrewly sayd of the,"⁹ sayd the kyng. "Therefore goo thou lyghtely¹¹ ageyn, and do my com-

¹ aches ² against ³ swooned ⁴ swoon ⁵ burst ⁶ know ⁷ if ⁸ hastens ⁹ thee ¹⁰ waves ¹¹ quickly

maundement; as thou arte to me leef¹ and dere, spare not but throwe it in." Than Syr Bedwere retorne ageyn, and took the swerde in hys hande, and than hym thought synne and shame to throwe awaye that nobyl swerde; and so efte² he hydde the swerde, and retorne ageyn and tolde to the kyng that he had ben at the water, and done his commaundement. "What sawe thou there?" sayd the kyng. "Syr," he sayd, "I sawe no thyng but the waters wappe³ and wawes wanne."⁴ "A, traytour, untrew," sayd kyng Arthur, "now hast thou betrayed me twyse. Who wold have wente⁵ that thou that hast been to me so leef¹ and dere, and thou arte named a noble knyghte, and wold betraye me for the richesse of the swerde? But now goo ageyn lyghtly, for thy longe taryng putteth me in grete jeopardye of my lyf, for I have taken colde; and but-yf⁶ thou do now as I byd the, yf ever I may see the I shal slee⁷ the⁸ myn owne handes, for thou woldest for my ryche swerde see me dede."⁹ Thenne Syr Bedwere departed, and wente to the swerde, and lyghtly took hit up, and wente to the water syde, and there he bounde the gyrdyl aboute the hyltes, and thenne he threwe the swerde as farre in to the water as he myght. And there cam an arme and an hande above the water and mette it, and caught it, and so shoke it thryse and braundysshed; and than vanysshed awaye the hande wyth the swerde in the water. So Syr Bedwere came ageyn to the kyng and tolde hym what he sawe.

"Alas!" sayd the kyng, "helpe me hens,¹⁰ for I drede¹¹ me I have taryed over longe." Than Syr Bedwere toke the kyng upon his backe, and so wente wyth hym to that water syde, and whan they were at the water syde, evyn fast¹² by the banke hove¹³ a lytyl barge wyth many fayr ladyes in hit, and emonge hem al was a quene, and al they had blacke hoodes, and al they wepte and shryked¹⁴ whan they sawe kyng Arthur. "Now put me in to the barge," sayd the kyng; and so he dyd softelye. And there receyved hym thre quenes wyth grete mornyng, and soo they sette hem down, and in one of their lappes kyng Arthur layed hys heed, and than that quene sayd, "A, dere broder, why have ye taryed so longe from me? Alas! this wounde on your heed hath caught overmoche colde." And soo than they rowed

from the londe, and Syr Bedwere behelde all tho¹ ladyes goo from hym.² Than Syr Bedwere cryed, "A, my lord Arthur, what shal become of me, now ye goo from me and leve me here allone emonge myn enemyes?" "Comfort thy self," sayd the kyng, "and doo as wel as thou mayst, for in me is no truste for to truste in. For I wyl in to the vale of Avylyon, to hele me of my grevous wounde. And yf thou here never more of me, praye for my soule." But ever the quenes and ladyes wepte and shryched,³ that hit was pyte⁴ to here. And assone as Syr Bedwere had loste the syght of the barge, he wepte and waylled, and so took the foreste;⁵ and so he wente al that nyght, and in the mornyng he was ware⁶ betwyxte two holtes hore⁷ of a chapel and an ermytage.⁸

CAPITULUM VJ

Than was Syr Bedwere glad, and thyder he wente; and whan he came in to the chapel, he sawe where laye an heremyte groveling on al foure, there fast by a tombe was newe graven. Whan the eremyte sawe Syr Bedwere, he knewe hym wel, for he was but lytel tofore bysshop of Caunterburye that Syr Mordred flied.⁹ "Syr," sayd Syr Bedwere, "what man is there entred that ye praye so fast fore?"¹⁰ "Fayr sone," sayd the heremyte, "I wote¹¹ not verayly but by my demyng.¹² But thys nyght, at mydnyght, here came a nombre of ladyes and broughte hyder a deed cors,¹³ and prayed me to berye hym, and here they offeryd an hondred besautes."¹⁴ "Alas," sayd Syr Bedwere, "that was my lord kyng Arthur that here lyeth buried in thys chapel." Than Syr Bedwere swowned, and whan he awoke he prayed the heremyte he myght abyde wyth hym styll¹⁵ there, to lyve wyth fastyng and prayers: "For from hens¹⁶ wyl I never goo," sayd Syr Bedwere, "by my wylle, but al the dayes of my lyf here to praye for my lord Arthur." "Ye are welcome to me," sayd the heremyte, "for I knowe you better than ye wene¹⁷ that I doo. Ye are the bolde Bedwere, and the ful noble duke Syr Lucan de Butlere was your broder." Thenne Syr Bedwere tolde the heremyte alle as ye have herde to

¹ those ² i.e. Bedwere ³ shrieked ⁴ pity ⁵ forest
⁶ he perceived ⁷ hoary forests ⁸ hermitage ⁹ put to flight
¹⁰ for ¹¹ know ¹² supposition ¹³ corpse ¹⁴ gold coins
¹⁵ always ¹⁶ hence ¹⁷ think

fore. So there bode¹ Syr Bedwere with the hermyte that was tofore bysshop of Caunterburye, and there Syr Bedwere put upon hym poure² clothes, and servyd the hermyte ful lowly in fastyng and in prayers.

Thus of Arthur I fynde never more wryton in bookes that ben auctorysed,³ nor more of the veray certente⁴ of his deth herde I never redde, but thus was he ledde aweye in a shyppe wherin were thre quenes: that one was kyng Arthurs syster quene Morgan le Fay, the other was the quene of North Galys, the thyrd was the quene of the Waste Londes. Also there was Nynve the chyef Lady of the Lake, that had wedded Pelleas the good knyght, and this lady had doon moche for kyng Arthur, for she wold never suffre Syr Pelleas to be in noo place where he shold be in daunger of his lyf, and so he lyved to the uttermost of his dayes wyth hyr in grete reste. More of the deth of kyng Arthur coude I never fynde, but that ladyes brought hym to his buryellys,⁵ and suche one was buried there that the hermyte bare wytnesse, that somtyme was bysshop of Caunterburye, but yet the hermyte knewe not in certayn that he was verayly the body of kyng Arthur, for thys tale Syr Bedwere, knyght of the Table Rounde, made it to be wryton.

WILLIAM CAXTON (1422?-1491)

PREFACE TO THE BOOKE OF ENEYDOS

After dyverse werkes made, translated, and achieved, havyn⁶ noo⁷ werke in hande, I sittyng in my studye, where-as⁸ laye many dyverse paunflettis⁹ and bookys, happened that to my hande cam a lytyl booke in Frenshe, whiche late¹⁰ was translated oute of Latyn by some noble clerke of Fraunce; whiche booke is named Eneydos, made in Latyn by that noble poete and grete clerke Vyrgyle. Whiche booke I sawe over and redde therin how, after the generall destruccyon of the grete Troye, Eneas departed, beryng his olde fader Anchises upon his sholdres, his lityl son Yolus on¹¹ his honde,¹² his wyfe wyth moche other people folowyng; and how he shyped and departed; wyth all thystorye¹³ of his adventures that he had or¹⁴ he cam to the achievement of his conquest of Ytalye, as all a-longe shall be shewed in this present boke. In whiche booke

I had grete playsyr by-cause of the fayr and honest termes and wordes in Frenshe; whyche I never sawe tofore lyke, ne none so playsaunt ne so wel ordred. Whiche booke, as me semed, sholde be moche¹ requysyte² to noble men to see, as wel for the eloquence as the hystories; how wel that, many hondred yerys passed, was the sayd booke of Eneydos wyth other werkes made and lerned dayly in scolis,³ specyally in Ytalye and other places; whiche hystorye the sayd Vyrgyle made in metre. And whan I had advysed me in this sayd boke, I delybered⁴ and concluded to translate it in to Englysshe, and forthwyth toke a penne and ynke and wrote a leef or tweyne, whyche I oversawe agayn to corecte it; and whan I sawe the fayr and straunge termes therin, I doubted⁵ that it sholde not please some gentylnen whiche late blamed me, sayeng that in my translacions I had over curyous⁶ termes, which coude not be understande⁷ of comyn peple, and desired me to use olde and homely termes in my translacions. And fayn wolde I satysfy every man; and, so to doo, toke an olde boke and redde therin; and certaynly the Englysshe was so rude and brood⁸ that I coude not wele understande it; and also my lorde abbot of Westmynster ded so shewe to me late certayn evidences⁹ wryton in olde Englysshe for to reduce it in to our Englysshe now used, and certaynly it was wretton in suche wyse that it was more lyke to Dutche than Englysshe; I coude not reduce ne bryng it to be understonden. And certaynly our langage now used varyeth ferre¹⁰ from that whiche was used and spoken whan I was borne. For we Englysshe men ben borne under the domynacyon of the mone, whiche is never stedfaste but ever waveryng, wexyng one season and waneth and dyscreaseth¹¹ another season. And that comyn¹² Englysshe that is spoken in one shyre varyeth from a-nother, in so moche that in my dayes happened that certayn marchautes were in a ship in Tamyse for to have sayled over the see into Zelande, and, for lacke of wynde, thei taryed atte¹³ Forlond, and wente to lande for to refreshe them. And one of theym named Sheffielde, a mercer, cam in to an hows and axed for mete and specyally he axyd after eggys, and the goode wyf answerde that she could speke no Frenshe. And the marchaunt was angry, for

¹ very ² requisite, desirable ³ schools ⁴ de-liberated
⁵ feared ⁶ curious, ornate ⁷ understood
⁸ broad ⁹ legal documents ¹⁰ far ¹¹ decreases
¹² common ¹³ at the

¹ beloved ² again ³ lap, beat ⁴ grow dark
⁵ thought ⁶ unless ⁷ slay ⁸ thee ⁹ dead ¹⁰ hence
¹¹ fear ¹² close ¹³ hovered, floated ¹⁴ shrieked

he also coude speke no Frenshe, but wolde have hadde egges; and she understode hym not. And thenne at laste a-nother sayd that he wolde have eyren.¹ Then the good wyf sayd that she understod hym wel. Loo,² what sholde a man in thise dayes now wryte, egges, or eyren? Certaynly it is hard to playse every man, by-cause of dyversite and chaunge of langage; for in these dayes every man that is in ony reputacyon in his countre wyll utter his commynycacyon and maters in suche maners and termes that fewe men shall understonde theym. And som honest and grete clerkes have ben wyth me and desired me to wryte the moste curyous³ termes that I coude fynde. And thus, betwene playn, rude, and curyous, I stande abasshed. But in my judgemente the comyn termes that be dayly used ben lyghter to be understonde than the olde and auneynt Englysshe. And, foras-moche as this present booke is not for a rude uplondyssh⁴ man to laboure therein ne rede it, but onely for a clerke and a noble gentylman that feleth and understondeth in faytes⁵ of armes, in love, and in noble chyvalrye, therfor in a meane bytwene bothe I have reduced and translated this sayd booke in our Englysshe, not over rude ne curyous, but in suche termes as shall be understanden, by Goddys grace accordyng to my cople. And yf ony man wyll entermete⁶ in redyng of hit and fyndeth suche termes that he can not understande, late hym goo rede and lerne Vyrgyll or the Pystles of Ovyde, and ther he shall see and understonde lyghtly⁷ all, if he have a good redar and enformer. For this booke is not for every rude and unconnyng⁸ man to see, but to clerkys and very⁹ gentylmen, that understande gentylnes and scyence. Thenne I praye all theym that shall rede in this lytyl treatys to holde me for excused for the translatyng of hit, for I knowleche myselfe ignorant of conyng¹⁰ to enpryse¹¹ on me so hie¹² and noble a werke. But I praye mayster John Skelton, late created poete laureate in the unyversite of Oxenford, to oversee and correcte this sayd booke and taddresse¹³ and expowne where-as¹⁴ shalle be founde faulte to theym that shall requyre it, for hym I knowe for sufficyent to expowne and englysshe every dyfficulte that is therin, for he hath late translated the Epystlys of Tulle and the boke of Dyodorus Syculus and diverse

other werkes oute of Latyn in-to Englysshe, not in rude and olde langage, but in polysshed and ornate termes, craftely,¹ as he that hath redde Vyrgyle, Ovyde, Tullye, and all the other noble poetes and oratours to me unknowen; and also he hath redde the IX muses and understande theyr musicalle scyences and to whom of theym eche scyence is appropred,² I suppose he hath dronken of Elycons well. Then I praye hym and suche other to correcte, adde or mynysse,³ where-as he or they shall fynde faulte, for I have but folowed my cople in Frenshe as nygh as me is possyble. And yf ony worde be sayd therin well, I am glad; and yf otherwise, I submytte my sayde boke to theyr correctyon. Whiche boke I presente unto the hie born my tocomyng⁴ naturell and soverayn lord Arthur, by the grace of God Prynce of Walys, Duc of Cornewayll, and Erle of Chester, fyrst bygoten sone and heyer⁵ unto our most dradde⁶ naturall and soverayn lorde and most Crysten Kyng, Henry the VII, by the grace of God Kyng of Englonde and of Fraunce and lorde of Irelande, byseching his noble grace to receyve it in thanke of me, his moste humble subget and servaunt; and I shall praye unto almyghty God for his prosperous encreasyng in vertue, wysedom, and humanyte, that he may be egal⁷ wyth the most renommed⁸ of alle his noble progenytours, and so to lyve in this present lyf that after this transitorye lyfe he and we alle may come to everlastyng lyf in heaven. Amen!

SIR JOHN BOURCHIER, LORD
BERNERS (1467-1533)

THE CRONYCLE OF SYR JOHN
FROISSART

CAP. CCCLXXXIII

How the commons of Englonde entred into London, and of the great yvell⁹ that they dyde, and of the dethe of the bysshope of Caunterbury and dyvers other.

In the mornyng on Corpus Christy day kyng Rycharde herde masse in the towre of London, and all his lordes, and than he toke his barge, with therle¹⁰ of Salisbury, therle of Warwyke, the erle of Suffolke, and certayn

¹ eggs ² lo ³ ornate, artificial ⁴ country ⁵ deeds
⁶ participate ⁷ easily ⁸ ignorant ⁹ true, real ¹⁰ ability
¹¹ take ¹² high ¹³ to arrange ¹⁴ wherever

¹ skillfully ² assigned ³ diminish ⁴ future
⁵ heir ⁶ dread ⁷ equal ⁸ renowned ⁹ evil
¹⁰ the earl

knights, and so rowed downe alonge Thames to Redereth,¹ where as was discended downe the hyll a x.M.² men to se the kyng and to speke with him. And whan they sawe the kynges barge comyng, they beganne to showt, and made suche a crye, as though all the devylles of hell had ben amonge them. And they had brought with them sir Johan Moton, to the entent that if the kyng had nat come, they wolde have stryken hym all to peces, and so they had promysed hym. And whan the kyng and his lordes sawe the demeanour of the people, the best assured of them were in drede. And so the kyng was counsayled by his barownes nat to take any landyng there, but so rowed up and downe the ryver. And the kyng demaunded of them what they wolde, and sayd, howe he was come thyder to speke with them; and they said all with one voyce, "We wolde that ye shulde come a lande, and than we shall shewe you what we lacke." Than the erle of Salisbury aunswered for the kyng and sayd, "Sirs, ye be nat in suche order nor array that the kyng ought to speke with you;" and so with those wordes, no more sayd. And than the kyng was counsayled to returne agayne to the towre of London, and so he dyde. And whan these people sawe that, they were enflamed with yre, and returned to the hyll where the great bande was, and ther shewed them what answere they had, and howe the kyng was returned to the towre of London. Than they cryed all with one voyce, "Let us go to London;" and so they toke their way thyder. And in their goyng they beate downe abbeyes and houses of advocates, and of men of the courte, and so came into the subbarbes of London, whiche were great and fayre, and ther bete downe dyvers fayre houses. And specially they brake up the kynges prisoners, as the Marshalse and other, and delyvered out all the prisoners that were within, and there they dyde moche hurt; and at the bridge fote they thret³ them of London, bycause the gates of the bridge were closed, sayenge, howe they wolde brenne⁴ all the subarbes, and so conquere London by force, and to slee⁵ and brenne all the commons of the cytie. There were many within the cytie of their accorde,⁶ and so they drewe toguyder, and sayde, "Why do we nat let these good people entre into the cyte? They are our felowes, and that that they do is for us." So therwith the gates were opnyed,

and than these people entred into the cytie, and went into houses, and satte downe to eate and drinke: they desyred nothyng but it was incontynent¹ brought to them, for every manne was redy to make them good chere, and to gyve them meate and drinke to apease them. Than the capitayns, as John Ball, Jacke Strawe, and Watte Tyler wente throughout London, and a twentie thousande with them, and so came to the Savoy, in the way to Westminster, whiche was a goodlye house, and it parteyned² to the duke of Lancastre. And whan they entred, they slewe the kepars therof, and robbed and pylled³ the house, and whan they had so done, than they sette fyre on it, and clene destroyed and Brent⁴ it. And whan they had done that outrage, they left⁵ nat therwith, but went streight to the fayre hospytalle of the Rodes, called saynt Johans, and there they Brent house, hospytall, mynster and all. Than they went fro strete to strete, and slewe all the Flemmynges that they coude fynde, in churche or in any other place; ther was none respyted fro dethe. And they brake up dyvers houses of the Lombardes and robbed theym, and toke their goodes at their pleasur, for there was none that durst saye them nay. And they slewe in the cytie a riche marchant, called Richarde Lyon, to whome before that tyme Watte Tyler had done servyce in Fraunce; and on a tyme this Rycharde Lyon had beaten hym whyle he was his varlet; the whiche Watte Tyler than remembred, and so came to his house and strake of⁶ his heed, and caused it to be borne on a spere poynt before him all about the cyte. Thus these ungracious people demeaned themselfe, lyke people enraged and wode,⁷ and so that day they dyde⁸ moche sorowe in London.

And so agaynst⁹ night they wente to lodge at saynt Katherins, before the towre of London, sayenge howe they wolde never depart thens tyll they hadde the kyng at their pleasure, and tyll he had accorded to them all that they wolde aske, acomptes¹⁰ of the chauncellour of Englonde, to knowe where all the good was become that he had levye through the realme; and without he made a good acompte to them therof, it shulde nat be for his profyte. And so whan they had done all these yvels to the straungers all the day, at night they lodged before the towre.

Ye may well knowe and beleve that it was

¹ Rotherhithe ² ten thousand ³ threatened
⁴ burn ⁵ slay ⁶ assent, way of thinking

¹ immediately ² belonged ³ pillaged ⁴ burnt
⁵ ceased ⁶ off ⁷ crazy ⁸ caused ⁹ towards ¹⁰ accounts

great pytie, for the daunger that the kyng and suche as were with him were in. For some tyme these unhappy people showed and cryed so loude, as thoughe all the devylles of hell had bene among them. In this evenynge the kynge was counsayled by his bretherne and lordes, and by sir Nycholas Walworthe, mayre of London, and dyvers other notable and riche burgesses, that in the night tyme they shulde issue out of the towre and entre into the cyte, and so to slee¹ all these unhappy people whyle they were at their rest and aslepe; for it was thought that many of them were dronken, wherby they shulde be slayne lyke flees;² also of twentie of them ther was scant one in harnes.³ And surely the good men of London might well have done this at their ease, for they had in their houses secretly their frendes and servauntes redy in harnesse; and also sir Robert Canolle was in his lodgyng, kepyng his treasure, with a sixscore redy at his commaundement; in likewise was sir Perducas Dalbret, who was as than in London; insomoch that ther myght well [be] assembled togyder an eyght thousande men, redy in harnesse. Howebeit, ther was nothyng done, for the resydue of the commons of the cytie were sore doutyd,⁴ leest they shulde ryse also, and the commons before were a threscore thousande or mo.⁵ Than⁶ the erle of Salisbury and the wyse men about the kynge sayd, "Sir, if ye can apese⁷ them with fayrnesse,⁸ it were best and moost profytable, and to graunt theym every thyng that they desyre; for if we shulde begyn a thyng the whiche we coulde nat acheve, we shulde never recover it agayne, but we and oure heyres ever to be disheyrityd." So this counsaile was taken, and the mayre countermaunded, and so commaunded that he shulde nat styrre; and he dyde as he was commaunded, as reason was. And in the cytie with the mayre there were xii. aldermen, wherof nyne of them helde with the kynge, and the other thre toke parte with these ungraycous people, as it was after well known, the whiche they full derely bought.

And on the Friday in the mornynge, the people beyng at saynt Katheryns, nere to the towre, began to apparell themselfe, and to crye and shoute, and sayd, without the kyng wolde come out and speke with them, they wolde assayle the towre and take it by force, and slee¹ all them that were within. Than the

¹ slay ² flies ³ harness, armor ⁴ frightened
⁵ more ⁶ then ⁷ appease, quiet ⁸ pleasant treatment

kyng doutyd¹ these wordes, and so was counsailed that he shulde issue out to speke with them; and than² the knyge sende³ to them, that they shulde all drawe to a fayre playne place, called Myle-ende, wher-as⁴ the people of the cytie dyde sport them in the somer season, and there the kyng to graunt them that⁵ they desyred. And there it was cryed in the kynges name, that whosoever wolde speke with the kyng, let hym go to the sayd place, and ther he shulde nat fayle to fynde the kyng. Than the people began to departe, specially the commons of the vyllages, and went to the same place, but all went nat thyder, for they were nat all of one condycion:⁶ for ther were some that desyred nothyng but richesse and the utter destruction of the noble men, and to have London robbed and pylled. That was the princypall mater of their begynnynge, the whiche they well shewed; for assoone as the towre gate opyned, and that the kynge was yssued out with his two bretherne, and the erle of Salisbury, the erle of Warwike, the erle of Oxenforthe, sir Robert of Namure, the lorde of Bretaygne, the lorde Gomegynes, and dyvers other, than⁷ Watte Tyler, Jacke Strawe, and Johan Ball, and more than foure hundred entred into the towre, and brake up chambre after chambre, and at last founde the archebyssshoppe of Caunterbury, called Symon, a valyant man and a wyse, and chefe chaunceller of Englande; and a lytell before he hadde sayde masse before the kynge. These glottons toke hym and strake of⁷ his heed, and also they beheded the lorde of saynt Johans, and a Frere Mynour, maister in medicyn parteyning⁸ to the duke of Lancastre: they slewe hym in dispyte of his maister, and a sergeant at armes, called John Laige. And these four heedes were set on foure long speares, and they made them to be borne before them through the stretes of London, and at last set them a highe⁹ on London bridge, as though they had ben traytours to the kyng and to the realme. Also these glottons entred into the princes¹⁰ chambre and brake her bed, wherby she was so sore afrayed that she sowned,¹¹ and ther she was taken up and borne to the water syde, and put into a barge and covered, and so conveyed to a place called the quenes Warderobe. And there she was all that daye and night, lyke a woman halfe deed, tyll

¹ feared ² then ³ sent ⁴ where ⁵ what ⁶ state of mind
⁷ off ⁸ belonging ⁹ on high ¹⁰ Princess Joan, the king's mother ¹¹ swooned

she was confortyd with¹ the kyng her sonne, as ye shall here after.

CAP. CCCLXXXIII

How the nobles of England were in great paryll² to have ben dystroyed, and howe these rebels were punisshed and sende³ home to theyr owne houses.

Whan the kyng came to the sayd place of Myle-ende without London, he put out of his company his two bretherne, the erle of Kent and sir Johan Holande, and the lorde of Gomegynes, for they durst nat apere before the people. And whan the kynge and his other lordes were ther, he founde there a threscore thousande men, of dyvers vyllages, and of sondrie countreis⁴ in Englande. So the kynge entred in amonge them, and sayd to them swetely, "A! ye good people, I am your kyng; what lacke ye? what wyll ye say?" Than suche as understode him sayd, "We wyll that ye make us free for ever, our selfe, our heyres, and our landes, and that we be called no more bonde, nor so reputed." "Sirs," sayd the king, "I am well agreed therto; withdrawe you home into your owne houses, and into suche villages as ye came fro, and leave behynde you of every vyllage ii. or thre, and I shall cause writynges to be made, and seale theym with my seale, the whiche they shall have with them, conteyning every thyng that ye demaunde; and to thentent that ye shal be the better assured, I shall cause my baners to be delyvered into every bayliwyke, shyre, and countreis." These wordes apeased well the common people, suche as were symple and good playne men, that were come thyder and wyste⁵ nat why: they sayd, "It was well said; We desyre no better." Thus these people beganne to be apeased, and began to withdrawe them into the cyte of London. And the kyng also said a worde, the whiche greatlye contented them. He sayde, "Sirs, amonge you good men of Kent, ye shall have one of my banners with you, and ye of Essex another; and ye of Sussexe, of Bedforde, of Cambridge, of Germeney, of Stafforde, and of Lyn, eche of you one; and also I pardon every thinge that ye have done hyderto, so that ye folowe my baners and retourne home to your houses." They all answered how they wolde so do: thus these people departed and went into London. Than the kynge ordayned mo than xxx. clerkes the same Fridaye, to write with all

diligence letters patentes, and sayled¹ with the kynges seale, and delyvered them to these people. And whan they had receyved the writynge, they departed and returned into their owne countreis; but the great venym² remayned styll behynde. For Watte Tyler, Jacke Strawe, and John Ball sayd, for all that these people were thus apesed, yet they wolde nat departe so, and they had of their acorde³ mo than xxx. thousande: so they abode styll, and made no prese⁴ to have the kynges writynge nor seale; for all their ententes was to putte the cytie to trouble, in suche wyse as to slee all the riche and honest persons, and to robbe and pylle⁵ their houses. They of London were in great feare of this, wherfore they kepte⁶ their houses previly⁷ with their frendes, and suche servauntes as they had, every man accordynge to his puysaunce. And whane these sayde people were this Fridaye thus somewhat apeased, and that they shulde departe assoone as they hadde their writynges, everye manne home into his owne countrey, than kynge Rycharde came into the Royall, where the quene his mother was, right sore afrayed; so he confortyd her as well as he coulde, and taryed there with her all that night.

* * * * *

The Saturday the kynge departed fro the Warderobe in the Royall, and went to Westminster and harde⁸ masse in the churche there, and all his lordes with hym; and besyde the churche there was a lytle chapell, with an image of Our Lady, whiche dyd great myracles, and in whom the kynges of Englande had ever great truste and confydence. The kynge made his orisons before this image, and dyde there his offryng; and than he lepte on his horse and all his lordes, and so the kynge rode towarde London; and whan he had ryden a lytle way on the lyft hande, there was a way to passe without London.

The same propre mornynge Watte Tyler, Jacke Strawe, and John Ball had assembled their company to comon⁹ together, in a place called Smythfelde, where-as¹⁰ every Fryday there is a markette of horses. And there were together all of affinite mo than xx. thousande, and yet there were many styll in the towne, drynkyng and makyng mery in the tavernes, and payed nothyng, for they were happy that made them

¹ sealed ² poison ³ assent, way of thinking
⁴ press, urgent effort ⁵ pillage ⁶ defended ⁷ privately
⁸ heard ⁹ commune ¹⁰ where

¹ by ² danger ³ sent ⁴ districts ⁵ knew

beste chere. And these people in Smythfelde had with theym the kynges baners, the whiche were delyvered theym the daye before. And all these glottons were in mynde to overrenne¹ and to robbe London the same daye, for theyr capitaynes sayde howe they had done nothyng as yet; "These lyberties that the kyng hath gyven us, is to us but a small profitte; therefore lette us be all of one accorde, and lette us overrenne this riche and puyssaunt cite or² they of Essex, of Sussex, of Cambridge, of Bedford, of Arundell, of Warwyke, of Reedyng, of Oxenforde, of Guylforde, of Linne, of Stafforde, of Germeney, of Lyncolne, of Yorke, and of Duram, do come hyther; for all these wyll come hyther, Wallyor and Lyster wyll bringe them hyther; and if we be fyrst lordes of London, and have the possession of the ryches that is therin, we shall nat repent us; for if we leave it, they that come after wyll have it fro us." To thys counsayle they all agreed: and therwith the kyng came the same waye unaware of theym, for he had thought to have passed that waye withoute London, and with hym a xl. horse; and when he came before the abbaye of saynt Bartilmeus, and behelde all these people, than³ the kyng rested and sayde, howe he wolde go no farther, tyll he knewe what these people ayded, sayenge, if they were in any trouble, howe he wold reape⁴ them agayne. The lordes that were with hym taried also, as reason was when they sawe the kyng tarye. And whan Watte Tyler sawe the kyng tarye, he sayd to his people, "Syr, yonder is the kyng, I wyll go and speke with hym; styrre nat fro hens without I make you a signe, and whan I make you that sygne, come on, and slee all theym, excepte the kyng. But do the kyng no hurte; he is yonge, we shall do with hym as we lyst, and shall leade hym with us all about Englande, and so shall we be lordes of all the royalme⁵ without doubt." And there was a dowblette maker of London, called John Tycle, and he hadde brought to these glottons a lx. doublettes, the whiche they ware;⁶ than he demaunded of these capitaynes who shulde paye hym for his doublettes; he demaunded xxx. marke. Watte Tyler answered hym and sayd, "Frende, appease yourselfe, thou shalte be well payed or this day be ended; kepe the nere me, I shall be thy credytour."⁷ And therwith he spurred his horse and departed fro his company, and

¹ overrun ² before ³ then ⁴ quiet ⁵ kingdom ⁶ wore
⁷ This seems to be a mistake for debtor.

came to the kyng, so nere hym that his horse heed touched the croupe¹ of the kynges horse. And the first worde that he sayd was this: "Syr kyng, seest thou all yonder people?" "Ye, truly," sayd the kyng: "wherfore sayest thou?" "Bycause," sayd he, "they be all at my commaundement, and have sworne to me fayth and trowth to do all that I wyll have theym." "In a good tyme," sayd the kyng, "I wyll well it be so." Than Watte Tyler sayde, as he that nothyng demaunded but ryot, "What belevest thou, kyng, that these people, and as many mo as be in London at my commaundement, that they wyll departe frome the thus, without havynge thy letters?" "No," sayde the kyng, "ye shall have theym, they be ordeyned for you, and shal be delyvered every one eche after other; wherfore, good felowes, withdrawe fayre and easely to your people, and cause them to departe out of London, for it is our entent that eche of you by villages and townshippes shall have letters patentes, as I have promysed you." With those wordes Watte Tyler caste his eyen² on a squyer that was there with the kyng, bearyng the kynges swerde; and Wat Tyler hated greatlye the same squyer, for the same squyer had displeased hym before for wordes bytwene theym. "What," sayde Tyler, "arte thou there? gyve me thy dagger!" "Nay," sayde the squyer, "that wyll I nat do; wherfore shulde I gyve it thee?" The kyng behelde the squyer, and sayd, "Gyve it hym, lette hym have it." And so the squyer toke³ it hym sore agaynst his wyll. And whan this Watte Tyler had it, he began to play therwith, and tourned it in his hande, and sayde agayne to the squyer, "Gyve me also that swerde." "Naye," sayde the squyer, "it is the kynges swerde; thou arte nat worthy to have it, for thou arte but a knave; and if there were no moo here but thou and I, thou durste nat speke those wordes for as moche golde in quantite as all yonder abbaye." "By my faythe," sayd Wat Tyler, "I shall never eate meate tyll I have thy heed." And with those wordes the mayre of London came to the kyng with a xii. horses, well armed under theyr cootes,⁴ and so he brake the prease,⁵ and sawe and harde⁶ howe Watte Tyler demeaned⁷ hymselfe, and sayde to hym, "Ha! thou knave, howe arte thou so hardy in the kynges presence to speke suche wordes? It is to moche for the so to do." Than the

¹ croup, rump ² eyes ³ delivered ⁴ coats ⁵ press
through ⁶ heard ⁷ conducted

kyng began to chafe, and sayd to the mayre, "Sette handes on hym." And while the kyng sayde so, Tyler sayd to the mayre, "A Goddesname,¹ what have I sayde to displease the?" "Yes, truly," quod the mayre, "thou false stynkyng knave, shalt thou speke thus in the presence of the kyng my naturall lorde? I commytte² never to lyve without thou shalte derely abyte it." And with those wordes the mayre drewe oute his swerde and strake Tyler so great a stroke on the heed, that he fell downe at the feete of his horse; and as soone as he was fallen, they environed hym all aboute, wherby he was nat sene of his company. Than a squyer of the kynges alyghted, called John Standysshe, and he drewe out his swerde and put it into Watte Tylers belye, and so he dyed. Than the ungracious people there assembled, perceyvynge theyr capytayne slayne, beganne to mourmure amonge themselfe and sayde, "A! our capytayne is slayne; lette us go and slee them all!" And therwith they araynged themselfe on the place in maner of batayle, and theyr bowes before theym. Thus the kyng beganne a great outrage;³ howbeit, all turned to the beste, for as soone as Tyler was on the erthe, the kyng departed from all his company, and all alone he rode to these people, and sayde to his owne men, "Syr, none of you folowe me, let me alone." And so whan he came before these ungracious people, who put themselfe in ordinaunce⁴ to revenge theyr capytayne, than the kyng sayde to theym, "Syr, what ayleth you, ye shall have no capytayne but me: I am your kyng, be all in rest and peace." And so the moost parte of the people that harde⁵ the kyng speke, and sawe hym amonge them, were shamefast,⁶ and beganne to waxe peasable, and to departe; but some, suche as were malicious and evyll, wolde nat departe, but made semblant as though they wolde do somewhat. Than the kyng returned to his owne company and demaunded of theym what was best to be done. Than he was counsailed to drawe into the feld, for to flye awaye was no boote.⁷ Than sayd the mayre, "It is good that we do so, for I thynke surely we shall have shortely some comferte of them of London, and of suche good men as be of our parte, who are pourveyed,⁸ and have theyr frendes and men redy armed in theyr houses." And in this meane tyme voyce and bruyte⁹

ranne through London, howe these unhappy people were lykely to sle¹ the kyng and the maire in Smythfelde; through the whiche noyse, all maner of good men of the kynges partye issued out of theyr houses and lodgynges, well armed, and so came all to Smythfelde, and to the felde where the kyng was; and they were anone² to the nombre of vii. or viii. thousande men well armed. And fyrste thyther came sir Robert Canoll, and sir Perducas Dalbret, well accompanied, and dyvers of the aldermen of London, and with theym a vi. hundred men in harneys; and a pusan man of the cite, who was the kynges draper, called Nicholas Membre, and he brought with hym a great company. And ever as they came, they raynged them afoote in ordre of bataylle; and on the other parte these unhappy people were redy raynged, makyng semblance to gyve batayle; and they had with theym dyvers of the kynges baners. There the kyng made iii. knyghtes; the one the mayre of London sir Nycholas Walworthe, syr Johan Standysshe, and syr Nycholas Braule. Than the lordes sayde amonge theymselfe, "What shall we do? We se here our ennemys, who wolde gladly slee us, if they myght have the better hande of us." Sir Robert Canoll counsailed to go and fight with them, and slee them all; yet the kyng wolde nat consent therto, but sayd, "Nay, I wyll nat so; I wyll sende to theym, commaundyng them to sende me agayne my baners, and therby we shall se what they wyll do: howbeit, outh³ by faynesse⁴ or otherwise, I wyll have them." "That is well sayd, sir," quod therle of Salysbury. Than these newe knyghtes were sent to them, and these knyghtes made token to them nat to shote at them; and whan they came so nere them that their speche might be herde, they sayd, "Sirs, the kyng commaundeth you to sende to him agayne his baners, and we thynke he wyll have mercy of you." And incontinent they delyvered agayne the baners, and sent them to the kyng: also they were commaunded, on payne of their heedes, that all suche as had letters of the kyng to bring them forthe, and to sende them agayne to the kyng. And so many of them delyvered their letters, but nat all. Than the kyng made them to be all to-torne⁵ in their presence: and as soone as the kynges baners were delyvered agayne, these unhappy people kept none array, but the moost parte of them

¹ in God's name ² pledge ³ disturbance ⁴ array
⁵ heard ⁶ ashamed ⁷ remedy ⁸ provided ⁹ rumor

¹ slay ² immediately ³ either ⁴ pleasant means
⁵ torn to pieces

dyde caste downe their bowes, and so brake their array, and retourned into London. Sir Robert Canoll was sore dyspleased in that he myght nat go to slee them all; but the kyng wolde nat consent therto, but sayd he wolde be revenged of them well ynough, and so he was after.

Thus these folysshe people departed, some one way and some another; and the kyng and his lordes and all his company ryght ordynately entred into London with great joye. And the firste journey that the kyng made, he wente to the lady princesse his mother, who was in a castell in the Royall, called the quenes wardrobe; and there she hadde taryed two dayes and two nightes right sore abasshed, as she had good reasone. And whan she sawe the kyng her sonne she was greatly rejoyced, and sayde, "A! fayre sonne, what payne and great sorowe that I have suffred for you this day!" Than the kyng answered and sayd, "Certaynly, madame, I knowe it well; but nowe rejoyse your-selfe and thanke God, for nowe it is tyme. I have this day recovered myne herytage and the realme of Englande, the whiche I hadde nere lost." Thus the kyng taryed that day with his mother, and every lorde went peaseably to their

owne lodgynges. Than there was a crye made in every strete in the kynges name, that all maner of men, nat beyng of the cytie of London, and have nat dwelt there the space of one yere, to departe; and if any suche be founde there the Sunday by the sonne risyng, that they shuld be taken as traytours to the kyng, and to lose their heedes. This crye thus made, there was none that durste breke it; and so all maner of people departed, and sparled¹ abrode every man to their owne places. Johan Balle and Jaques Strawe were founde in an olde house hydden, thinkyng to have stollen away, but they coulde nat, for they were accused by their owne men. Of the takyng of them the kyng and his lordes were gladd, and thanne strake of their heedes, and Watte Tylers also, and they were set on London bridge; and the valyaunt mennes heedes taken downe that they had sette on the Thursday before. These tidynges anone spredde abrode, so that the people of the strange countreis,² whiche were comyng towardes London, retourned backe agayne to their owne houses, and durst come no farther.

¹ scattered ² distant districts

THE TRANSITION TO MODERN TIMES

SIR THOMAS MORE (1478-1535)

A DIALOGUE OF SYR THOMAS MORE,
KNYGHTE

THE THIRDE BOKE. THE 16. CHAPITER

The messenger rehearseth some causes which he hath herd laid¹ by some of the clergie: wherfore the Scripture should not be suffred in Englishe. And the author sheweth his mind, that it wer convenient to have the Byble in Englishe.

"Syr," quod your frende, "yet for al this, can I see no cause why the cleargie shoulde kepe the Byble out of ley mennes handes, that can² no more but theyr mother tong." "I had went,"³ quod I, "that I had proved you playnely that they kepe it not from them. For I have shewed you that they kepe none from them, but such translacion as be either not yet approved for good, or such as be alredi reprovod for naught, as Wikliffes was and Tindals. For as for other olde ones,⁴ that wer before Wikliffes daies, remain lawfull, and be in some folkes handes had and read." "Ye saye well," quod he. "But yet as weomen saye, 'somewhat it was alway that the cat winked whan her eye was oute.' Surely so is it not for nought that the English Byble is in so few mens handes, whan so many woulde so fayne have it." "That is very trouth," quod I; "for I thinke that though the favourers of a secte of heretikes be so fervent in the setting furth of their secte, that they let⁵ not to lay their money together and make a purse among them, for the printyng of an evill made, or evil translated booke: which though it happe to be forboden⁶ and burned, yet some be sold ere they be spyed, and eche of them lese⁷ but theyr part: yet I thinke ther will no printer lightly⁸ be so hote⁹ to put anye Byble in prynte at hys own charge, whereof the losse shoulde lye hole in his owne necke, and than¹⁰ hang

¹ alleged ² know ³ weened, thought ⁴ This word is the subject of remain, as well as a part of the phrase in which it stands; the construction is curious but common. ⁵ hesitate ⁶ forbidden ⁷ lose ⁸ easily ⁹ hot, ready ¹⁰ then

upon a doubtful tryal, whether the first copy of hys translacion, was made before Wikliffes dayes or since. For if it were made synce, it must be approved before the prynting.

"And surelye howe it hathe happed that in all this whyle God hath eyther not suffered, or not provided that any good verteous man hath hadde the mynde in faithful wise to translate it, and therupon ether the clergie or, at the least wise, some one bishop to approve it, thys can I nothing tell. But howsoever it be, I have hearde and heare so muche spoken in the matter, and so muche doute made therin, that peradventure it would let and withdrawe any one bishop from the admitting therof, without the assent of the remenant. And whereas many thinges be laid against it: yet is ther in my mind not one thyng that more putteth good men of the clergie in doubte to suffer it, than thys: that they see sometime much of the worse sort more fervent in the calling for it, than them whom we find farre better. Which maketh them to feare lest such men desyre it for no good, and lest if it wer hadde in every mannes hand, there would great peril arise, and that sedicious people should doe more harme therwith than good and honest folke should take fruite thereby. Whiche feare I promise you nothyng feareth me, but that whosoever woulde of theyr malice or folye take harme of that thing that is of it selfe ordeyned to doe al men good, I would never for the avoyding of their harme, take from other the profit, which they might take, and nothing deserve to lese.¹ For elles² if the abuse of a good thing should cause the taking away therof from other that would use it well, Christ should hymself never have been borne, nor brought hys fayth into the world, nor God should never have made it neither, if he should, for the losse of those that would be damned wretches, have kept away the occasion of reward from them that would with helpe of his grace endeavor them to deserve it."

"I am sure," quod your frend, "ye doubt not but that I am full and hole of youre mynde

¹ lose

² else