

# *After Agincourt*

William Worcester's Lost Journal

edited by Stephen Cooper

After Agincourt

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After Agincourt

For William

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## Editor's Preface

This Journal, which I have entitled *After Agincourt*, was written by William Worcester over a period of twelve months in 1444-5. It describes a very different country from the one we inhabit today. The Kingdom of England was surrounded by enemies. The Welsh were a subject people, but one which had come within an ace of throwing off English rule only thirty years before. The Scots were inveterate enemies, universally hated in England, especially in the northern counties. The French were a constant threat, much more populous and powerful than the English, and quite determined to reclaim the territories which the King of England still held on to, in Aquitaine and Normandy. Henry V's startling victory at Agincourt in 1415 seemed like a distant memory three decades later.

Superficially, there were many similarities between the England of 1444 and the England of 2014. We had a monarch and a bi-cameral Parliament then, and London dominated the life of the nation financially and politically, while most of the wealth was in the South-East. Yet appearances can be deceptive. The King ruled as well as reigned. Parliament existed to assist the Crown, not to limit its power. Democracy, in so far as men thought about it at all, was an unspeakable Greek practice, the equivalent of mob rule. The population of the country had been drastically reduced by the Black Death of 1348 and subsequent outbreaks of plague, and was tiny, compared to what it is today. Most people lived in the countryside and they earned their living by farming. It was no part of the function of government to promote economic growth. Most men had no aspiration to 'rise' in society. The expectation was that you stayed in the station to which you had been born and life for most people was nasty, brutish and above all short.

Around a third of the population was in holy orders. There were hundreds of monasteries and other religious houses, not visibly in decline. The major buildings of the day were built to honour God, not Mammon. The fate of the individual soul was paramount. Sexual intercourse was considered an unclean act, the product of the Original Sin committed by Adam and Eve, which had condemned all mankind to a miserable life, subject only to the promise of redemption through Christ and the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Yet, although that Church was ubiquitous, the Lollard heresy, the first in England for a thousand years, had gained manie adherents. Likewise, the monarchy, though divinely ordained, was far from being

totalitarian in the modern sense. It lacked the power to impose its will, since there was no police force, no standing army outside Normandy, and no Royal Navy. Law and order was largely left to local authorities and England was a much more violent place then, than it is now.

William Worcester (1415 - c.1482) was born in Agincourt year. He came from Bristol, was educated at Oxford and became scrivener, or secretary, to Sir John Fastolf (c.1380 - 1459). He joined Fastolf's service some time before 1439, when the Knight retired to England, after manie years' service to the Crown. They lived at Fastolf Place, or Palace, in Southwark, gradually moving to the sumptuous castle Sir John was built at his birthplace of Caister in Norfolk.

Fastolf was one of the richest men in England, but he was never a member of the aristocracy, though he was made Baron of Sillé-le-Guillaume, in France. He was lord of a large number of manors, spread throughout manie counties. Some of these, notably Castle Combe in Dorset and Bentley in Yorkshire, had come to him when he married a wealthy and older widow, Millicent Scrope, in 1409. The marriage was childless but Fastolf held on to her manors after Millicent died in 1445. Millicent had a son by her previous marriage, Stephen Scrope, who became Fastolf's ward. Stephen ought by rights to have inherited his parents' estates in 1445, but Fastolf kept Scrope waiting until his own death in 1459. Stephen Srope never forgave Fastolf for the way he had been treated.

Fastolf lived was a soldier, landowner and litigant and he lived in the public eye. His alleged 'desertion' of Sir John Talbot at Patay in 1431, when he 'fled the field' and left an entire English army to its fate, made him notorious. It is less well known that he was a writer, the author of the first military tract written in English, and a prime mover in a small literary circle which included Worcester, Scrope and Peter Basset, who wrote a chronicle of the French wars at his master's request.

Worcester is altogether more obscure than his master; but as Fastolf's secretary, he had occasion to travel the length and breadth of the South of England. As he did, he compiled a guidebook, somewhat akin to Cobbett's *Rural Rides*, which we know as *The Itineraries* and which was completed some time in the 1470s. *The Itineraries* is an invaluable source for historians of all kinds today, though it is a long and rambling work, full of lists, and tells us nothing of Worcester's privat life. Worcester's other works included the *Annales Rerum Anglicarum*, ('Annals of the History of England'), the *Acta Domini Johannis Fastolf* ('The Deeds of Master John Fastolf') and *The Boke of Noblesse*, begun in the 1450s and finished in 1475. He is also known to have collaborated with Scrope on *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, a very boring compendium of sayings, reflections and moral tales; and there is also his *Topography of Medieval Bristol*. Literary historians have long suspected that he wrote

another work, but believed that it was lost long ago, and possibly never completed. I think I can now claim to have discovered this.<sup>1</sup>

The text I now present to the public was discovered by me some years ago in the McFarlane library in Magdalen College, Oxford. It is not like any of Worcester's other books. For a start, it is a 'juvenile' work, in the sense that it was written much earlier than any of his other known works, before he was married, or indeed had any experience of women, though he was 30 at the time. More importantly, it is highly unusual. It is not a chronicle or history or travelogue or work of theology, and it was written in English, when it was still common to write in Latin or French. It was evidently begun when Sir John Fastolf asked Worcester to prepare a tract, similar to several which he is known to have written himself, to explain why the English had triumphed at Agincourt, and why triumph had been followed by disaster. In Fastolf's view the answer was very simple: the country had gone to the dogs; but Fastolf was old and Worcester was young, and the younger man was reluctant to agree with his master's pessimistic view.

Worcester struggled with this commission. In fact, he found it impossible to write the book Fastolf required, though his notes clearly informed the later *Boke of Noblesse*. What he did manage to do was to record his thoughts on the subject, and on many others, with a remarkable frankness and in a way which is most untypical of his other writings, especially *The Itineraries*. In doing so, he may have achieved something which he certainly never set out to do, and written the earliest English diary that is now available to us.

What do we learn from Worcester's Journal? Principally, I think, that late medieval men (and women) had a much wider variety of opinions than we might think, if we only considered works which were intended to be read by others. For, in William Worcester's day, there was no 'Press' and no recognition of a right to freedom of expression. If a man wrote, or even spoke, words against the King, he might be executed for treason, and in a very horrible way. If he wrote or spoke words critical of the Church or the Faith, he might be burnt at the stake, under the terms of the Statute of Heresy - *De Heretico Comburendo* - of 1401; but neither of these risks seems to have troubled our William. He felt he could write what he liked in the privacy of his chamber over the barge-house in Caister Castle, and say what he liked to his friends and acquaintances. His text shines a light into many dark places.

For the sake of clarity I have modernised the punctuation in Worcester's text and some of the spelling, but not all. Since I thought it was important to retain as much of the flavour of his writing as possible. For those who would like to know more about him, I would recommend the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, and

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<sup>1</sup> I have included in the text some letters and documents, which were evidently inserted before the Fastolf Papers as a whole were taken by cart from Caister to the recently-founded Magdalen College in Oxford, around 1480.

K.B. McFarlane's *William Worcester: A Preliminary Survey*, first published in *Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson* (Oxford, 1957) and subsequently in *England in the Fifteenth Century* (The Hambledon Press, 1981). There is also the chapter on Worcester in Daniel Wakelin's *Humanism, Reding and Englissh Literature, 1430-1530* (Oxford University Press, 2007). I note that all three books were published in Oxford, which seems fitting since one of the few facts previously known about Worcester is that he was educated there, probably in the early 1430s and probably at a hall associated with Balliol College.

Finally, I am delighted to be able to dedicate this edition of William Worcester's lost Journal to my grandson William Callingham, whose Mummy was labouring to give birth to him as I laboured to complete my work.

Stephen Cooper, 2013



## OF THE BURNING OF JOHN BADBY *De Haeretico Johannis Badby Comburendo*

*I John Fastolf esquire did in the yere of our Lord 1410, on Sunday, the first day of March, in the afternoon, witness the examinacion of John Badby, tailor, being a layman, within the precinct of the Preaching Friars of London, on the crime of heresy, before Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, and other his assistants.*

*It was put to Badby that he hath heretically taught that the sacrament of the body of Christ, consecrated by the priest upon the altar, is not the true body of Christ by the virtue of the words of the sacrament.*

*Which John Badby did answer that it was impossible that any priest should make the body of Christ by such words sacramentally spoken in such sort. And furthermore he saith that a saddler of Bristol hath as much power and authority to make the like body of Christ, as any priest hath. Moreover he saith that, when Christ sat at supper with his disciples, he hath not his body in his hand, to the intent to distribute it to his disciples, and he saith expressly, that he did not this thinge.*

*The same reverend father admonished and requested the said Badby oftentimes, and very instantly, to charity; forasmuch as he should forsake such heresy and opinion holden, taught, and maintained by him. Yet the said Badby, although admonished and requested both oft and instantly, answered that he would never trow<sup>2</sup> otherwise than before he had said, taught, and answered. Whereupon the Bishop of Worcester pronounced him a vile hereticke.*

*And, when the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London hath consulted together, it was concluded, that he should be put into a certayne chamber or safe house within the mansion of the Friars Preachers, and so he was; and the Archbishop of Canterbury saith that he himself would keep the key thereof.*

*And when the Wednesday was expired, Badby still held and defended that whilst he lived he would never retract. And, the Archbishop considering and weighing that he would in no wise be altered, and that he began to persuade others, proceeded to confirm and ratify the former sentence. And thus, shifting their hands of him, they delivered him to the secular power.*

*In the afternoon the Kingis writ was not far behind, by the force whereof John Badby, still persevering, was brought into Smithfield, and there, being put in an empty BARREL, was bound with iron chains fastened to a stake, having dry wood put about him. And as he was thus standing in the BARREL, it happened that Prince Harry, the Kingis eldest son, was there present who, shewing some part of the good Samaritan, began to endeavour how to save*

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<sup>2</sup> Believe.

*the life of him.*

*In this mean season, the Prior of St. Bartholomewhis in Smithfield brought, with all solemnity, the sacrament of God his body, with twelve torches borne before, and so shewed the sacrament to the hereticke. And then they demanding of him how he trowd in it, he answered, that he knew well it was hallowed bred, and not God his body. And then was the BARREL put over him, and FIRE put unto him. And when he felt the FIRE, he cried, Mercy! calling be like upon the Lord and his screams were mistaken for repentance and so the Prince incontinent<sup>3</sup> commanded to take away the BARREL and quench the FIRE. And he was taken down HALF COKED. The Prince then asked the obstinate hereticke if he would forsake his heresy, to take him to the faith of HOLY CHURCH? Which if he would do, he should have goods enoughe promising allso unto him a yerely stipend out of the Kingis Treasury.*

*But the wretch refused.*

*Wherefore, when as yet he continued unmovable in his former mind, the Prince commanded him straight to be put agayne into the BARREL agayne and that he should not afterward look for any grace or favour. And the FIRE was set thereto. But Badby was nothinge abashed at the torment and he persevered obstinately to the end, and at length his body was this time WELL COKED, while he screamed and bawled continually, until his ghost escaped him. And the air was filled with the sweet smell of a ROST METE for several hours together.*

*In Witness Whereof I have hereunto set my hand and the day and yere first Before Written*

*J Fastolf, Esquire.*

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<sup>3</sup> Immediately.



**The Burning of the Obstinate Hereticke Badby**

# I

**6 September, yere of our Lord 1,444, Harvest Feast,  
Southwark.**

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD to the birth of Christ, according to the Boke of Eusebius, is 5,228 yeres, as is written in the chronicles of Claudius composed for Ado the priest.

I wish not that my words be published abroad but I write in Englysshe now, for as Master Chaucer saith in his Tales of Canterbury

*Some speke Frensh and no Latin  
That have used courts and dwelt therein,  
And some speke of Latin a party  
That speke Frensh full feebly,  
But lerned and lewd, old and younge  
All understanden Englysshe tongue.*

My Latin at school was hard gained. But I learned enoughe by rote to qualify me for the University reding and it hath bene of much use in my trade of scrivener. There are lines of Virgil which come into my ghost<sup>4</sup> even now.

*Volvoitur Euryalus leto, pulchrosque per artus  
It cruor, inque umeros cervix conlapsa recumbit...*

*Euryalus rolleth in death, and over his beautiful limbs  
Flows the blood, and his neck collapses, lolling onto his shoulders...*

I had a frende in school in Bristol, killed in the late expedition. They say he was killed on a bridge, his head allmost severed from his body, like as Sir John Chandos at Lussac, or Virgil his poppy that is cut with the wheat. But when I

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<sup>4</sup> Spirit.

conceyve of him I allso recall the trick my frend hath played on the Grammar Master

*Volvoitur Euryalus leto, pulchrosque per artus  
It penis, inque vaginam, cervix relaxa, penetrat...*

These were idle and sinful thoughts, but I doubt my frende deserved the beating with sticke.

The wheat and barley harvests are in, and all the parishes making merry, even in the City, where the merchants and bankers scarce know the value of labour. On all sides is feast, disport and musick. In Southwark there are special hymns and prayers and the Church is spred with baskets of bred and pasties, fruit and fysh, birds, cakes, and venisons. And the Stews are more busy than ever.<sup>5</sup> Our present age is more prosperous and sinful, and not more austere, than former tyme, for all men say.

Sir John hath written from Caister in Norfolk. He bids me come there for a commission. He saith I can travail by his barge or by road. But as he knoweth full well, I like not the Almayn Ocean. And so I will go by road, for to visit churches and abbeys, as is my wont and plaisance.

Sir John is a good Master, for all his covetise and cruelty. He alloweth me my time, so long as his work on the titles goes on. He hath manie disputes concerning manors, as allways. I should beware the roads, saith he, for Robinhoods. And keep a special watch for Tuddenham and Heydon their men, proud prykers in Anglia. He can reimburse me a purse or twain but my life is allso important.

MEMORANDUM. Sir John is a grete hater. He grudgeth the Jew as he grudgeth the Turk, though he never met nayther. He grudgeth the Welsh though he has met several. He grudgeth the Frensh though he hath met manie. But more than any he grudgeth John Heydon and Thomas Tuddenham. Tyrants of Anglia he calleth them, like the Visconti of Milan<sup>6</sup>, of whom we hath red in Master Chauceris werke. Your Englyshe tyrants feed not their children to serpents, nor torture men forty days and nights, but they have other ways to oppresse. Tuddenham hath bene bothe tenant of the Duk of Norfolk and creature of the Marquess of Suffolk, whom my master calleth Jack Napes.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, he hath bene Deputy Steward of the Duchy of Lancaster in Norfolk and Member of the Parliament for the same county, whence he obtaineth manie unlawful monies. But the coils of the serpent are manie and another coil is clept Heydon. Tuddenham and Heydon both, saith Sir John, jumpeth up - men that hadde few manors of their own before they fell in the way of Jack Napes. Now they lord it over all as if they were Erles born.

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<sup>5</sup> The Stews in Southwark were the 'red-light district' for London as a whole.

<sup>6</sup> Worcester is referring here to *The Monk's Tale* in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

<sup>7</sup> William de la Pole, created Marquess of Suffolk in 1444 and 1st Duke of Suffolk in 1448. Tuddenham and Heydon worked for him.

I find my man Jack doth share our Masterhis hates, grete and small, but specially of the Frensh. He smells of the stable, which is horse piss and sweat and leather, but I am used to that from boyhood and he serveth me well.

I allways wanted to be more than a miserable scrivener and now Sir John hath even<sup>8</sup> me the chance. The commission he promiseth of Agincourt doth set my blood a racing. For this Agincourt was a battle in which the mighty Royal Power of Fraunce and all its Puissance did suffer grete Discomfiture in the yere of Christe M<sup>iiij</sup>xv.<sup>9</sup>

## 8 September, St Alban His Abbey

Sir John conceyves the inns be stuffed with villains in league with the Robinhoods. But I feel safe with Jack, who is stubborn and strong - for I have seen him at work with pitchfork a thrusting merrily like a cock in a croft. And we passed a pleasant evening in Finchley and attended Mass there this morning, before setting off once more up to the North.

If a man were to set out from Southwark for Caister by road, he were not well advised to travail on this Grete North Road. But, although I have a map of the roads, I hath long had desire to see the tomb of the Good Old Duk of Yorke at St Albans. We made our way through the villages and found that grete bridle path, which taketh a man to the Abbey like a novice.

St Albans is home to the martyr, killed by Diocletian Pagan Tyrant of Rome the Grete, and men visit this place to see the shrine. But methinks in future time twill be remembered as the burial place of Good Duk Humfrey. He hath lately built a tomb and a chantry there, to receyve him after his passing.

The monks work here on the scrivening of grete antiphoners for the Mass. Some of them write, and some of them flourish,<sup>10</sup> and some of them bind the bokes when they are complete. But this is dry employment.

The Abbey hath bene home to a famous school of historiers, as Matthew of Paris 200 yeres ago and Thomas of Walsingham who died 20 yere ago. And now is John of Whethamstede, Abbot, who writeth constantly, despite his heavie dutie. For this Abbot hath jurisdiction over his monks, but allso in manie manors, and hath petitioned and obtained the return of writs, even to the exclusion of the Kingis Justices. In this abbey they hath constructed a little room to keep the bokes of the library and they translate<sup>11</sup> the bokes from the old presses in the cloister. Methinks this is a new thinge. They hath around 600 bokes, not less.

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<sup>8</sup> Given.

<sup>9</sup> 1415.

<sup>10</sup> Illustrate.

<sup>11</sup> Transfer.

Duk Humfrey his tomb is of free-stone, adorned with the forms of his ancestors. I am sure it is as noble a resting place as a Body could have, though his Soul must yet endure the Pains of Purgatory.<sup>12</sup>

As I was watching by, a sumptuous Italian gentleman approacheth me. We were able to understanden each other in that broken Latin they speak in the partes of Italy. His name is Silvio Piccolomini, and he was borne in the yere of the Incarnacion, 1,405 and comes from Corsignano near Siena, and he hath harde Friar Bernardino preach.

Silvio hath worked as a scrivener for Pope Felix of Savoy and for the Emperor of Almayn and he hath bene crowned Poet Laureate. But he means to abandon Felix for Eugene and tells me that, forelong, all Felix his supporters will abandon him and Holy Church be healed once more. He liketh not the Grand Turk who menaceth Christendom.

Of Italy he saith the art of the Ancients is now revived there and the study of all liberal Artes doth flourish. Philosophy is red in public. Theology is taught in the Universities. No branch of learning is ignored. Christians have a deep desire to understand the truth.

Oh brave new world, which hath such people in it!

I asked if they studieth astrology mucche in the parts of Italy and he saith verily they do. But a man should be ware of being too certayne of anythinge based on our observations of the sky, for such prophesies, constellations and influence of stars might not be true. And even if they be, it is not possible that they be masters over Godhispower and to believe that would be an heresy or else an grete error which is as badde.

I told him that there hathe bene likewise much progress in the arts at Oxenford. Duk Humfrey hath founded lectureships in the twain Laws and three Philosophies, and provided monies to help build a new School of Divinity.

It doth amuse me to hear Silvio pronounce the name Chichele. He saith he hath harde of the Good Old Duk and his most generous benefaccions. He asketh me

*Was he not at Agincourt, where his brother Harry saved him from his death?*

To the which I replieth

*That he did, and the Duke is still a warrior now, though his main enemy is at home.*

Silvio hath bene on embassies here before the present time. Once he was sent to Scotland, landed at Dunbar, walked ten miles through ice and snow and contracted the gout, from which he still suffers. He saith the Far North of England is

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<sup>12</sup> Humphrey Duke of Gloucester (1390-1447) was a younger brother of Henry V. He fought at Agincourt (1415), helped govern the kingdom after Henry's early death in 1422, and opposed the Duke of Suffolk's peace policy in the 1440s.

very pore and not at all like the South of these Isles. There is a great Divyde between the twain. He saith that in the South it semeth that everyone hath become rich since they drove his counciemen back to the partes of Italy, who used to buy up all the woolle in the Cottisoualdes.<sup>13</sup> But in the North all is grete castles and pele towers, cattle raidings and rough justice. There are no manor houses there.

He saith he hath bene in London now, to see the most famous church of St Paul, the River Thames which is swifter at the flow than at the ebb and the bridge like a city. I told him my master hath a Plaice hard by this bridge, with a wharf and kitchen garden.

He would like to see the village where men are born with tails. But fered he will not have the time. He would like to see the golden mausoleum of St Thomas at Canterbury, for he saith it is the onlie shrine in England that is known throughout the partes of Italy. He asketh me if it is reallie covered with diamonds and perles, as men doth pretend? I saith I never was yette in Canterbury, though my mother urgeth me all ways to go, for my health.

He hath bene to West Minster, to see the tombs of the kings. And he saith the tomb of Harry Fifte is fine, for they hath finished his chantry and hung up his achievements, and you can see the grete Kinghis shield and sword, saddle and gauntlets and the helmet with the dint made by the Frenshe.

I said there was doubt if that helmet were Harrys. For it is a tilting helm and would never have bene worn in battle, and my Master Fastolf saith all this is fraud to fill the coffers of the Church.

I asked him if he was on his way South or North along that Grete North Road? He saith the former. He hath hadde his fill of Scotland the first time, which he wited<sup>14</sup> a very rough place – he knew these words would please an Englissheman for was it not Edward Firste who calleth the land of Scotlande a turde? He saith the comon pepple there are pore and rude, the men short and brave the women all easily won – or so he was told. He saith there is nothing that the Scotch like to here better of than abuse of the Englishe. He conceyves that Scotsmen will never agayne submit to Englishe rewl. They have their King and their Parliament and their own laws, and they would liefer<sup>15</sup> die to the last man than accept what they calle Englishe tyrannie.

He saith the North of England, on the Border, is much like Scotland. He saith he stayed in a pele tower there. When a good part of the night had passed, twain young women shewed him to a chamber strewn with straw and announced they would sleep with him, as was the custom of the countrie. He saith he was unwilling for his mind runneth on Robinhoods, who he fereed might appere at any minute, so he repulsed them, saying he was afraid that if he committeth a sin, he would have to pay the penaltie if robbers arrived. So he remaineth alone with the heifers and goats,

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<sup>13</sup> Cotswolds.

<sup>14</sup> Considered.

<sup>15</sup> Rather.



which preventeth him from sleeping a wink, by stealthilie pulling the straw out of his pallet.

Some time after midnight there was a grete barking of masty hounds<sup>16</sup> at which the women scattered and there was the wildest confusion. Silvio stayed where he was in the pallet, too afraid to be alert and erect. In the morning the women returneth and saith the strangers in the night hath bene frendes. He thought this was the reward for his continence.

He thought we Englishe were a wild people, excessively yeven to crying in public, who hated all Jews, Lombards and Florenzers, whom they deemeth to seke the sins of Sodom. They like a stranger onlie if he resembes an Englissheman. I saith I knew a Danysh gentleman Andrew Ogard who hath bene made most welcome in this countrie, hath fought harde for our King and is now denized at Rye House and summoned as Member of the Parliament for Norfolk. So that we can not hate the stranger so muche.

He saith our Master Chaucer hath wrote that all men understanden Englishe tongue, but yet the Englishe that is spoken in one shire varyeth muche from another. So in one shire men say *eggs* but in another *eyren*, while the Englishe of York Shire no other shireman can understand.

I asked him if foteball was permitted in his countrie. He asked what itt wasse. I said it was a wild game which permitteth some villages to make war on another. But my master hath forbidden it in all his manors. Silvio said in his countrie they nedeth no excuse for slaying near neighbours.

He asketh me if I found that in my countrie old men commend the times past, and blame the times present, dispraising our present doings and manners and affirming every good custom and every thinge to decline allways from ill to worse, since the days of their grene age?

I saith assuredly, the old men in England doth affirm all this and often.

The cause whereof, in his opinion, is that the yeres take away from the blood a grete part of the lively Ghostes, and the instruments wax feeble, whereby the Soul worketh her effects. Therefor the sweet flowers of delight fadeth away in that season out of our hearts, as the leves fall from the trees after harvest. And instead of open and clere thoughts there entereth cloudy and troublous heaviness accompanied with a thousand hert griefs, so that not onlie the blood, but the mind is allso feeble. And of the former pleasures we receyve onlie a fast memory and the print of the beloved time of grene age, which when we had it, the heaven, the erth, and every thinge rejoiced and laughed allways about our eyes.

*Nota Bene. Before I left I spoke with Master Dunstaple. This man is Master of Musick. He hath told me of his plan for a motet anent St Alban. This man hath served the Duk of Bedford when Sir John was Master of His Household. And eftbetimess served Good Duk Humfrey.*

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<sup>16</sup> Mastiffs.

## 9 September

By my conning it is 22 miles from St Alban His Abbey to Rye House, where we took pedigrees of York and Lancaster to Sir Andrew Ogard. He came to England as a soudeour, after the Lady Philippa, sister to King Harry, married Eric of Danemark. He hath since risen hi, being made knighte for his valour at the Battle of Vernelle, M<sup>l</sup>.iiij.xxiiij.<sup>17</sup> where Sir John was made banneret. Then Sir Andrew was made counsellor to the Duk of York. He married into a Norfolk family, taking as wyff Margaret Clifton of Bradenham near Norwich and never returned to his own countrie. And this Margaret Clifton was daughter of Sir John Clifton, now appointed Mayor of Norwich, in succession to William Hempstede, who partlie caused Gladman his rising and was sent to the Flete prison for his pains.

Rye House is all red, though 50 types of brick are used there. Sir John hath advised Sir Andrew on the use of the brick and the emplacement of conveyniences in white stone. The Outer Court at Rye is 73 steps long and 60 steps broad. The moat is 20 steps across. From the outer gate to the lodge, fenced and emparked on both sides, is 360 tailors yards. The length of the cloister is 17½ yards and its bredth 13 yards. The length of one collateral of the Grete Court, on the north syde, is 28 yards.

The said Sir Andrew, dwelling in England for 8 yeres, hath kept his chapel in his house, of clerks and choristers, of whom there were sixteen every day, with four priests, to a cost of £100 a yere. Allso he gave to Wymondham Abbey 15 copes of cloth of gold of blue, with his arms. The purchase of the manor of Rye costeth him £1,100. Allso the granary, 16 horses, 30 cows and the storehouse of goods 2,200 marks. And the building of the Inner Court with brick and the rooms with the cloiser cost, yncluding repairs, a total of 2,000 marks and more.

And truly there is a great rebuilding going on apace all over the South. New houses erect every where, of brick as well of stone and churches remade throughout the land, with grete West Towers and plain Englisshe windows.<sup>18</sup> And costeous tombs of alabaster and bronze, and fine Englisshe brasses. Whence cometh our new found wealth? The countrie dothe growe exceedingly.

I have ensearched the chronicles and pedigrees of Lancaster. Sir Andrew is requested to be advised hereupon and add what he knows of the order of descent from Noah to Woden. But he is to keep it close till they speak. It is no matter for simple witted men, nor fools, to deal with.

## 12 September, St Edmundis Bury

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<sup>17</sup> Verneuil, but the battle was fought in 1424 not 1423.

<sup>18</sup> Worcester refers here to the Perpendicular style of architecture.

The Abbey of Edmund, likeasmuch to that of Alban, hath a famous school of historians and much to remember. It is 505 feet long, and spans 246 ft across its westerly transept. The west tower collapsed fourtene yere ago and is rebuilding.

Bury St Edmunds hath 2,000 bokes, not less.

To a tavern and there Jack spent some time in the back room with a maid – a pore creature but pretty. This costeth me much in ale and cake. And I curseth myself for my havyor,<sup>19</sup> though I did nothings contrary to my vow. Jack is under no such bond and he was fatigued later. He he told me hath enjoyed solace and wanted to explain the nature of this. But I refuseth to listen to hym.

I must learn to stamp out the first sparks of passion, though Jack conceyves I am mad. He saith the wants of the fleshe must be satisfied, like any paynim,<sup>20</sup> if John Mandeville hath it aright in his tayles.

I talked to the Abbot of the laws of werre. For St Thomas Aquinas writeth of the just werre and proportion in the use of mightiness. The Abbot saith the view of the Church towards werre hath changed much. When Rome the Great was under the tyrannie of the paynims, the Holy Fathers condemned all were, and soudeours who became Christians would not fight and were martyred. But now we live in Christian tyme, it is a manhis duty to fight for the King. And fighting for the King is fighting for God. Therefore the Lollers who preach agaynst werre are rebels all, agaynst God and the King.

I saith I doubteth not his argument but, for the sake of the disputation, what doth he replie when the Frenshe saith they hath bene Chrystian since Clovis the Grete, clept Louis, who reigneth 300 yere before the grete Alfred? He replieth it was welle I sought this disputation in Cloister and not in Strete, for we could both be putte in Clinke twere we in Southwark. But methinks he liketh a disputation as well as I.

*A man was free to argue that our werre was Unjust before Agincourt. But God shewed his hand there and it pointed to Harry. He sent us the wind to sail to Normandie, he smashed down the wall of Harfleur, he protected the meyny<sup>21</sup> on the march and he slaughtered all the Frenshe in battle, while scarcely any of our men were kilt. And St George himself was sene on the field of bataylle!*

His eyes gleamed like the bloodiest berserker on a Danysh chesseboard.

I would have like to say that, as I hath harde, Godde hath some assistance at Harfleur from Harrys grete gunnes and our archers played no little part at Agincourt. And Ockham with his razor would clip the beard of this St George. But I would have bene wasteing my breth.

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<sup>19</sup> Behaviour.

<sup>20</sup> Pagan.

<sup>21</sup> Army.

We talked of usury and the riches of Holy Church. The Holy Fathers were hostile to all trade, commerce and lawyers. Christ himself chaseth the monielenders from the Temple. St Paul would not have a Christian take another to court, as being agaynst Christian charity. All usury was forboden.

But that was then, saith the Abbot, and now is now and we cannot go back. St Aquinas lets us see that trayde in itself is not sinful but onlie as a temptation to sin. There is a just price. There are Christian ways of doing busyness and even of profiting from chevyschance.<sup>22</sup> His Grace the Cardinal Beaufort is a grete patriot and hath guaranteed the Werre with the treasure of Wynchester and Southwark these last forty yeres. This Cardinal pays for the Werre in Fraunce, which is a just war; and he is a grete advocate of the Faith, in Parliament and in the Councils of Europe. Besides, the Lord Pope himself is one of the gretest of monie lenders. His Florenzer bankers are the gretest we have, though Florenz be full of the men of Sodom and effeminaytes.

And what of Richard Whittington, he cryed, the thrice mayor of London? Are we are to condemn him for his monie lending, as Lollers would? Without hym and his kind, there would never have bene an Agincourt, nor would we have had all those benefaccions for the pore and indigent. You cannot leave everyone to the charity of monks and nuns. Doth not John Fastolfe labour to found schools, like any good man and are not his labours paid for, at least in parte, by lawful usury and trade? The true vice is covetousness. This is the mother sin. Observe the tenth commandment

*Thou shall not covet your neighbouris house. Thou shall not covet thour neighbouris wyff, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anythinge that belongs to thy neighbour – videlicet Exodus 20:17.*

I should not have tried to dispute with this Fellow for he would not stop. And he could have continued half an hour or more. But I broke off, upon excuse to visit the privy chamber.

To my grete surprise my man Jack hath harde of this Richard Whittington. He saith that, where he comes from, they tell tales about this mayor and his catte. I said that this big Dick should be more famous for his college, founded in London, than for a catte, even if the catte were the best mouser in Christendome.

## 13 September

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<sup>22</sup> Making loans.

I was told there was a monk who hadde bene sent to the University by the Abbey and completed a higher degree, after manie yeres residence at a Hall attached to Balliol's House. And did I know him? I did not, but he was an amiable fellow and much excyted by somethinge which had troubled him manie a yere. He said he had never bene able to compute the number of angels that can dance on the head of a pin, as the Schoolmen like to dispute, but he hath found, in a Boke of Calculation, the total duplication of the chessboard.

## 14 September, Holy Rood Day

I was born in Bristol in the yere of Agincourt. My father was a whittawer<sup>23</sup> like my mothers father. The midwyff struggled with me and I have onlie one eye and thereby wear a patch. That is all of my condition that is fit for presentation to the Physician, save my piles. I am a short man, even when erect. They say it is not enoughe for a man to know how to ride – he must know how to fall. But I am lacking in confidence, by reason of my piles and my patch.

By the time I reached manhood, very manie were tired of the Werre, but Sir John hath aways talked of little else. He hath an abiding sense of grievance for he saith the Frensh started it, but we failed to finish it, for all Harrys Victory. Now they hath the upper hand; and all his work hath bene wasted. The countrie hath gone to the dogs, who spred their turds around the yarde of England.

I wrote these notes at Bristol, from a grete paper boke of chronicles belonging to a certayne priest of the Church of St Stephen.

*The height of the tower of the Church of St Stephen in Bristol is 125 feet, besides 31 feet below ground level and the church be all a rebuilding. The length of the chapel on Bristol Bridge is 36 steps and its width is 12. Bristol Bridge was first founded by King John. The length of it is 120 steps. According to the differences of climate men differ in their features, the colour and temperaments of their bodies and Ghostes. Hence we see the Romans serious, the Grekes fickle, the Africkans shifty and the Gauls fierce by nature and bolder in temper. The Englisshe in the time of King Edgar learned an uncouth ferocity of Ghoste from the Saxons, weak effeminacy of the Flemings and excessive drinking of the Danes.*

I had a childhood frende, clept Catherine. We were very much alike save that she would find reasons to worret and I would find reasons not to worret - or so my mother said, who favoured me. We used to play she ande I. I was the Monk and she was the Nun. I was the Friar and she was the Boy. We liked the three-wishes game. She liked where the boy given the set of pipes but we liked the third gift best of all,

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<sup>23</sup> A craftsman who produced leather items for horses, such as saddled and harnesses, or any items made from bleached white leather.

where was the mockerie of farting. We loved stories of the boyhood of Jesus, of how the Saviour misbehaved – as causing the bullies to fall dead - and how his mother reproved him, though he was God. We had a gleeful time, for nayther of us was beaten by our parents. Catherine's mother saith she was a girl of masculine understanding and conduct, proud, furious, selfysh and unfeeling. But I was I and she was she and we loved eche other in our own way.

We lost our frendeship when they sent me to the Latin school in Bristol – the first of my family to be made reddie for the University reding. We were allowed three yeres to master the Grammar. After this, we red in Ovid and Terence, learned to translate from the Latin into Englisshe and from the Englisshe into Latin. In the fifth yere, we red in Sallust, Livy, Tacitus and Virgil. We were made to compete in making speechis, in both tongues. I was in an habile class. The Master compared us to nightingales, competing with one another to reche the sweetest song. We were allowed some time for honest and harmless recreacion, as might moderately exercise our bodies and not at all place our health in jepardie. But because some boys were apt to sneke home, there were frequent roll-calls, without advertisement.<sup>24</sup> And no foteball ever allowed.

Catherine stayed at home and served her mother all this time, though she had some few lessons from a Dame.

## 15 September, Norwich

I am worn out with the travailling and the need to rest, especially in my arse end.

Norwich smells of cattle and their dung, for there is a copious cattle market here. The aldermen claim it is the second city of the kingdom, though cut off in part by the Fen and the Wash. We entered from the North side and stopped to visit the church of the Friars, just rebuildd by Old Thomas Erpingham, Master of the Bows at Agincourt, who allso paid for the gatehouse of the Abbey Church. There is an image of him on hi and the Knighthis cote of arms, brightly displayed. There are shops and fine churches and manie taverns. I am told of *The Three Kings*, *The Ship*, *The Barge*, *The Merry Wherryman*, *The Castle*, *The Sheaf*; *The Bull*; *The Prince of Wales*; *The Masty hound*; *The Maids* which the locals call *The Whores*. In the Market Place is a Guild Hall, of flint like a chesseboard. A city with manie wealthy men, rich on shepemet and the wool of their backs. The merchants have a Guild of St George for the men and a Guild of St Anne for the women. Near the Market Place I was nerely knocked down by a boy skating on boards attached to his hands and his feet, after the manner of the Dutch.

The abbey church hath as Cloister the largest in Christendom and I noticed a Latin school outside the West door, hard by the Erpingham Gate.

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<sup>24</sup> Warning.

St Peter in the Main Croft hath a roof re-built by the sheepmen.

At the bottom of the town is a place clept Lollers' Pit.

The Ordinances prohibit the playing of all foteball gaymes within the City. Men and boys devoted to that sport must play outside the walles.

## 16 September

I have bene working in the Muniment room of Guild Hall, chiefly in the Norwich Domesday. The best record in England saith they. It containeth more deeds, licences, indentures, vouchers, common recoveries and feet of fines than a man could red in twain lifetimes. And though it was compiled for the city, it hath much to say about the manors of the county, if the ensearcher knoweth where to look.

I found it hard to find my way around this boke at erst.<sup>25</sup> And the Librarian was not help full. I suspect he is one of Tuddenhamis men. But the deposite is open and he could not defie me. And so at last I found the thinge I was looking for about Titchwell manor and came away, pleased with my work and nedeing refreshment. I paused at a tavern. Where I met Jack and had too much to drinke. And afterwards this set me to thought.

I know not how my father met Sir John Fastolfe. But I conceyve it was by means of some busyness done in Castle Combe. Sir John was much there when he first took in hand his wyfs manor there, and my father supplied manie items for the horses. And Sir John paid for my University redeing four yeres, before he stoppt. I did not know whether to be fumous<sup>26</sup> for the stoppeing or grateful for three yeres of paying. But in any way I had become his man.

When I went across to Oxenford my frende Catherine went to live in another county but I never did forgett her. I vowed to remain chaste, as manie students of Oxenford do, though they become not preests. And I have kept this vowe. I never mingled with the common women of the town, though others engaged in criminal conversation while the Proctors slept. There was manie a whore in Oxenford town. But the story of the Garden of Eden techeth all duplication of man and woman is unclean, and Christ never took a wyff.

Yet there was allso a story told in Oxenford of the twain-backed beast of Plato and his Greek Scripture, which split apart in Ancient time. And each half, bereft of the other, did spend its lyf grieving and looking for the other half. And some whispered this was a better explication of how Mankind is trewlie, than the story of Adam and Eve, though not Christian. And I wondered if Catherine and I were like those beasts of Plato. And if be the trewe secret of the duplication, more convenable than the secret discovered in Holy Scripture.

But there were some allso who red in Albert the Great that there are solaces of the Upper Parts and solaces of the Lower Parts, of women. And that all men do

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<sup>25</sup> At first.

<sup>26</sup> Angry.

either prefer the one Part or the other, though women conceyve that this be skyte of the bull, since the caressing of the Upper Part is but a prelude to the approach to the Lower. All such talk disgusteth me and I do not repete it. Yet I Confess I have bene tempted for there are taverns in Southwark hard by Fastolfs Place, where Wynchester geese are sold and yea some appere comely, though they wear the the harlots weeds.<sup>27</sup>

I never went into those dark places, and yet Jack saith 'Drink the whole draft if you want to know what it is...' Remove, Jesus, that filthy crust of sensual corruption which covers my heart. And lead us not into temptation, for Ever and Ever. Amen.

## 17 September

I was looking at the new work in St Peter when I saw her. A young widow, tall and imposing, with veil. There were some novices there taking their vows as nuns. She might perchance be taking the vows herself, to escape the further attention of men. She was standing apart, looking at them. She did not see me and must have left betimes afterward, as I was looking at the font. I asked the priest who she was and he looked at me with suspicion. But, when I saith I was a servant of Fastolfe he said she was Mistress Gladman, widow of a Norwich man, killed in the riots last yere. And a good and worshipful ladie.

## 18 September

More work in the Guildhall. I compiled an abstract of title touching Titchwell. I fancy the librarian was watching me constantly, though I hadde payd him 4d on my Master's accompt.

I was contented at Oxenford, though it was difficult for boys from small schools to compete with them of Wynchester, allways destined for hi office. We were told there to shun all thoughts of Master Wycliffe of Balliol's House, and never to speke thereof, for 267 different errors had bene identified in his lectures and he hath bene rejected by the Monks both Black and White, by the Friers Dominican and Franciscan, and techers of every persuaion. And his bones dug up and burned, and his ashes cast on the water of the Swift which flows slowlie through Lutterworth, by order of the Council at Constanz and the Archbishoppe of Canterburie. And his techeings which were driven from Oxenford were now in the mouths of bumpkins, some of whom though now that the whole World was made of Cheese and we poor creatures were all worms within it. And all wretched Heretickes were damned and we would be damned too if we so much as thought about this Wycliffe.

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<sup>27</sup> 'Winchester geese' was slang for the prostitutes of Southwark, who frequented the Stews belonging to the Bishop of Winchester.



But of course we talked about hym endlesslie.

My mother wanted for me to be a full Preste; but my Latin, which hath bene prayed at school, was but mediocre in the Schools of Oxenford and I beganne to conceyve that it hath bene acquired too costesously. But I passed manie hours listening to Master Chaucer and his Tayles. One of our Masters had a copy which he lent to my fellows and we had redeings in secret. There hath never bene such poetry in Englisshe, nor such themes. Chaucer spoke to us of our own lyves. *The Wyff of Bath* was our favourite, though I doubt any reel woman is so fond of the duplication as she.

I did not take a degree. There were few that did save those of Wynchester. But, when I was one and twenty I joined Sir John as a scrivener. He needed more assistamce for he was set to withdraw from the Werres and, with three homes in Castle Combe, Southwarke and Caister, as well as Silly-Gwillem in Fraunce had much to occupie his tyme. He was the richest of men and I was pleased to find a place with him. I have bene employed by him longtime all over his estates.

But now he summons me to take up my residence at Caister. The commission he hath for me promiseth advancement .

## 19 September

Norwich is a bustling City. A Castle, an Abbey, a Bishopps Palace and clergie, wharves and boatmen, hospitals, Guildhall and merchants, law courts and lawyers. Yet there are manie pore. I seldom give alms but gave the wyf of W. Organ 1d on my Master's accompt.<sup>28</sup>

Twain women fell to their deaths in vats of hot barley malt. One died the same day and another is like to pass within the week.

The square tower of the Castle at Norwich is 45 of my paces in each direction. The height of it no man can measure, save with the Arab calculations. Men say that underneath this castle mound sits an old heathen king with his sword in his hand, and his gold and his silver pennies all around him. Julius Caesar was not the first builder of the castle, but he caused various bulwarkes to be made here, as he did in all cities clept 'Chester', as one may suppose Chichester, Wynchester, Rochester, Chester by Dee et cetera. How this Caesar found time to build the Chesters and all the camps men call after him, and all those forts along the Saxon Shore, for defence agaynst the heathen pirates, I cannot reckon.

The street cries in Norwich are the same as in Southwark, though the speke hereabouts differs much

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<sup>28</sup> It is virtually impossible to express medieval money in modern values since the same multiplier cannot be applied to every price. However, the average wage paid to a farm labourer in 1450 was 4d a day, while masons and carpenters were paid a penny or two more: R.L.Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster* (Sutton Publishing, 1986), p.13(n).

*Hot pies, hot!  
Good pork and goose!  
Go dine go!*

At the West Door of the Abbey church are feathered angels in the spandrels, which I hath not seen elsewhere. But the Sacristan telleth me they be common through all Norfolk. Over St Ethelbertis Gate in the Close, there is a knight with a spear, lunging at a beast. I suppose it is St George, killing his dragon once more. The Abbey Cloister is 60 yards or 180 feet long from the northside to the south, towards the Frater, and by my steps 90 paces. Sir Thomas Erpingham, who was not so old, is buried on the north side of the presbytery. At Agincourt he launched the storm of arrows when he shouted *Nestroque* and threw his baton in the air. It is curious that men create disputations about this word. For it is but Norfolk speche for *Now Strike!*

Henry Despenser, Bishop of Norwich, who died in M<sup>1</sup>,CCCCVI<sup>29</sup> lies buried here and led the Crusade along the Way of Flanders. There be manie Friars of the Order of Carmel in Norwich. Norwich Priory hath 600 bokes. They say that Christ Church Canterbury hath over 2,000 and at St Augustine they hath the same.

Dom. Thomas Houghton, a monk of Norwich Priory, who daily doth a dozen ciphers, saith that the duplication of the chessboard is

18,446,744,073,709,551,615

This sum would be difficult to figure using the Roman ciphers employed in common household accompts. It doth require a skilled calculator, learned in the Art of Arithmetic, and conversant with the Arabic numerals for to arrive at it. I asketh Dom Houghton wherefrom he had this number. He saith he got it from a certayne boke borrowed by the librarian of Norwich Priory from the church of St Stephen in Bristol my hometown, which be a very grete coincidence in addition to a very grete number. He saith there is a fable as to its more ancient origin

*Once upon an ancient time, a sage of Ind invented the game of chesse, and the Grete King for whom he invented it was so delited that he invited the sage to suggest his own reward. The sage then asked for a reward of rice grains, one grain to be placed on the first square of the chesseboard, followed by twain grains on the second square, four grains on the third square, eight on the fourth, and continuing this duplication of grains on each subsequent square until all sixty four were filled. And then adding up the number of grains on all the squares.*

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<sup>29</sup> 1406.

*To the King, this seemed a modest request, for he expected to pay in all a few cartloads of grains. For he hath not expected that the duplication, which at first doth proceed in slow and deliberate fashion would then build with such force to the climax. And so the King, who had expected to pay the sage with a few cartloads of rice, found that he owed more grains than there were in all the world.*

There are different endings to the storie of the grains. One is that the sayge succeeded the King. The other is that the King had the sayge killed. It doth seme to me that the last is more likely.

In the Market Square, by Guildhall, I harde a minstrel sing of my Master

*There had the conquest bene sealed up  
If Fastolfe had not played the coward...*

I sent Jack to chase the bugger off but his last words hung in the air as they disappered towards the winding river

*He cowardly fled, not having struck one stroke  
Hence grew the general wreck and massacre...*

This be calumnie and vile of my Master.

## 20 September

To the Guildhall agayne to look for material on Repps, where Sir John feres his title is gross defective.

There was a clerk of Oxenford who displayed an allmost complete ignorance of Latin. Asked about *Te igitur, clementissime Pater* he knew not the case of *Te*, nor by what word it was governed. And when he was told to take his time and look closely which word agreed with it, he looked hard at his feet. They told him to look for the vocative adjective, but he replied that he thought it was *Pater*, adding 'For He governeth all thinges.' To be sure that he was entirely ignorant, they asked him what case *clementissime* was in that event. And he saith he knew not. Then they asked him what *clemens* meant. And he knew not.

I learned no law at Oxenford, that being for a hier degree. It was when I entered Sir Johnis service, and in London, that I learnt rudiments of estates and tenures and conveyancing.

Sir John tells stories of Tuddenham his marriage. This villain was married when he was 17, to the daughter of John Woodhouse, a squire of Castle Rising. He lacked the manhood to consummate the marriage, but the couple lived together some yeres nonetheless. What a sham and shame. Then his wyff had a child by her fathers chamberlain and became a nun of the cloister, after the child was put away.

And Tuddenham lived in Sin and fathered a bastard, Henry, the image of his cursed father. And then he debased himself by cavorting in Lakenham Wood with Alice Chaucer, to the scandal of alle.

Heydon is no better. For he hath a wyff who allso gave birth to a child, not his. She had it last yere on Saint Peters Day. When she made it plain, Heydon flew into such a rage, he said he would take a knife and cut her nose, to make her shame known unto the world; and if he ever saw the child he would skewer it. He said he would put her aside and she should never in no wise come into the tavern agayne. And now he lives in Sin with one of the Winter women.

Nayther man will get an annulment for this is not permitted by the Bishop of Norwich. And yet they lord it over all, the twain of them.

## 21 September

MEMORANDUM John Wycliffe was Master of Balliol over 50 yeres before my time. His lectures and his followers hath bene most energetically suppressed, in Oxenford and elsewhere. But his Ghoste might have smiled. For his conceytes, proclaimed from such eminence, could not altogether be expunged. There hadde bene no heresie in England before his time. But, since his death there hath bene an Age of Doubt, where once was Faith. The mould is broken and men no longer know where to look for authority. There were twain Popes when he died and there are twain now for all the travails of Constanz. Some men look to the King for a leader. Some to a General Council of Holy Church. And some to the Popes, but not all men agree who that be.

The Master was famous in his day for his tract, subsequently burned, clept *On the Truth of Scripture*. He trowd that the Vulgate was free from error; and that all must have access to its techeings. He saith *the language of a boke, whether Hebrew, Greke or Latin or Englisshe, is the vesture of the law of God. And in whatever clothinge its message is most truly understood by the faithful, in that is the boke most reasonably to be accepted*. Brave words, and much opposed by Holy Church, which dependeth on its ancient control of language. But men began to murmur agaynest Holy Church which prevented them, and then to shout. When they mumbled they were clept Lollers, from the Dutch. Master Wycliffe himself translated manie passages before his death. Then the Lollers stated that Holy Church hath bene corrupted by temporal matters and that its claim to be the true church was not right. They attacked the notion of Purgatory. Then they denounced the Mass and the miracle of it, and exorcism, and pilgrimages and all blessings.

Retribution followed. King Henry the Fourthe caused to be promulgated a statute *De Haeretico Comburendo*, of the Burning of Heretickes, in the yere of Incarnacion M<sup>l</sup>CCCC1, which banneth the Lollers, prohibiteth translation of the

Scripture, or the very possession of English bokes, and authorised the heretickes to be tried by Holy Church but handed over then incontinent to the Kingis officers for byrning. Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, assisted by other bishops, as Despenser the Crusader of Norwich, byrned both bokes and bodies.

A notable hereticke was John Badby. He suffered the cruel death at which Prince Harry was present. Fastolfe conceyeth it a necessary cruelty, as doth Jack. But I cannot in my heart conceyde that. I much agree with Bishoppe Pecock, who hath written much against the Lollers but saith *we ought by clere witte and reason draw men into consent of trew faith otherwise than by fire and sword or hangement*.<sup>30</sup> Byrning may create new martyrs. Who knoweth but that Master Badby will one day be hailed as a Manly Man by sundrie perverters of the Faith? And, though I am no hereticke, I hath allways thought it a noble conceyte to translate the Testaments. Would that not make it easier to reason with these fellows and with the likes of Jack, who yerneth after truth but cannot recon Latin or Frensh? Nor can he rede Englishshe, but he could have it red to him.

But Sir John conceyeth the heretickes have onlie themselves to blame for this cruelty. For they are prosecuted onlie if they be obstinate or relapsed, and they may allwayes recant, provided they find others to purge with them. Oldcastle, who saith the Pope was Antichrist and the Archbishop was his privy member and the Friars were his arse, was yeven 40 days to repent and yet persisted in his treason to God and the King. And Badby was offered life, liberty and a pension of 3d a day.

I asked my Master if a recanting hereticke were required to do any penance and he said most certaynley for he hath known a man walk all around Norwich bareheaded and barefoot, clad in a shirte, starting in the market place and finishing in the Cathedral aye and a man might catch his death of cold as the result. But better too cold than too hot.

## 22 September

To the Guildhall for work on Sir Johnis title in Blickling.

Sir John grudgeth Jack Napes. He asketh what doth any man expect of a fellow whose grete-grandfather was a wool merchant from Hull? For him the profession of arms is the onlie road to gentility. But truth is Jack Napes did serve his countrie in the Werres as did manie of his family. He was seriously wounded at our takking of Harfleur, where his father was killed. Later that yere his elder brother Michael was killed at Agincourt. It was that which led to his becoming Erle. And he was a commander of the meyny<sup>31</sup> at the siege of Orléans. And after the

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<sup>30</sup> Reginald Pecock was appointed Bishop of St Asaph in June 1444 and Bishop of Chichester in 1450. He was an ardent opponent of the Lollards but appealed to reason rather than the authority of the Church in doing so. For this reason, he was investigated, condemned for heresy, and deprived of office: see V.H.H.Green, *Bishop Reginald Pecock* (C.U.P., 1945).

<sup>31</sup> Army.

Captain-General, Erle of Salisbury, had his head shot off by a bombard, Jack Napes gained promotion. But when that great city was relieved by the Witch whoome the Frenshe calle Joan of Arc, he retreated and surrendered to her at Jargeau, remaining a prisoner three yeres, when men sayeth now that he did turn Frensshe. And other men say, that the night before he yielded himself, he lay in bed with a Frenshe nun of the cloister, whom he took out of holy profession and defouled with the act of duplication, by which he got a bastard daughter.t

After his release on ransom, this Jack Napes became a favourite at our court and made Constable of Wallingford. And all the while that Sir John was still fighting in Fraunce, Jack Napes was insinuating. He hath then bene made Steward of all estates of the Duchy of Lancaster in the County of Norfolk which, with his own estates in Suffolk, makyth him Master of all East Anglia. And now he hath married Princess Margaret of Anjew on the Kingis behalf and bene made Marquess of Suffolke for negotiating the marriage. And some saith this was not his onlie reward and that when he married the Princess as proxy he proceeded allso to consummate the marriage on the Kingis behalf, though he is married to Dame Alice and should keep his vow of matrimony. And this is another result of the duplication.

But Jack Napes rewls alle England now. Men say the Good Duk Humfrey is not long for this world, albeit he is the Kings uncle and Harrys brother.

## 23 September

I hath bene redeing the *Chronicle Universalle* of Brother Ranulfe Higden but he is not allwayes reliable. Brother Higden saith there are wolves seen in England still. But I have never met any one yet who did see one.

To the tavern of Henry Backster and, God forgive me, there was singing and we had the company of women, by Jack his arrangement. And it semeth to make little difference in these East Anglian parts, whether a woeman be married or no. I talked to the Maid nexte to me, of Religion and the Friars, of whom she semeth to knew a few. But she showed little interest in my talking. And when I saith I did not want to touch her Parts, she semeth right confused. And so we all four ate bred and chese at my expense and Jack did enjoy himself and I thought much on God. But Jack did bragge about how he hath enjoyed the Solaces of the Upper Part and would to God he had enjoyed the Lower too. I damned him for a filthy beast and an sodde. He was hurt and asketh me to explain myself. I tried to do so. I said *When thou have sought the company of a sensual satisfaction, what loneliness afterwards followeth...*

But was he was not convinced of this and semeth right confused, een as much as the Maid. It is easy thinge to say in Oxenford where there are manie men who dreame only of philosophie and their minds runne not on wimmin. But Methinks Master Bacon had it aright when he saith that some thinges can onlie be known by

observation and experience.

I went to Mass in the Cathedral and confession. The priest doth not know me here. I asketh forgiveness for the sins both of impure thought and conduct. And told him of my vow. He asketh if I thought I had broken it. I saith I was unsure. For I conceyve I hath broken it in my heart but not in dede. Is it fornication for a man to look upon a woman with desyre in his heart? He saith it is and imposeth a penance, though not grave. Only the very fornicators are made to walk through the streets in a white shirt and candle. And this is a lesson to me, to kepe to my vowe, in deed allwayes and in thought where I canne.

## 24 September

To another tavern, where the maid is very beauteous. Jack spent a little time with her and afterwards bragged he hath this tyme enjoyed both Solaces. And all this I had to pay for, for he is my servant. I damned him for a Fornicator. He damned me for the sinne of Onan. I would have hitte him but he is the stronger. Jack doth despise me for my timiditie. He understandeth not my vow. Nor doth the maids for it is my monie.

To Mass and Confession to another priest, including the matter of my vow. It doth ease my Ghoste but I know not if easeth my Soul. What if the Lollers be right and the Priest hath no power to forgive Sin, nay no more than the Pardoners? Then all unclean thoughts and deeds will be debited to my accompt in Purgatorie hereafter. But then methinks, if the Lollers be right, there is no such place and it is straight to Hell for me.

Sir John was oft in Norwich but no longer goeth there. He saw his counsaile there, had a house there, did busyness and attended the Guild of St George. He and old Sir Thomas worked together to obtain the Guild charter from King Harry, betimes after Agincourt. The Guild at Norwich hath a silver gilt statue of an angel, saith to contain an arm belonging to the Saint, the gift of Sir John. And yet he quarrelled with the men of Norwich, as with so manie others.

I asked Sir John why. He saith that some of the men of Norwich saith in jest there is something of the smell of fische about Fastolf. For he lives out at Caister by Sea, he liketh to dine on lamprey and hath defeated the Frensh at a battle known as The Herrings. And others say a man should be wary of going to dinner with John Fastolf for *he should pay well therefor*.

Sir John took these japes as a grete affront to his dignitie and estate.

## 25 September

Yeven to Richard Elys in regard to inspecting evidence of Thrigby 4d.

Tis time to make for Caister but afore I walked to the Swanne and sent for a

maid. It is a large House and we had a privat room for very little; and I did get her hand to me under my clothinge and did take off her outer garment for a while, while she served me but allowed her to share a little of my supper, which salved my conscience at what she did. I kissed her and touched her. And she would have done more for me if I had wanted. And at the time I was not sadde.<sup>32</sup>

God forgive me, and pardon the breach of my vowe but I find it is an itche I cannot leave unscratched.

## 26 September

Mass and Confession. It is time I moved away from this city. My hope is the countrie air will do me good, both in body, Ghoste and Soul. I find worke a grete diversion of evil thought. But the itche returneth constantlie.

Saynte Peter Maincroft is 90 of my paces long and 40 wide. The aisle of the Church is 80 paces long. It hath a most unusual alabaster, with a group of 9 female virgin saints, St Margaret of Antioch and her dragon in the centre. In the reliquary they have pieces of Jesuis Manger, part of his Cross, part of the Burning Bush of Moses and a Hairshirt belonging to Thomas-a-Becket.

All the talk is of the visitation of the parishes and what the Bishoppe hathe found. Three men hath accused Margaret Lindsay of casting a spelle which made them unpotent. But she purged herself with the oath of five women. The three are now themselves a-shamed and forbidden to repeat the slander, upon paine of excommunication. There were twain women accused of using the art of witchecraft and saying to spinsters desirous of marriage that they would make them to have the men whom they affecte and desire to have. In another case, a woman so bewitched her parish prieste that he sinned and spent monie on her and founde his way to close prison.

And then, in the midst of this banter, I see Mistress Gladman, with her stately bearing and her widow weeds, gliding out Holy Church with her attendant. She hath taken off her veil and I could see the side of her face, though not the full visage. She hath a most noble and worshipful forehead. Why doth she seme familiar?

## 27 September

MEMORANDUM. When the Emperor Sigismund left England, which I compute was the yere after I was born M<sup>1</sup>CCCCIV, he wrote *Farewell and rejoyce in thy glorious triumphs, O thou contented England, and blessed be for thine allmost angelic nature.*

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<sup>32</sup> Prudent.



*Adoring Jesus with glorious prayse thou are of right renowned. This prayse I give thee of due right thou deserveth.*

Tis a pleasant thinge to conceyve that strangers love this land of ours, though we for our parte grudge them muche. Yet I scarcely conceyve that Sigismundhis opinion did much good for King Harry. The Frenshe did not yield after Agincourt, despite the drubbing he hath given them and the Emperour of Almaynies frendshippe.

## 28 September

In Fraunce they speak of a kind of love which is like unto a thunderclap, which striketh a man without advertisement and renders him spekeless. But they saith that this kind of love doth not exist between a man and hys wyff, which I find hard to credit. They also preach adultery, though in pretty stories, which is Sinful.

I once asked Sir John if those courts of love, of which we rede, ever did exist in Fraunce. He saith he hath never seen them in session but Fraunce is a large countrie, so vast he hath onlie bene in the North and in Guienne,<sup>33</sup> and still not seen one half of it. There may be courts like this in Toulouse or Carcassonne for alle he knoweth. Or in the Province of King Rainier.<sup>34</sup> Or in the lands Raynier claims in Naples. But what they say of love is onlie what you find in the Frenshe romances and in our Matter of Britain. Looke at the tale of Lancelot and Guinevere per exemplum.

I asked him then what he thought then of this kind of love. He saith no working soudeour, or yeoman, or tinker or tailor, or merchant or ploughman hath time for this kind of non sense. He is too busy. He needeth a wyff to support him, be his companion, brede his children and look after his house. And the wyf needeth a husbandman to work for her and defend her, and not a picture to worshippe from afar. And therefor I conceyve that the tales be entertaining but a fancie.

## 29 September - Michelmasse

The feast of Saint Michael the Archangel, patron saint of the sea, of ships and boatmen, and especial to Norwich which lives by trade. When I was in Normandie I saw that this province, being home to manie mariners, honours him above all others. The Mont-Saint-Michel, which was mother house of St Michaelis Mount in Cornwall before the Werres, is a grete centre of devocion and pilgrymye, though not so

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<sup>33</sup> Guienne was the English abbreviation of Aquitaine, synonymous with Gascony, amongst the English.

<sup>34</sup> Provence.

mighty as Rome the Grete.

This is a Holy Day of Obligation.

A Christian should go to Mass and abstayne from activity which hinders worship. Countrie folk say blackberries should not be picked after this feast. For that when Michael banished Satan, he fell into a blackberry bush and cursed the brambles as he fell among them.

A quarter day, when men pay rents and settle debts.

Servants are hired and fired, accompts settled, a reckoning made and recorded. And lawsuits settled, although this doth not apply to Sir John, who never doth yield, in law or in werre.

Geese are tasty at this time of yere.

Terme beginneth at Oxenford and Bridge of Cam.

## 30 September

Doth History move round and about? The favourites of Dame Fortune would have it so. In the young days of King Edward, thirde of that name after the Conquest, it is clere from Master Froissart his Chronicle that we were up and the Frenshe were down.

Then came a time, when Charles the Fifte called the Wise was on their throne and Richard the Unwise of Bordeaux on ours and the Wheel turned. Then they were up and we were down. First turn of the Wheel.

Then the Dame turned her Wheel a second time, when the Frensh King Charles the Sixte called Well-Beloved thought he was made of glass and might breke, and we had Harry the Grete, and the Frensh kingdom was rent by civil war and ours was not. And that was the time of Agincourt and the conquest of Normandie, when Sir John was made governor of Paris and our meyny reached the Loire.

But now men fere the Wheel hath turned for a third time, for now their old Dolphin is become new King Charles the Seventh, while we have the queer fysh as King. And some fere he is mad like his Frensh father in law. And in short the Frensh are coming up, and we are going down.

Master Froissart tells of a time, a few yeres after the Rifling Time,<sup>35</sup> when the countrie lived in fere of invasion. And it was the plan of the Frensh Lords to embark at the port of Sclose,<sup>36</sup> sail for England, and destroy our whole countrie. Grete armaments were made in Fraunce. Heavy levies of subsidy were imposed and grete preparations made by sea and by land. The whole summer was employed in grinding flour, and making biscuits in Arras, Lille, Amiens, St. Omer and all the towns nearby. There was not a vessel of any size, from the port of Seville to Prussia,

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<sup>35</sup> The Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

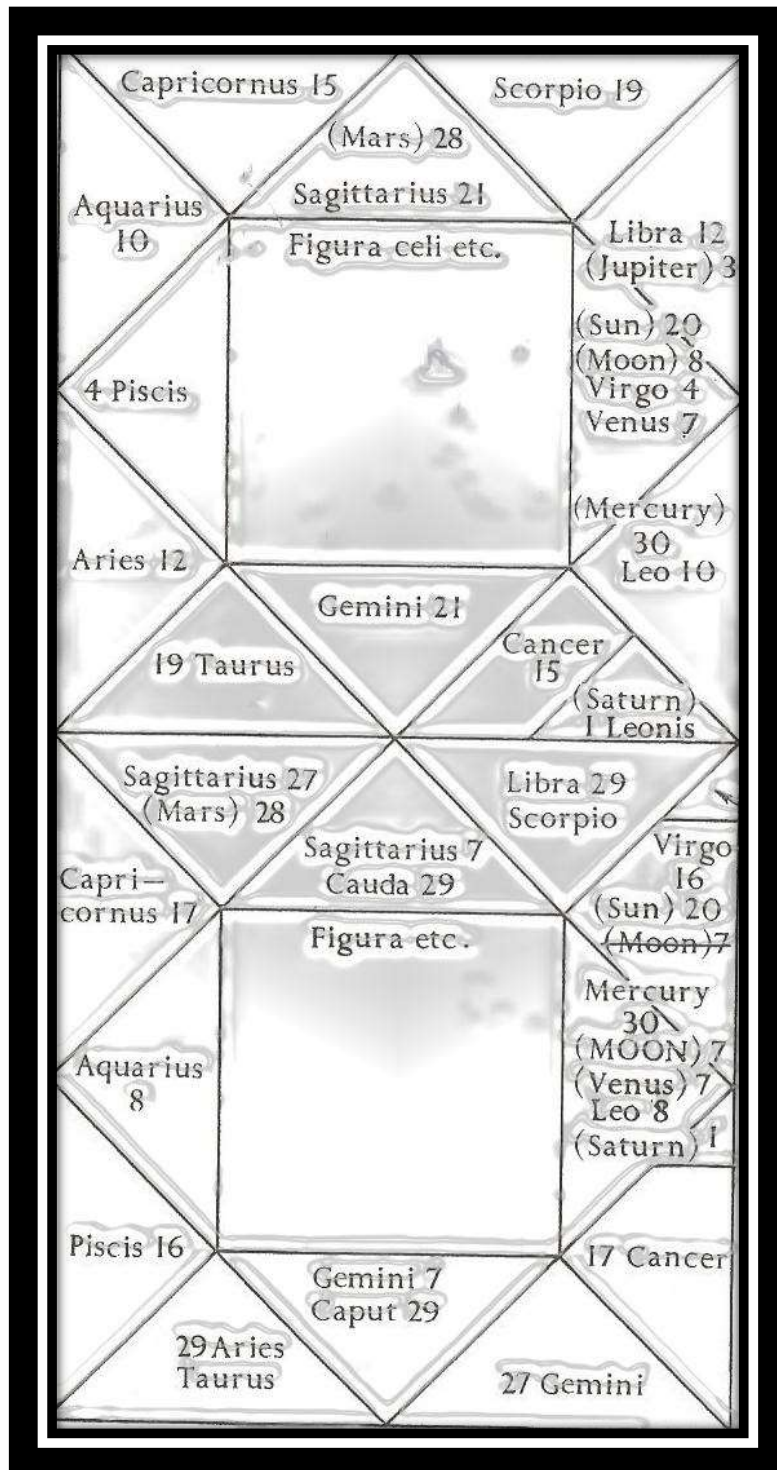
<sup>36</sup> Sluys.

that they could lay hands on but was seized, by fair or foul means, for the king of Fraunce.

The Frensh Constable constructed a town of frame-work, of large timber, which was to be put together, on their landing in England, for the lords to retreat to as a place of safety, and be lodged therein. This town was so constructed, that when they dislodged, it could be taken to pieces, roofs and all. Whoever had bene at Damme, Bruges, or Scluse at this time, and had seen how busily all were employed in loading the vessels with hay in trusses, garlic, onions, biscuit in sacks, pease, benes, cheese-bowls, barley, oats, rye, wheat, wax-candles, housings, shoes, botes, helmettes, spurs, knives, hatchets, wedges, pick-axes, hokes, wooden pegs, fat pigs, kitchen furniture, utensils for the buttery and every article necessary for man or beast, would have bene struck dumb with astonishment.

How Master Froissart doth love a list! And yet he was the gretest of writers. He holds together so manie stories and episodes, weaving one with another, first following one theme or campaign, then another, but taking care to breke off at a point where he can conveniently pick up the first later on. And levet his reders panting.

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A Map of the Heavens, done in September, for Sir John Fastolf

## II

### 1 October, Castle Fastolf

Sir John hath manie mansions in Southwark, Yarmouth and Blickling. But the finest of these is is the Castle he hath built all anew at West Caister.

I arrived in the neighbour hood and asked for directions. A yokel directed me to *Caister by the Sea* and I found myself on a bleak and barren coast, with low sandbanks skirting the Almayn Ocean. I turned around and asked agayne, before being directed to *Caister on the Marsh*. My error cost me six miles, but at last I came upon Castle Fastolf. It is fine built alle of brick and is both crenellayted and machicolayted.<sup>37</sup> There are beasts leapeing out from the parappets, wyverns and dragons, bears and wolves, some vomiting rainwater. The air reeks of woodsmoke and horse piss.

The drawbridge was down and I found Sir John and the men in the Outer Court. I bowed to him but he bid me stand and watch. A man doth forget how tall he is when erect.

Before me was a spectacle alle groteskque. They were inflicting an corporeal punishment on a manne whom they hath adjudged a Tuddenham Spy. They hath stripped him and beaten on him and made him run between twain lines, while they shouted and jeered and slapped his arse with fire buckets. At the last they booted him out of the Castle and he went running down the lane, screaming whilst all the while he gave them the evil eye. They threw his clothes after him so he should not freze. Sir John saith he hath got off lightly.

The old knight approacheth, smelling of verjus. Then he asketh me why I took so long and whether I had found anything of interest in Norwich? I said I had and would make a full report. He said but thou must have set off from Southwark over thre weke ago and why doth it take so long to make the journey and look up a few titles. *What else hast thou bene doing?*

I said the Norwich Guildhall was a difficult place to fathom, like unto the Almayn Ocean and a manne has to be careful for Tuddenham spies were everywhere. And the Norwich Domesday was a wonderful thinge to contemplate but devilish hard to interpret.

He accepted that but wanted to play the cat with the mouse. He saith I had

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<sup>37</sup> Battlements. .

bene gone so long he fereed for my virtue. Norwich was a fouldsome place – they hath riots there last yere - and there was publicke voice and fame that there were manie wicked women there. And some of them would set their cap at me if they had their chance. I would not keep my innocence long if I spent much time in Norwich, whereas for his parte he hopped to make a match for me and wanted honestlie to give me the right warrantie, when he sold me.

I blushed for I kneweth not how to take this play.

*You jest, Sir. Norwich is a fine place, and the citizens both prosperous and virtuous. And I had my hands full the whole time with your Honour his busyness.*

*Well, well I am sure thou didst, but remember to keep the tail male separate from the tail female.*

He guffawed, chered by his own joke, though it was a coarse thing for anie one but are versed in the indentures.

They shewed me to a chamber over the Barge House, excedeing colde and dampe, infested with varmin and lyce. But so is the rest of the Place.

## 2 October

Matthew Gough hath written terrible stories from the siege of Metz. It is reported that the Frensh, with our assistance during this Trewe, hath deployed grete culverins, while the Metzers have blown up part of their city to shorten the lyne. The cruelties on eyther syde to prisoners are unspekable. The attackers and the besiegers each have men clept Flayers. But the Metzers are so rich they will buy the departure of their tormentors.

Sir John asked me for my report on my ensearches in Norwich, which toke a longwhile but eventually we passed to other thinges.

I asked Sir John the name of that village where the children are born with tails, which Silvio hath spaken of. Some say it was Strood in Kent. But he hath never bene there and could not vouch for that. And others say the village is in Dorset Shire, but he did not know its name. It was said by those of the Dorset persuasion that in the time of St Augustine, the Saint hath bene mocked by some doubting Thomases in that village. They hath bene impudent and cried stynking fysh and threw tails of thornback rays<sup>38</sup> upon his back, and the backs of his companions. Whereupon the Saint sent them a judgement from God, so that the children who were born in that place thereafter were born with tayles.

I saith I found this tayle of tayles hard to trow, though there are manie visitors to England who have remarked upon it. I asked if other nacions were not so cursed.

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<sup>38</sup> A kind of fish.

*Not so far as I ken, William, though there was a story current in Fraunce of a Almayn squire, knighted in Prussia, who had a tayle and founded an Order of Tayled Knights. But, upon due enquiry, I find it was a pigtail.*

And after dinner he sends for me agayne and tells me he wants me to write a Grete Boke, with a Pageant. He knoweth full well that one such is being prepared for John Paston and another for the Lord Talbot his enemy, but these are a blank melange of history, the art of war, courtesie, heraldry and poetry. He wishes to better them by preparing a Boke about the grete problem of our daies. Of how King Harry won at Agincourt, and we cannot win a brawl in a tavern. How was Grete Harry able to conquer the better half of Fraunce? And Somerset, in the late expedition, one miserable town in Normandie, which expedicion broke him nonetheless? How could we lose 300 men at Dieppe when Harry suffered no casualties to speke of at Agincourt, save the Duk of York and Erle of Suffolk? If we could explain this, he would wish to present this Grete Boke to the Duk his nephew, as the man most likely to take us back to Fraunce in triumph.

I may have a yere to complete it. As for the Pageant, I should use my judgment as to numbers. But not too manie and not too few was his watchword in all matters.

I saith I doubted my hability for this task. I was used to certayne kinds of scrivening, as abstracts of title and lists of positions my master hath held in Fraunce and England, of places he hath taken, inventories, rent-rolls, correspondence and descryptions of buildings and churches, but a tract such as this was newe to me. And as for the Pageant I had no skill in drawing. Surely he could write the Boke himself and pay others for scrivening and drawing both?

He saith he is an old dog and these new tricks. He hath written manie memoranda for the council Royal, but no one listens to him anie more. But thou hast a way with words, William, he saith. Dost thou want to remain a porely scrivener all thy days?

*I can tell thee much about the Erly yeres. Thou knowest that even before Agincourt I supplied grete quantities of cloth for uniforms to the King, and manie secret services for Harry. And I advised in conference about the planning of the expedition, along with the Duk of York and Old Sir Thomas of Erpingham. I helped decide they sail for Normandie allthough we spred it abroad they were headed elsewhere. But I can onlie tell thee of all this to the yere of thirty-nine. For the rest thou must look to Peter and Osbert and the others. They hath fought in Normandie and Guienne the more recently. Take them into thy confidence. Win them to your syde. Tell them tales of chevalrie from Master Froissart his Chronicles. Try not to get involved in low talk with their men, nor with the dirtie stories they delite in.*

I still doubted my hability. But Sir John is my master and I agrede to try. His eye twinkled att mee.

*Good man. I will make it worth thy while. I may even arrange that marriage for thee.*

### 3 October

I hath bene walking in the afternoon, down the lane to West Caister. And saw some house martins going to roost in low shrubs there. Methinks they may spend the winter in places such as this. But some fools doth conceyve they fly off to Fraunce for that purpose. A man could wish that he could fly, tho. But Jack saith if God hath wanted us to fly, he would have yeven us wings. So saith manie of the rusticke folk, aye and smiths and tailors and carpenters.

Sir John oft lectures the men on how to resist a siege – for he is not sure that the brick of his Castle would withstand the grete gunnes, if the Frensh should land on the coste. He tells them of the second siege of Harfleur, when he commanded in the town.

*When part of the Frensh meyny sat down, after Harry had left for Agincourt, they sat much longer than when we did six months afore. Their siege lasted all through the winter and our privation was the greter. We Captains defended the place with onlie 1,500 soudeours and xxxiiij knights, agaynste the mighty power of Fraunce by the space of one yere and a half, though our main force had long since departed with Harry.*

*We began to run out of food quite hastily. The Frensh were masters of the Narrow Sea and could prevent supplies arriving from England, and they tightened their hold on the landward side, piece by piece. In default of the relief, we sent out foragers but it was hard work and bloody. In the last week of November, I led a large party to the sally. We broke out and approached within six miles of Rouan, capturing 500 prisoners at Le Pauly, but could not hold on to them when we were attacked.*

*Shortly after New Yere M<sup>i</sup> xxxxvj,<sup>39</sup> we were reinforced and on 9 March my Master Dorset led a second rayde, agayne with the aim of obtayning provisions to hearten our men. We had around 1,000 horse with us. But they knew we were coming and caught up with us at Valmont, a few miles from the coste. They ambushed us, the dirtie couards, though nothing foul the Frensh do should ever surprise an Englisshe man. There were 5,000 of them, or more, led by the Cunte of Arminake, Constable of Fraunce, and they gave us a drubbing.*

*But we contrived to re-group and withdrew with the night. We reached the coste at Estretat and marched back on Harfleure along the shoreline, eventually reaching the maw of Seine at Kiddycocks,<sup>40</sup> where we avenged our defeat, made good our losses of stores, and took manie prisoners.*

*Een so, we were reduced to eating the horses, when we got back to Harfleur, which made some men cry. And a wretched cowis head was sold for 6 shillings and 8 pennies*

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<sup>39</sup> 1416.

<sup>40</sup> Chef de Caux.



*sterling and the tongue for 40 shillings. More than 500 of the garrison died in default of sustenance. But we came through and never yielded.*

*Every man kepeing the scout watch had a mastie hound on a leash, to bark and warn off any adverse party, coming to the dyke or approaching the town to scale it. And the good Duk of Bedford with manie myghtie shippes broke the blockade in the maw of Seine on the fifteenth of August One Thousand, Four Hundred and Sixtene.*

It apered to me that this constant repeyting of what we once did at Harfleur is little to the point, now a daies. What is Harfleur, compared to Constantinopolis? And what is to be done when the Grand Turk doth attack it, as he Will with his thousands. Methinks een now that I here the clarion call to his meyny, far off in the land of the horse archers.

## 4 October

In the morning, I was mostlie busie writing a bill for Sir John to Thomas Howes<sup>41</sup> about Lady Bardolphs matter.

MEMORANDUM that the Grete Hall in Castle Fastolf is 38 of my paces long, which makyth 59 feet, and 16 paces or 28 feet in width. It is still much in use, for Sir John liketh the old ways. There is a hi table and a lo, of which I am glad. For as the poet saith

*Woe is in the halle each day in the weke  
Where the lord and lady liketh not to sitte  
Now everie rich man eats by hymself  
In a privat parlour,  
To be rid of pore men.<sup>42</sup>*

But at Caister the men sit on the benches, in the Grete Hall as of old. They can be rough, and they do oftentimes stinke, and a man would not want to come too close when they are at work with their knives at the trenchers. But Sir John never did withdraw to his room until after dinner, nor doth he do so now that he hath reched the fourth age, though he is robust. Tis pittie he hath not a sonne to lern this way of living, for manners makyth man, as they say in Wynchester of Alfrede.

This Castle is not complete, though it hath bene a-building manie a yere. But it makyth for a syght, rising up to the Heaven. A huge raw house, all built in brick, like Tattershall of Cromwell, but with augmentacion, as there are twain skytehouses of brick, one for the men in the Outer Court and one for the women in the Inner and

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<sup>41</sup> A letter to the parson of Castle Combe, one of Fastolf's servants.

<sup>42</sup> From William Langland's *Piers Plowman*.

this I have never sene before. The windows look out on the common fields and village, and beyond them is the sea on one side, on the other the vast fen. A single road crosses the fen, but there is allredy a hole in it, big enoughe to swallow a cart or a cowe. Not far off the little bit of wood at Bromholm, fragment of the true Cross, brings pilgryms to the Priory. Men saie they turn for home with limbs straightened and eyes freshly opened.

There are more than fiftie folk living in the Castle, according to the steward his roll. These yncludeth gentle-fol, servants, yeomen, grooms and Fastolf *Poursuivant* or Herald, though he be away in Fraunce nowe. The servants ynclude cook, butler, gardener, waterbailly, the man who looks after the swans, Chaplayne, Bursar, Steward, and the recevyers, surveyors and auditors who ride forth, for Sir John hath manie manors. And then there are the menials and the wyffes, washerwomen and maids and Jacks of all traydes.

Sir John hath a well funded and well stocked Infirmary including Surgeon, Physician and Apothecary. They practique the Art of Medicine, but I doubt any hath lerned the University Reding. Yet they be more than leeches. The Physician is said to be an incomparable judge of urine, and hath copious supplies of mercury for the men, supplied by the Pothecary.

Sir John hath twain masty hounds, Harry and Bedford his brother, and manie dogges.

Dame Millicent<sup>43</sup> is not a well woman. She stayeth in her Chamber and descendeth not the stair. The maids serve her constantly, and she gyveth them little thanks, for she is mostly in pain. She is a good dele older than her husband. Her son, Sir Stephen, minds her not, though he be her son and not Sir Johnis. I verily trow she hath bene gretely disappoynted in him.

## 6 October, the Translation of St Hugh

Tom Topcroft, bricklayer, hath bene touched by the light of the Moon and rangeth forth round Caister halfnaked, threatening to kill any man who cometh near him, out of Christian charity.

The Northern poet hath written, of a castle not unliken to ours

*No better barbican hath ever bene beheld by that knight  
And inside there was a splendid hall  
With towers and turrets on top, all tipped with crenellacion.*<sup>44</sup>

The Chefe Surveyor telleth me that around £6,000 was spent on the buildyng. There is an Inner and an Outer Court, with over 50 rooms, including apartments and

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<sup>43</sup> Fastolf.

<sup>44</sup> From *Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight*.

quarters. A fine Chapel painted. 28 bedrooms with 39 beds, kitchen, larder, cellar, pantry. And Stew. Outside are stables reeking of horse piss, a tack room smelling of saddle leather, bakehouses smelling of bread, a brewhouse smelling of ale, a bargehouse stinking of rats and a garden with gardener full of stinks and smells. I will not even try to describe the stink from the Apothecary's shop.

This Potheary hath a recipe to cure the bite of a mad dog, a thing which hath never yet been attempted: *Take the shells of a good manie Male Oysters, calcine them in an oven or crucible, grind them in a mortar with pestle, add a pint of whyte wyne..... The let the Patient drinke it, and by all means not to touch Butter or anyting Oily during the Cure.*

Sir John hath obtained a licence to crenellate, as much for the fashion as for the defence. Yet there are extensive wet moats, and the Grete Tower hath five storeys and standeth 90 feet hi, by my reckoning, though a man might need the Astrolabe and the Arab calculations to measure this precisely. There are gunlopes and arrow-slits, a drawbridge and wall-walk for sentries, for we overlook a wide stretch of the coast.

Yet this castle is allso a rich jewel. Twain halls, one for Winter and one for Summer. There is lighting, heating and washing, while the privat rooms have single or joined stoles. There is no shortage of playces to piss and skyte. There are feather beds and not solely in Sir Johnis chamber. Even the cook sleepeth under a coverlet decorated with roses and the heads of blodehounds. There is good white window glass from Norwich and fine relliefs. A man who hath travailled hard and slept in countrie and town inns will find all that he needs here for peace and repose. Save for a harlot to share his bed. For Sir John is strict in suchelike matters.

He liveth well. There are cushions and pillows. There are sumptuous clothes, gaming boards, cards and chesemen for the play. And I remark he hath not the rook in this but a berserk knight, biting the top of his shield. And the bishoppe wears his mitre sideways. But Sir John liketh not the play of chesse, though King Harry was a player. He saith it resembleth not war, and is fit onlie for flirtation between men and women, which he doth abhorr. For myself, I have played it but liketh it not, for I lack the will to win and the flirteing would be against my vowe, tho I hath brokyn it.

Sir John impaleth his wyff her cote of arms with his own, and displayeth these and his motto

*Me Faut Faire  
Which signifieth  
I must be up and doing.*

Fitting words for a man who hath spent allmost 30 yeres a-fighting in Fraunce and hath not ceased to strive for the right, even into his fourthe age. Over the oriel window in the Grete Hall, he displays his own arms, yncluded a grete helm with Garter collar, surmounted by a feathered crest. Twain feathered angels doth

support this and they shew a man the Fastolf shield, Garter belt and Garter motto

*Honi soit qui mal y pense*  
Which signifieth  
*Shame to those who evil conceyve.*

What is it that the man here did conceyve? Some say this speketh of the claim of our King to the Frensh Crown. And some say it speketh of the Countess of Salisbury her queynt. The feathered angels doth intrigue me. They resemble those I saw in Norwich. There are manie cloths of Arras<sup>45</sup>. There is a gyant bering the leg of a bear in his hand. There is the Adoration of the Shepherds and the Assumption of our Lady. Another sheweth the nine Worthies.<sup>46</sup> Another sheweth a Moorish, or Morris dance, as we saie now. Another, hung on the south-west side of the Grete Hall, shews the siege of a town. But whether it be Falaise in Normandie, or Phallist of the Ancients, I know not. Tis true Sir John was at Falaise. I must ask him.

MEMORANDUM. These Nine Worthies are yet added to, even in our Days of Decline. The Frensh hath tried to add the Constabule Bertrand du Guesclin. But some Englisshe hath added Harry Fift. And others talk of King Arthur, King of the Breton blode, and of those other grete kings of England, Alfred, Edmund Ironside, William Conqueror, Richard Cuer de Lion and Edward the Firste who was a croisader.

But others agayne say that Richard, late Erle of Warwick was a Worthie Man. He fought Glendower in Wales. He was Captain of Calais. He was tutor to Henry Sixt and went with him to his coronacion in Fraunce. He went on a voyage to the Holy Land. He allso went to Constanz and jousted with a lord of Almayne in the coat armour of Warwick. He jousted a second time in the arms of the lord of Elmsley Castle. The third time he bore on his surcoat the arms of the barony of Hanslope. He was Lieutenant of Normandie and died full sicke in Rouen, where he hath kept Joan, the Witch of Orliens. When this Erle was appointed tutor to King Henry the Sext he was instructed to teche him letters, languages, manners and other things it fitteth a prince to be lerned of. And was likewise given full authority to chastise him for his faults, and if he sought evil company. But, though the Prince was chastised, he kept evil companions still.

## 8 October, the Translation of St Alphege

Jack brought me a bill from my mother, delivered at West Caister, a most strange

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<sup>45</sup> Tapestries.

<sup>46</sup> Hector of Troy, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar; Joshua, David and Judas Maccabeus; King Arthur, Charlemagne and Godfrey de Bouillon.

thinge. It was brought along the pot holed road, by a man who did not tarry.

*Right worshipful son, I recommend me to thee, desiring heartily to hear of thy welfare, thanking God of thy mending of the grete disease thou hast had. For by my troth I am never in heart ease when Methinks of thy condition and thy affliction in the arse end. Now thou art in that flat county I would urge that thou givest an image of wax to Our Lady of Walsingham. And give some nobles to the four orders of Friars at Norwich to pray for thee. And conceyve about going on pilgrimage. GO NOT TO ROME but to the shrine at Walsingham, or to St Leonard in Norwich or to Bromholm Priory for thy health sake.*

Oh mother mine! To make such a commotion about a disease that manie hath, and perchance sheweth me up to the men as a feminate. For they will all have bene told of this bill by the messenger, or will be when they meet him in the tavern. And as for Holy Walsingham it is a twain day ride, and getting there would gretely worsen my affliction, which at times hath me in agonie. And doth she conceyve I have all the time in the World for these constant pilgrimages when I have Sir Johnis busyness to attend to, and now this blessed Boke to worret me. And what doth she conceyve I shall use for monie?

## 9 October

Tuddenham spies have sprede the word that Sir John used to be one of those hereticke knights who enjoyed the Royal favour under John of Gaunt in Richard of Bordeaux<sup>47</sup> his time and somehow keep their flame alive now in the time of persecution. But this is a bigge lie.

I know this for certayne for I have bene writing and rewriting Fastolfe his Will and Testament the last several yeres, for the attention of his lawyers. Sir John allways refers to the pain and anguisshe which he doth expect in Purgatorie. He desireth that an annual Mass be said in his memorie in St Georgis Chapel in Windsor. And if he hath his way, Caister will become a place where holy men sing a continual round of Masses for the benefit of his Soul, in the attempt to reduce the Pain of It. Yet, if the Lollers be right, there is *no such thinge as Purgatorie* and we must Ymagyne that above us there is onlie Heaven, and below us onlie Hell.

And Sir John saith, if the chantry be not built at Caister, his executors must pull down the Castle, and every stone and stick thereof, liefer than allow some other Christian to enjoy it. Yet he hath yeven generously to the Church at Castle Combe, a Font, West Tower and clock. He is benefactor of the regular clergie and a patron of St Benet his Abbey, where tis his hearts wish to be buried. And the chapel of the Castle here is most semely bedecked, with chalice, candlestick and pyx, all gilt. No Loller he, for all some fools doth say. Nay, a doughtie supporter of Holy Catholicke

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<sup>47</sup> Richard II. King of England 1377-99, the son of the Black Prince, was born in Bordeaux in 1367. He led two expeditions to Ireland, in 1394 and again in 1399, just before he was deposed by Henry IV.

Church.

## 10 October

Methinks Master Chaucer hath penned some lines about our Chaplayne, though nayther ever knew the other

*A good man of religion was wyth us  
A parish priest, and impecunious.  
But he was rich in faithe and charitie  
And a grete scholar of theologie.*

He is of the same ayge and type as me. His name is Andrew. He saith he hath onlie bene appointed of late, having replaced a manne who would not serve Sir John, for that he experimented with the Devil his work, in the shape of fire arms.

I asketh Andrew if he hath not the same objection.

He saith not since King Harry Fift had great gunnes and the Frensh and the Turk both hath great gunnes, better than ours semely, so it was impolitick to renounce the weapon on the grounds of Christian teching, for the Turk would suppress Christianity altogether if he had his waye.

I told him that at Oxenford I had red another Andrew, allso a Chaplayne. And this Andrew copied the tract of Albert the Grete, who wrote of the solaces of Women, and of their Upper and Lower Partes. We agreed it was a silly debate and hardly fit for the University redeing.

Sir John took me on a tour of the Armoury, to check the Inventory.

*Twain gunnes with eight chambers shooting a stone seven inches thick twenty inches compass.*

*A serpentine with three chambers shooting a stone of ten inches compass.*

*Three fowlers shooting a stone of twelve inches compass.*

*Twain short gunnes for ships with six chambers.*

*Twain small serpentines to shoot lead pellets.*

*Four gunnes lying in stocks to shoot lead pellets.*

*Seven hand gunnes with other abyllmentes<sup>48</sup> belonging to the saith gunnes.*

*Twenty-four shields of elm board, twain of galain.*

*Eight old-fashioned suits of white armour.*

*Ten pairs of body armour, worn out.*

**Et cetera et cetera**

Sir John said that Tuddenhamhis spies had spred it round that he was loseing

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<sup>48</sup> Equipment.

After Agincourt

his reason and that he had onlie armour that was old-fashioned and worn out. But the sallets were all of the latest type. And he was particularly pleased with his lead hammers. He could see a day when they might do mighty execution upon the French agayne, as they had at Agincourt. But I asked him why no longbows - onlie crossbows, though these be of best steel?

*Longbows are no good for defending a castle or town, William. Nor for attacking one, nayther. They are onlie any use in the field, and then onlie when used in large numbers. And then onlie when thou canst prepare thy positions.*

*You have manie gunnes too, Sir John.*

*Yes, but thou must not go telling it abroad. We can hold this place agaynest a meyny with those gunnes.*

*And did you have gunnes at Agincourt?*

*None at all, boy. We had them at Harfleur – King Harry was famous for his gunners and he gave all the gunnes their own names. They did much useful damage at the siege. But we could not drag them halfway across Fraunce with us, now could we?*

*The French had none?*

*They had some serpentines and culverins but could not use them, for lack of generalship. They reallie were hopeless that day. But an archer named Roger Hunt, of a Lancashire retinue, was killed by a gunne, I know not how.*

Then a sad look came upon his face.

*Thou knowest William, we have fallen sadly behind since those daies. King Harry was the very master when it came to new ways of making war and defending the countrie. He had his armourers working night and day at the Tower before the Agincourt expedition. And he practically created a Navy out of no thinge. But now, we have stoppt doing any of this. And the leadership of chevalrie hath passed to others. Charles Dolphin, the Seventh as we must now call him, hath a new master gunner and this man hath created a new artillerie, tremendous in action. Yeven the excuse, they will breke this present Trews and use their gunnes agaynst us, in the siege and in the field, where they have never bene used before, even in the parts of Italy, where town fights town and all are in the state of nature.*

*And what can we do?*

*We can yet win out if we augment our publicke spending. But we must spend more than we have of late, if the Parliament will allow it. If onlie we would spend what the French and*

After Agincourt

*Turk and Venetian doth, we could have the beating of them all over agayne.*

*And doth the Grand Turk then have gunnes?*

*Report is he is the gretest builder of them there hath ever bene. With all that wealth from China that he hath from the Silk Road, he probably hath them redy allredy.*

*And is He then a clere and present danger to Christendom?*

*To Christendom proper, no, not as yet. He is jepardie to the Grekes, notorious Schismatics, worse than the Frensh. But the time cometh.*

But though Sir John pretendeth to be old and past his pryme, I know he is determined to restore the balance between us and the Frensh where it relates to fyre-arms and gun-powder. And hath ordained that the Apothecary mayke some experiments thereto in his laboratory.

## 12 October

How much hath Master Chaucer to say about these men of Sir John!

*This was not all, they had a Cook besides,  
To boil chicken and marrowbone, well spiced  
He could roast and boil and griddle and fry,  
Make ground-mete pottage and bake a pye.*

Our cook is very like unto this man, clad with flesh and bone. He wants to fatten me up, as if he were my mother. He oft prepares fat birds for the table. He catcheth some with snaring and liming, but there are manie tame birds in the gardens here, no trouble to catch.

## 13 October

I hath prepared an Inventory of the bokes in the Grete Tower, for to make a Library if Sir John will allow it. I am sure he shall, for he saith he established a Law Schole in Caen. I am pleased that manie of these bokes are well-used. The lover of bokes keeps them not hidden in their store chests but thumbs them day and night, nay batters them, wears them out, fills the margins with annotations.

Some of these bokes were obtained from Fraunce, when Sir John was Grand Master of the Duk of Bedfordis household. The Duk paid over £2,000 for 1,000 bokes from the Frensh royal library, after we took the grete City of Paris.



*A life of Julius Caesar*  
*Livy his histories of Rome*  
*A historie by Josephus*  
*A rhymed Brut*  
*Vegetius his tract The Art of War*  
*Some works of Christine de pisan*  
***The chronicles of Master Jean Froissart***  
*Some courtly romances yncluding King Arthur*  
*A grete Vulgate incorporating Petrus Comestor*  
***The Encyclopaedia of Bartholomew the Englissheman***  
*Sir Johnis own Garter Statutes*  
***Et cetera et cetera***

Sir John wants his Library in a room in the castle in the manner of St Albans. I liketh this, for it is no longer fitting to have the bokes strewn around in chests and presses. He says allso I may use the Library as a *Scriptorium*, provided I put his name in all the bokes and collect all the muniments touching his manors, and in due time, list them too. There is a mountain of these now rotting in the stables, reeking of piss.

The monasteries have long had the finest libraries but now they are encumbered with old Mass bokes and new Antiphoners. The better bokes are now at the twain Universities and spred among the layfolk, the King, the Royal Duks and Erles and even the Knights. And manie more write than scrivening monks. Methinks a whole World of Larning doth begin and tis the Dawneing of a New Age, absent the Grand Turk.

## 16 October, the Translation of St Richard

Purveyors have come for to take the pheasants, partridges and other fowl for the Royal household. Sir John ordered the swans to be hid and the bastards did not notice them, or their absence, which doth surprise me.

The King hath granted out of the custom and subsidy of the ports of Ipswich and Lynne<sup>49</sup> and, if it cannot be paid therefrom, from the first subsidy granted by the clergie or commonalty of England, the following sums by way of repayment of chevysance.<sup>50</sup>

*The men of Lynne 20 marks*  
*The abbot of St Benet the same*  
*The prior of St Faith, Horsham £15*  
*The prior of Castle Acre, 10 marks*

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<sup>49</sup> King's Lynne.

<sup>50</sup> Loan.

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*The prior of Walsingham, £10*

*The prior of West Acre, the same*

## 18 October, St Lukis Day

This is dog-whipping day when all strays are to be whipped out of all Churches. And young girls like to dream about their future husbandmen. They take a potion of spices, honey and vinegar, go to bed and pray

*St Luke, St Luke, be kind to me,  
In dreams let me my true love see.*

The which doth appere to be rank superstition as well as utter foolishness. But doubtless it amusethe them.

## 21 October, St Ursula Her day

MEMORANDUM St Ursula was in the time of the Ancients a British princess who, at the request of her father King Dionotus of Dumnonia, set sail to join her future husband, the pagan Governor Conan Meriadoc of Armorica, along with 11,000 virginal handmaydens. After a miraculous storm brought them over the Sea in a single day to a Gaulish porte, Ursula declared that before her marriage she would undertake a pilgrimage across all Europe. At that time there was assuredly onlie one Pope and she headed by ship for Almayne, intent on going to Rome. But when she got to Almayne, the city was besieged by the Grete Hunne, who was like unto the Turk of his Day, and all the virgyns were violated and beheded in a Massacre. The Grete Hunne shot Ursula dead with his own bow, though it is not recorded whether he violated her first.

And this be a very fine story. But I do trow it is false. For if a man doth go back in time with the texts, the 11,000 virgins become 1,100, and then it appereth they were at one time they were 110, or it may be 111 if a man yncludes Ursula. And lastly the number reduceth to 11. Which is still a lotte of virgyns to have violated by brutish Hunnes, with no one to save them. But not so manie to carry by shippe to Almayne.

## 22 October

I have bene redeing in Bartholomew his Encyclopaedia about the Lion of the Bestiary. He saith the lion is the king of the beasts but there are twain kinds of lion.

One is timid, hath a short body and curly hair and the other hath straight hair and a long body and is fierce. And the timid lions are frightened of the sight of hunters with spears, so they look at the ground when surrounded. They also feare the sound of creaking cart wheels, fire, and the sight of the cocke. Lions are harmed by scorpions and killed by snakes.

I distrow this hogshite. For there are manie beasts in the Bestiary which are invented. *As per exemplum* the griffin, which they saith is half eagle and half lion. And in Durham by the shrine, the monks have a griffin claw, which they show to those whom come to be cured. And manie trow in the claw for it is remarkable, though others saith it is nought but the horn of a goat, from the mountains of the Switzers.

In the barracks the favourite in the Bestiary is The Goat-stag. They say this is part man, part hog, part deer and part fucking donkey. I merely record what they saith. He is a wily, strong, swift and stubborn but hath a fucking padlock on his mouth, the whole signifying a Trusty Fucking Servant.

This I trow doth exist, if onlie in the mind and soul of fouwle-mouthed servants everiewhere.

## 23 October

Sir John saith the people of this countrie want this War to continue. Jack Napis peace policy will ruin both him and the Kingdom. But tis not true, as hath the Public Voice and Fame, that WE started the whole thinge. It was the French all along to blame. They are inveterate brekers of their word, as in treaties, trewss, alliances and pacts. The whole nacion is steeped in perfidy, though the French reverse the proposal. They brake the Grete Peace of Bretigny near Paris and they brake the Grete Trews of Troyes. This sheweth openly, and may be a mirroure for ever to all Christian princes to mistrust any trews made by the Adversary or by any of his allies and subjects, be it the Duk of Bretayne, the Duke of Orliens, or any such other his complices.

I venture to suggest that Sir John's mind is clouded for he grudgeth so much the French. Yet he saith here is the proof.

*In M<sup>1</sup>CCCCV<sup>51</sup> they brake the Trews by attacks on our Englisshes Isles of Normandie, Plymouth and the Isle of Wight. Then they allied with that bastard Glendower in Wales and the Castilians in the parts of Spain. They advanced as far as Worcester. The Spaniardoes used galleys, raiding and burning all the way from Land's End to the Solent, before hiding like cowards in Harfleur for the Winter. In M<sup>1</sup>CCCCV1 the Spanisshes did rayde Anglia and used fire ships agaynest us.*

*Oh yes, William, the French started the Werre. But we should finish it. We should*

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<sup>51</sup> 1406.

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*allways fight them and never yield. Nor should we ever ratte on our comrades who hath settled in Normandie and Maine. We Englisshe never have yeven up, save when Jack Napes did yield to the Witch Joan at Jargeaux. It is folly to conceyve we can trade land for peace in Fraunce.*

And yet men saith Sir John was afereed of the Maid and fled the field at Patay.

## 24 October

I asked Sir John, how did he accompt for the victory at Agincourt when we were faced by such numbers?

*Well, victorie was not so difficult as man pretend, nor so miraculous as the snivelling Chaplayne doth claim. The Frensh were in a state of open civil werre, as they had bene for almost ten yeres, since the Arminakes butchered the Duk of Burgundy and the Duk hath sworn revenge. They were busy butchering each other still, when Harry landed in Normandie and it was far from certayne that the Bourguignons would not join us, though they refrained just then.*

*And then the French meyny was composed of raw recruits, led by few with experience of Werre. We had the veterans, for we had campaigned together all season and fought together on manie old campaigns, in Ireland, Wales, aye and in Fraunce alike.*

*As to numbers there is no doubt they had the advantage of us, as they allways shall, for Fraunce is a vast, populous countrie and England butte little along side her. Of the four or five regions into which one could divide the the kyngdom of Fraunce the poreest would offer more revenue, more towns and cities, more knights and squires than the whole of England. But the numbers verily don't matter. Harry was not in the least concerned about them. He reckoned with 5,000 archers, and each with 60 or 70 arrows he could hit them with... a very large number of arrows. You could worke this out far better than me. While the men at arms and the archers would make short worke of any that was left.*

*And was God truly on our side?*

*Well, Harry certis thought so and that counts for much. He had bene brought up by the priests to trow that England was Mary her dower and St George was Mary her Knight, though George was verily from the Holy Land and never set foot in England, nor for that matter in Fraunce. So, when his snivelling Chaplayne told him that God sent us the wind at Hampton, or the Virgin looked after us at Harfleur, or St George fought with us at Agincourt, Harry trowd it. And if he trowd it, we all must and did.*

*And did the Frensh catch him unawares or did he go after them?*

*Like a masty hound after a bear. And here the snivelling Chaplayne doth mislead, for he saith the Frensh ran us to ground. Tis horseshitte, Will. Harry set out to strike a blow for England. He knew he could defeat them, leaving the Art of Arithmetic to lesser men. And in similar like, our Ghostes were allways hi, whatever the snivelling Chaplayne hath writ.*

*The sniveller saith too we were far from home, short of supplies, hungry, tired and afered. But he was not a warlike man. Fact is, we had shewn them our strength time and agayne in the days of the Kingis grete grandfather Edward the Thirde after the Conquest; and besides, onlie the ignorant conceyve that God is on the side of the big battallions. A few disciplined veterans will allways defeat an undisciplined horde, unless they be horse archers of Asia.*

*Like the Turk?*

*Well that fight remaineth to be fought.*

## **25 October, the Feasts of Crispin Crispian and St John of Beverley**

The soudeours were drilling in the courts and around the moat and were playing at manlie games, as throwing the stone and barre. Sir John doth insist this be done several times a weke, for he will have no slackness. Now and then he orders a march to Yarmouth, weapons redy. They stop there on the beach for refreshment before returning at the duplication. The archers were practising at the butts, which they had set up next the fyshponds. They held an archery contest, at the end of their practique, won by our York Shireman.

*Then some would leap, and some would run,  
And some would use artillery:  
'Which of thou can a good bow draw,  
A good archer to be?*

This York Shireman had come down from the Scrope manor of Bentley near Doncastre and stayed when he married a Norfolk wench, who died in childbyrth. He likes to talk, as most men doth, about his grene age. He saith his people had a tale about hiding in a cleft in the mountains, from Scottish raiders. He admit he hath never known this happen in his lyfetye but there was such a place where one could easily imagine it, not far from Kettle his Well in the North Riding and they all grudgeth the Scots still in those parts, though it be several days from the Border. He saith the Scots would do the same agayne if they could. We have benefited from a

long period of weakness on their part.

The York Shireman is fiercely proud. He conceyveeth that God hath placed York Shire before the other counties, because the Emperor Constantine was born in York.<sup>52</sup> And he boasteth that in all the tymes of the troubles, when the Lollers rose against the government, in the tyme of Oldcastle and later, there was trouble in manie of the counties but never no trouble in York Shire.

I spoke to him of Robin Hood. He said he was that Robin came from York Shire near Wakefield, and lived in the time of Edward, our comely king. And according to him the Good Friar Tuck came also from York Shire, indeed from the Fountains Abbey.

*This curtal friar had kept Fountains Dale  
Seven long yeres or more;  
There was nayther knight, lord, nor Erle  
Could make him yield before.*

Sir John now ordered that the grete gunnes be fyred, having sent word to the surrounding villages of his intention to do so for he fereed to set off the alarum. I have never bene so stunned. These gunnes are a terrible wicked Innovation. They helped Harry mightily when he took Harfleur, and manie other towns in Normandie. But if they ever be turned agaynest us, that could be the end for us in that Province yeah in all of Fraunce. Happily, no man hath yet fired them agaynest fellow men in the field, for they are monstrous beasts, too heavy to be taken with the meyny in movement. Though they might one day be mounted on a ship and the Pothecary may yett find a way to improve their deliverie.

We celebrated the anniversary of the grete Battle, with a bonfire in the outer court and cakes and ale in the inner. But it doth seme to me that, in the general waie, even Agincourt is no longer celebrated very much. We are apt to promise to ourselves more lasting memory than the changing state of human thinges admits. The prediction is not verified and the feast of Crispin passes by without grete mention. Late events obliterate the former.

*But was Agincourt the Englishe revenge for Hastings?*

*Well I say yes. It enabled us to conquer all Normandie. And then Harry divoyded up the land among his followers, just as Duk William hath done after Hastings. And invited Englisshemen to settle in all the towns of the Duchy. And so it is our destiny to settle there, just as we did in Calais after Edward Thirde of that name took that fayre cittie. And now Calais doth send burgesses to be Members of the Parliament. And I hope that eventually, this will happen in Normandie, once our present difficulties are overcome. But we must complete the conquest.*

*And if we do that, shall we re-name the Frensh villages after Englisshemen and make*

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<sup>52</sup> This is quite wrong. Constantine was born in modern day Serbia; but he did visit York, in 305.

*the Frensh speak Englisshe?*

*Well we could try, though they might be little willinge. Yet remember the plan Edward discovered in Caen, when he took it in forty-six. That yncluded a clause requiring us all to renounce our Englisshe tongue, in the event a Frensh invasion were successful. And why should we not do the same to them, as they planned for us?*

## 26 October

In the morning, busy writing a bill for Sir John to John Bokkyng<sup>53</sup> about the oyer and determiner<sup>54</sup> at Beccles. We had braysed spring grenes for dinner.

Sir John had told me he had some verily fine soudeours, as trayned and skilled in war as any man, wonderful men at planning a battle, scaling and assaulting towns and castles and seizing the advantage. As expert and experienced as thou could wish for, says he. But they doth like to play rough.

The barracks smelt of the farmyard and rushes. They took no notice of me and clept for a story. Up jumps one man and begins forthwith. Here is one about the gentle folks, saith he, eyeing me up and down with suspicion.

*In London, which is much resorted to by manie folk, there lived, not long ago, a rich and powerful man who was a merchant and citizen, who beside his grete wealth and treasures, was enriched by the possession of a fair daughter, whom God had yeven him over and above his substance, and who for goodness, prettiness, and gentleness, surpassed all others of her time, and who when she was fifteen was renowned for her virtue and beauty.*

*But it happened that, either by the permission of God, or that Fortune willed and ordered it so, being envious and discontented at the prosperity of this beautiful girl, or of her parents, or all of them,—or may be from some secret and natural cause that I leave to physicians to determine, that she was afflicted with an unpleasant and jepardieous disease which is commonlie clept piles.*

*The worthy family was gretely troubled when they found the fawn they so dearly loved, set on by the sleuth-hounds and beagles of this unpleasant disease, which had, moreover, attacked its prey in a jepardieous place. The pore girl—utterly cast down by this grete misfortune, could do naught else than weep and sigh. Her grief-stricken mother was much troubled; and her father, gretely vexed, wrung his hands, and tore his hair in his rage at this fresh misfortune.*

*Then came a matron who hath much studied that disease, and she turned and returned the suffering patient, this way, and that way, to her grete pain and grief, God knows, and made a medicine of a hundred sorts of herbs, but it was no good. The disease continued to get worse, so there was no help but to send for all the doctors of the cittie and round about, and for the pore girl to discover unto them her most piteous case.*

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<sup>53</sup> A tenant of Fastolf's.

<sup>54</sup> An *oyer et terminer* was a judicial inquiry into acts of violence in a particular area, with wide powers to punish wrongdoing.

*There came Master Peter, Master John, Master This, Master That, as manie Phsicians and Surgeons as you would, who all wished to see the patient together, and uncover that portion of her body where this cursed disease, the piles had, alas, long time concealed itself.*

*They gave orders what was to be done, and sent Apothecaries with clysters, powders, ointments, and whatsoever else semeed good unto them. And she took all that they sent, in order that she might recover her health.*

*But all was of no avail, for no remedy that the said Physicians could apply helped to heal the distressing malady. And whilst the father and mother, relations, and neighbours sought for aught that might alleviate their daughter her sufferings, they met with an old Friar, who was blind of one eye, and who in his time had seen manie thinges, and had dabbled much in medicine, and he having gazed at the diseased part at his leisure, avaulted<sup>55</sup> that he could cure her.*

*When the time came when he was to heal the patient, they placed her as before on a couch, with her backside covered with a fair white cloth of embroidered damask, having, where her malady was, a hole pierced in it through which the Friar might arrive at the said place.*

*He gazed at the seat of the disease, first from one side, then from the other: and anon he would touch it gently with his finger, or inspect the tube by which he meant to blow in the powder which was to heal her, or anon would step back and inspect the diseased parts, and it semeed as though he could never gaze enoughe.*

*At last he took the powder in his left hand, poured upon a small flat dish, and in the other hand the tube, which he filled with the saith powder, and as he gazed most attentively and closely through the opening at the seat of the painful malady of the pore girl, she could not contain herself, seeing the strange manner in which the Friar gazed at her with his one eye, but a desire to burst out laughing came upon her.*

*But it came to pass, alas, that the laugh thus held back was converted into a f—t, the wind of which caught the powder, so that the greter part of it was blown into the face and into the eye of the good Friar, who, feeling the pain, dropped hastily both plate and tube, and allmost fell backwards, so much was he frit. And when he came to himself, he hastily put his hand to his eye, complaining loudly, and saying that he was undone, and in jepardie to lose his onlie good eye. Nor did he lie, for in a few days, the powder which was of a corrosive nature, destroyed and ate away his eye, so that he became blind.*

*The Friar cited the merchant before the Parliament of the said city of London, which clept upon the aforesaithe merchant to appere. To manie folk was this strange and amusing case known, and was oft adjourned and left undecided by the judges, as is their custom.*

*But She, who before this was renowned for her beauty, goodness, and gentleness, became notorious through this cursed disease of piles, was in the end cured, as I have bene since told.*

## 27 October

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<sup>55</sup> Boasted



I am not sure I can write the boke my Master hath commissioned. I have but little time. Sir John still expects me to write his bills and make his enquiries before he commits to purchase, and pursue his title ensearches, and these are manie. And he hath much litigation. And my opinion is not his to command. He conceyveth there was once a golden age of chevalrie, perhaps under Harry but possibly more so Edward Thirde. But from what I know, that was allso a black time. A time of Black Death and Black Rebellion. And I am not sure the men of today are as degenerate as Sir John considereth them to be.

### 30 October, Hallowtyde Eve<sup>56</sup>

Master Chaucer saith that all men understanden Englisshe tongue. And yet, as Silvio hath prophesied, the York Shireman is nigh impossible to followe. And Brother Higden saith all the men of North Humberland, and especially of York, soundeth so sharp, slitting, and froting and unshapely, that men of the South may not understand them at all. Happily our York Shireman hath lerned to speke a little better from his wyff of Norfolk.

But this man, when a man can understand him, hath little time for the Southrons, save those of Norfolk, who be as tough as he. He saith he once knew a man of Norfolk who got a thorn in his eye, went to see the Surgeon, had his eye out the same day and was present and correct at *Reveillez* next day. But the general run of the people of the South is meek and quiet, while the people of the North is more moveable and cruel. He saith

*Tis little wonder that men of York Shire do not speak Englisshe of King, when King seldom comes near, but spends all time perambulating from one manor to other in Counties he calleth Home.*

I asked him where the North doth begin then and he said

*North of Trent.*

I asked why the North is so different and he saith

*Men up North are all hard as berserkers, because of Viking blood.*

I said we of what he clept the South had known allso the invasions of the fierce and manly Danysh nacion. I had bene in Bury St Edmund and they should know.

*But we had Ketil and Hubba and Eogan. They were Norsemen like and come from Norway,*

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<sup>56</sup> Halloween.

*further in North than Denmark and much more savage kind of style, though Eogan hath bene in Ireland too. And we had Ivar Boneless and Ragnar Hairy Breeches, after they slaughtered their way through Anglia, aye and Eric Bloodaxe, who captured York. We took some knocks but tha will not hear us complain on it.*

I asked this York Shireman what he knew of the pedigree of Scrope for it was a famous name. There hath bene much litigation between them and the Grosvenor over the right to bear the arms *Azur A Bend Or*. He saith

*Family came from Bolton in Wensleydale, where they obtained licence to fortify in time of Sir Stephen his grandfather. They hath bene much yeven in past to hi treason, for Sir Stephen's Uncle William was executed like and there was an Archbishop of that name that was likewise behefted. And Harry Scrope likewise, for his part in Southampton Plot, in Agincourt yere.*

I thought this was not right but I kept silent for lack of further enquiry.

This night they clept for a ghost story, to match the occasion. And up jumps the York Shirefellow with this.

*There was once a tailor named Snowball, who was riding back to home in Ampleforth, having bene to market in East Gilling. It was winter time and he was looking forward like to sitting wi wyff by fire, when he harde on way what sounded like ducks a quacking, and then he saw somethinge that looked like raven flying in face, and then swooping towards ground, flapping wings as if it were about to die, kind of style. And a moment later raven flew in face and pecked him so fiercely like that he fell off orse to ground. And there lay, covering face, so terrified he thought he would lose mind.*

*At length, he roused him and got up, and then drew sword, though he had almost forgot he carried one, and he slashed about wi it wildly, until he was all a wery of doing so. And he shouted out Begone, foul Ghoste! I know that thou hast power to do harm, but leave me be, for I am innocent of wrong towards thee.*

*But the ghost – for that was what it were, and in deed of local man, shrieked back wi a horrible wail that could be hearde, this time, een by a man who was at distance of arrow, well shot wi Englisshe bow.*

*And then ghost advanced on tailor agayne, though tailor defended himself wi sign of cross and sword, whereupon crow changed into kind of dog wi chain on neck. Now tailor verily thought that game were up. What shall become of me, he thought to hiss?*

*And then he thought to conjure ghost, in the name of Trinity and by virtue of blood of Jesus Christ and is Wounds, calling on him to speak wi him, and not harm him, but stay still and answer questions, telling him name like and reason for torment and what remedy might be.*

*Well by Gum, Ghost then came out o dog wi terrible rush of air and orrible groan like.*

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*I cannot tell name of ghost, but he confessed that in life he done some vile and terrible sins, and even that he were excommunicate by Holy Church. And he asketh tailor to go to priest who lived nearby and sing nine score Masses on behalf of soul. And that be all I remember me.*

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## III

### 1 November, Hallowmesse<sup>57</sup>

FOR ALL THE SAINTS, known and unknown, who from their labours rest and hath attained the Beatific Vision, as explained by the Lord Popehis Bull.

I hath allways thought it a grete waste of my time to disputeth of the weather, or fore cast it. For it changeth all the time in England, as in the Northern parts of Fraunce. And the duplication of this talk every day doth wery a man.

### 2 November, Sowlesmesday<sup>58</sup>

We remember the Sowles of all the faithful departed, all frendes, familie members and loved ones who have died and now endure the paines of Purgatorie, setting to one syde the dowtes of the Lollers. Sir John went to visit the graves of his mother and father and said he would be gone some time.

**I hath made no start to the boke.** Yet busy, in the morning, writing a bill for Sir John to send to Thomas Howes about Dallyng the false harlot. And putting Sir Johnis name in the bokes in the Library. I write here his name but not a curse on thieves, as the monks do in theyre lybraries

*This boke is one,  
God his curse another  
He that take the one  
God give him the other*

I asked our Chaplayne whether there were still more Pope than one. He said not, the

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<sup>57</sup> All Saints' Day

<sup>58</sup> All Souls' Day.

Schism of Avignon and the Babylonian Captivity hath ended over twenty yere ago. But I saith I hath had harde from a travailler from the partes of Italy that there were twain Popes still as we spoke. The first was Eugene of Rome and the second Felix of Savoy, formerly Counte Amadeus. He saith that could not be right. He hath never hearde of Felix, and Eugene was without question rightful Pope. But I trust Silvio on this.

The Surgeon and the Physician hath both visited Dame Millicent of late but it is trowed nothings can be done for her. Sir John doth burye himself in his estate accompts.

### 3 November

Not long before Sir John came home from Fraunce, the Frenshmen were before the Isles of Jersie and Guernsie, a grete navie of them, and 600 men were taken and slain of them of the Isles, allways true to the Englishe Crown, since the days of William the Bastard. John Vincent of Bentley was at the Priory of Lewes last week, and saith that sixty sail were sailing before that coast, of Frenshmen kepeing the sea. The Lord Fauconberg is at Southampton with his navy.

Edmond Clere of the Kingis household informed me he hath hearde of a soudeour of Calais how Crowmere and Blakeney are much spoken of amongst the Frensh. Sir John proclaims all Norfolk in jepardie. John Paston saith not long before over a thousand Flemish sailors landed at Waxham. Now he reports there are manie ships off Yarmouth and Crowmere, which hath taken manie Englisshemen and put them in grete distress and ransomed them for grete sums. Some of these rascalls make so bold as to come ashore and play on Caister Sands, making themselves at home upon the Strand as if they were Englisshemen.

Sir John is somewhat def, but otherwise in good health, for a man of more than 60 with the body and mind of a man who soldiered over XXV yere. He is appointed to a Commission charged with ensuring that the Watchers of the Coast resist invasion by the Kingis enemies. He hath authority to lead all men at arms and archers for the safekeeping of the sea and full power to punish delinquents. Likewise, to make inquisitions, touching ships laden or unladen with wools, wool-fells, goods, wares and chaffare,<sup>59</sup> concerning customs and subsidies, and taketh all duties serious.

### 4 November

This morning, before the men had even had brekefasted, the call to arms was

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<sup>59</sup> Merchandise.

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sounden and the men mustered in the Outer Court in the bitter cold. Sir John sent one of them knocking at my door, and he came a stumbling in, tripping over some papers I had left by my door.

*Get up, get up, he saith, the alarm hath gone and we are to give chase this day.*

*Thou must be mistaken Peter, for I have important work to do on these papers this daie.*

*No mistake, Master, for Sir John sends for thee personal. We are upon the brine within the hour.*

*Sir John, saith I, when I had dressed and found him, walking up and down with the others drawn up smartly there must be some mistake here.*

*William, he saith this is no time for argument. I am a man downe. Osbert is away in Norwich. Every man, and every Jack, must play his part, if we are to teche these rogues a lesson.*

My innards had turned to water and my piles throbbed like an inflated cock but I fell in.

We marched out of the castle gate, across the marsh by the board walk to the shore and found twain boats, *The Margate* and *The Blythe*. They were little more than rowing boats, small cogs clinkered with a lateen sail. I said I had never bene to sea bifour but Sir John told me it was hardly going to sea to take a little trip round Caister Sands and we all got in, a dozen men in Sir Johnis boat and half that number in mine. And a masty hound in each and gun-powder supplied by the Apothecary.

The men all looked around and found blocks of wood which they strapped around their myddles. But I had none. I enquired as to the purpose of these blocks, and Sir John said if the ship went down the wood might save a man his life. Even if a man could not swim, it would give hym tyme to await the arrival helpe. I could not swym but I hadde bene yeven no wood.

*And what be the masty hound for? Saith I.*

*We hath trained them to swim and fysh a man out, in the moat. Just watch these doggies swim, boy. Thou needst have no fere.*

I hadde, and still hath, no faith in the masty hound as my saviour, but strapped on a good block best I could.

We put to sea in that sieve of a boat amongst the foul weather and a mountainous cold swell, which the seamen calleth a fine day with a steady blow. As

we approached the Sands, half a mile out, Peter discovered a handgunne from underneath a tarpaulin and started to mount it on stocks. I asked him what he was by Our Lady a doing of, since the Thinge could not be any possible use at sea. He saith it was a new conceyte of Sir John and he was sure it would work perfectly. All I had to do was pull the serpents taylor and the French would be blasted to Purgatory.

*Thou must be mistaken Peter I saith And not for the first time today, if thou conceyvest I am here to pull your trigger. It is as like to blow us up as the French. And HOW do we even know if these buggermen are French. They could be harmless Flemings.*

*You have forgotten, Master William, that your harmless Flemings hath now a trows with the French, so they are no longer harmless at all, to us. Much ink hath bene spilt against them and tis tyme for blode to follow. And if Sir John tells us to fyre, fyre ye will or you shall answer for it and I shall answer to him for the delict.*

We approach the sand and the menne beached the vesselle. There was no one around but they walked up and down the Strand, lokeing for I know not what, while Peter and I bobbed about on the brine, while he charged and primed the gunne. At the last, we joined the others.

*Well I saith no sign here of any Fleming or Frenchman here. Let us for home.*

Sir John saith *But there is every sign the enemy hath bene here. The French hath had a camp. Here are remains of fire, and here is a piece of manskyte.*

He sniffed, raked over some ashes and kicked the turd out of touch.

*But how dost thou know this turd be dyscharged by a Frenchman, cryed I, and not some local fysherman? Methinks thou shouldst call off the hunt. It getteth colder by the hour not warmer. There may be a storm blowing out of the Almayn Ocean.*

*Look he saith here is a shoe and a ribbon. The French fuckers have bene having women here. And if thou art for flight, wouldst thou stand and see thy sister violated by thine enemy and do nothinge? And all within my manor?*

I saith *my sister, supposing I had one, is most unlikely for to be violated on the Strand. She would have better waies to pass her daies. And this is ribbon is more likely to belong to a strumpet of Yarmouth, hired for the swyving<sup>60</sup> on a long summers day.*

But Sir John his blood was up and he would not listen to my reason, or my fere.

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<sup>60</sup> Swyve was a vulgar word for sexual intercourse, which elsewhere Worcester calls duplication.

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Beside he is a man of honour and doth take no woman for a strumpet without proof positive.

*Hath Peter redied the gunne? He barked like a masty hound.*

*Yes he hath saith I and I liketh not the the look of it. It is most unsteady and jepardieous in my opynion. And it probably will not even discharge.*

*Leave that to me for your opynion is not worth much in these matters. Any road, the answer with these new firearms is to trust God and keep thy powder drie and that is just what we hath bene doing all yere in the Courts, as onlie good Norfolk men know how. I shall not let the prey escape me now, Sir.*

*Sir John, quoth I, conceyve not in your bowels een now you may be wrong? You have known me give good loyal service manie a yere, but as riding servant. Now ye trusteth me with that commission in writing we spoke of, which I take very ponderous. But you never saith anythinge about the service military, to which as you know full welle, I am unfitted by reason of my infirmities.*

*For sywving Christe Jhesu, boy, shut up! All thou hast to do is pull the trigger when Peter gives thee the signal. The game is afoot. Thou hast come this far. Act like a man and for the sake of Holy Purgatorie, let us now down now.*

The dagger went home though I didst not conceyve he need be so foul of mouthe. At all events, he was deaf to my entreaties and we embarked upon those little boats once more upon that Almayn Ocean.

We rowed and sailed about without aim, as I demed it, for some hours, with the tide and the current taking us sometyme this way, sometyme that, and sometyme both at once, I know not how. And all the while the masty hound howling, and me pewking over the edge of the boat or gunnewall, as Peterkin clept it. But at last, as I was hoping we might be turning for home, we came upon a much larger boat under sail. And to my grete greef, did not upon the instant make a run for it away, but een made towards it.

*Jesus, Mary and Joseph, what doth Sir John conceyve he is about now?*

*Don't worret, Master William, the old man knows exactly what he doth. You just make sure you pull this here serpentine when I give you the nod.*

And I saw that while I had bene pewking over that verie gunnewall, Peter hath bene mounting this gunne on itt and getting it redy for the firing, while draping the tarpaulin over it to guise it.

Next thinge I knew I could see Sir John climbing the rig on the side of the



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strange shippe. Then he went on board and started talking to their captain, who had stele plate on his breast and thighs. But the talk was not long. At last before any one thought to prevent him, Sir John taketh hold of the captain and threw him mightily into the sea to drowne.

At that, Peter, who was standing on the gunnewall straining his eye, giveth me the signal.

*Now strike!* He shouts and I fumbled with the gunne, which explodeth entirely.....

The next thinge, I woke up in my chamber in Castle Fastolf, with the leeches all across my belly and Peterkin standing over me.

*What is this he saith thou art awake.*

Then he saith I hath bene wounded, but not so badly, the Surgeon had cleaned me up nicely so that was no matter and after a few days I would be as fit as a lop. And seeing as I was of the celibate persuasion, I would not be needing my stones anyway.

*What dost thou mean? My stones are all right, if it is any of thy busyness.*

*Aye, they would be, if thou still had them, Master William, but the Surgeon was obliged to take them bothe away. But, take comfort, for thou hast thy willy still, Willy.* He guffawed.

*I tore at the sheet to see what he meant, and found I was as intact as a stone horse.*

*Fucker!* I shouted, for my shame.

But he had allredy left the room, laughing like a lord all the way down the stair.

Then comes Osbert Mundeford, fresh back from Norwich. He saith I am the manly man. Wounded in my countries service, and before it I had bene takyn for a feble clerk of Oxenford.

*Thou hast done well, boy. That explosion of thine so surprised the Frensh that we were able to overpower them alle. Of course it might have bene better if the serpentine had shot a few grapes their way. But thou couldst not help it backfyring. And it was a diverting spectacle. Sir John saith we catch up with the Frenshe in the matter of gunnery and will doubtless overtake them one day, if they have not thrown us out of Fraunce in the mesne time. And everyone conceyves well of thee, even the masty hound, for he hath bene here licking thy pretty face mightily.*

*That part of what they tell you is true,* said the maid, who came out from behind the carpet. *Harry hath come in here every morning for the last three days and licked thy face as*

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*if it was a bowl of mete custard.*

I gagged on vomit at the thought.

*But what of Peter and the other men in my boat?*

*They are all well, saith the maid I assume she is a maid several of them were blown overboard when you fired the gun, but the seawater is a cure for all ills. And they are here and wanting to see you.*

And in they came, hailed me for my feat of arms, shook me by the hand, slappeth me on my pore back, told me they hadde me down for a useless bokeworm and scrivener but now I had proved myself a Worthy. And how I had shewn the Frensh what for. And they will make sure I am taken along on all future expeditions.

*And were they verily Frenshemen then?*

*Well no not at all. They were pirates from Cornwall. But what of that? The swyving bastards did merit the hanging. We shall not have men from another county to landen on Caister Sands and do what they like with our women, strumpets or no.*

## 7 November

We had strong tasting mete and fried spinach. There is one swan less in the moat, but there will be a new crop next yere, the keyper saith.

Sir John introduceth Sir William Yelverton, who oft staies here. I bowed but I can see he is kind for he greted me with a wave off his hand where manie do but stand and look through a man. He smells of old spice.

MEMORANDUM He is a Norfolk man but an eminent lawyer. A Justice of the Peace in Norwich and Recorder. A member of several of the Parliaments, a Steward of the Duchy of Lancaster and this yere made Puny Judge of the Kingis Bench.<sup>61</sup>

I asked him about the Werre. He saith he hath no doubts our King will prevail in the end, if the soudeours can get the better in the fighting, because we have better governance here, which the Frensh would do well to emulate. He said the Englishe common law is far above the Frensh civil law which deriveth from the Roman. As everyone should lern, it is founded on liberty, being based on the judgment of wise judges who hath forged it out of a mass of auncient custom. This law he saith is peculier to England and was introduced by Brutus the Trojan when he founded the

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<sup>61</sup> A Puisne Judge was a junior member of the court, rather than its President.

country. The French have nothing like it. They state a principle, we decide a case.

He was warming to his theme and I could not stop him. He saith the English common law meant trial by jury rather than by trial on the evidence of twain witnesses onlie, as in France. And England hath gentlemen who are good honest men and take the office of justices of the peace and Shire Reeves without payment, which makyth for a Bigge Society, whereas the French have hacks paid by their King. But of late the Chancellor hath bene engaged in creating a rival known as Equity, which takyth busyness away from common lawyers and courts. This Equity is like the incoming tide in the time of King Canute. It flows into the estuaries and up the rivers. It cannot be held back.

Nervously I suggested that I verily wanted to hear about the French Werre. But he was more interested in law than werre, a vice that Sir John findeth distressingly common in our daies.

*In Fraunce, they have no Grete Charter, and no juries because they have no substancial yeomen to sit on them, for the lower class is all miserable and pore.*<sup>62</sup>

## 8 November

Lombard Chicken Pasties and Verte Sauce. And after dinner, they spake of punishment and torture. Sir John thought that we have to be firm. He talked of the sheer criminality of men, as a result of original sin. The punishment should fit the crime. That was his watchword. We ought to stick to the Testament, an eye for an eye and so forth. And as for torture that ought to be a necessary part of justice, both before and after the crime. He doth not criticise the French for their thorough use of it.

Sir William disagreeeth. He saith the common law of England doth not like the torture. Nor any cruel and unusual punyshment. I asked him if byrning were a cruel and unusual punyshment. He said it were no part of the common law of England, but required by the Statute of Heresie and the law of the Church, which is different. But as for my question, he did not conceyve it cruel or unusual.

*If thou call not byrning cruel, what would be cruel?*

*Why, what the French did when they found a man to have adulterated the marriage of their King and Queen. They broke him on the wheel, and castrated him before he was beheaded. Oh, and they flayed him too while they were about it.*

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<sup>62</sup> The argument anticipates the views of Lord Chief Justice Fortescue (c 1394-1476), author of *De Laudibus Legum Angliae*.

## 9 November

It was proclaimed from the pulpit that my Lord Napes hath left for Fraunce, to fetch the Princess Margaret home from Anjew. For her suite she is to have 5 barons and baronesses, 17 knights, 65 esquires, and 174 varlets, with allowance for 91 days. Jack Napes is to recevye £9 per day for himself and his wyff the Marchioness, granddaughter to Master Chaucer. And who is to pay for this but the Englishe Exchequer, whose coffers equal not its duplication?

On Sir Johnis busyness I came to Norwich, along Yarmouth Road, through Mautby and Runham. Tis a days ride this way, though some go by Filby and Fleggburgh which are not passable when the waters be hi. I stopped in Opie Street. They say this was once the shameful and dolorous part of the city. Then the Aldermen decided to cleanse it. They followed the practique of the burgesses of London, who issued an ordynance because of affrays, broils, and dissensions arisen by reason of base men consorting in the tavernes and stews<sup>63</sup> with common strumpets, and more especially Flemish wimmin. They forbade that the whores go about or lodge in the City, or in the suburbs thereof, by night or by day, but they were to keep themselves to the places assigned, that is to say, the Grete Stews of Southwark, upon pain of losing and forfeiting their upper garments. A noble and well drafted statute, according to the lawyers who wrote it, but it semeth to me to be like stoking a fire. For without their upper garments they doth onely inflame the base men even more. And certis it was not good for Southwark, where the Stews doth duplicate daily round the Bishop's Palace. Though some say the Bishop owneth Them and doth not complain.

I was walking near Opie Street when I rounded a corner and all most knocked down the widow Gladman agayne, who had got a little ahead of her companion. She laughed at the close encounter, stepped back and then she gawped

*Thou art William Worcester of Bristol!*

*Well yes, mistress, I am, but thou hast the advantage of me.*

She pulled back her hood. It was my childhood frende Catherine, all growd up and womanly. She smelt of lavender. I bowed, she curtsyed, but her companion, who was a plain matron, said incontinent it was not proper to talk in the street. Catherine put an end to her banter by asking if I would call at her house on the morrow when her brother was coming. I thought this was odd since I knew she had no brother,

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<sup>63</sup> A stew was a pond stocked with fish, but also a brothel.

but I saith I was glad of her suggestion.

*I live in Weaver Street, next to St Peter Main Croft. Come there for to ete a mite. I will set a fyre, it is growing so cold these winter daies. The house has three windows on the ground floor, twain on the first and one on top and has flowers in a basket. Be wary of the masty hound.*

## 10 November

I found her house very easily, hard by the church. The windows very clere, the masty hound chained outside the Hall. Her companion had bene sent forth, and her brother had failed to arrive. The which I did not find at all strange or unwelcome, since shee had none. We were able to talk alone.

I bowed and then I kissed her on the cheke. She was joyed to see me but it was allso clere she was a troubled woman. Her husband, Robert Gladman, hath died during the riot here last yere. He hath bene a Norwich merchant and a member of the Gild of St. George. Not a soudeour as I had once thought. But he hath bene much inclined to favour Duk Richard of York, who hath done good service in Normandie and continueth there, with little thanks from Jack Napes or King Henry.

There had bene a serious disturbance in the cittie of Norwich and some of this Gladman his property had bene destroyed and she hadde gonne in fere of her life. Her husband had taken it upon himself to form a militia, and parade them through the city, for to strike fere into marauders. She saith it was in self defence and to stem the rioting, but others thought he was one that helped disturb the pees. At all events, he hadde disappered and his body hadde then bene found all mashed up and life less. The city hath bene fined 3,000 marks, its liberties seized by the King and His governor now rewld it.

She was putting on the brave face. She asketh me what I do in Norfolk and I saith Sir John commandeth a history, compareing the tyme of Agincourt and our present tyme and favouring the House of York. But she sheweth little interest in tymes past since she many present problems, including legal, touching the property of Gladman. He hadde an entailed estate but wanted to leave her more than her dower in tail. So he hath barred the entail by means of a common recovery. She did not know what that was, but it ought to mean she was entitled to that estate free of the tail, for otherwise it would pass to her husbandis brother, since they hath no children of theyre marriage. And then there is the manor of Ormesby, which Tuddenham threatens to take by main force, on pretense of a claim through Moleyns.

My head was spinning. I said, my dere, the common recovery is a lawyers game, and I am a mere scrivener and not qualified to advise. For it is a box that more than one Jack can spring from. Dost thou not have a lawyer?

She said she did, but suspected he was in league with Tuddenham to deprive her of her heritage and drive her to fresh marriage, from which she could never escape. And tis pittie but marriage was allso somethinge which een her own family doth urge on her, for it would free their estates from her dower.

I told her I knew a very good lawyer, a frende of Sir John and would she allow me to instruct him on her behalf? She could relie on me to give an accurate accompt of her affayres, once we had the tyme for us to sit down and talke and for me to make some note of the detayle.

*Oh Will, she said, but if thou couldst do that and set my mind at ease, I could be so full of thanks. But by the way, the deeds and muniments relaying to all that I have told you are lost allso.*

*What! All of them*

*Well yes, Gladman never told me where they were and now I cannot find them.*

*Well, I can help thee there, at the least. I know a place where memorials are kept and have lerned allredy to gain access there.*

*William, thou wert allways so kind. Thou art like one of those knights of old, in shining plate.*

*And Playte beats Chain Mail!*

We laughed. It was a phrase we had used in a childhode game. And so it was agreed that I should help her.

## **11 November, Martinmasse**

We toke our tyme but I allso toke the particulyars, went to the Guild Hall and came back with copies of most of the relevant deedis and muniments, for the Norwich Domesday hath particulars of transactions conducted in Norwich and most of the County allso. She was all eyes open. It was as if I had returned with treasure trove, hidden from the Crowner.<sup>64</sup>

I told her this did not solve all her problems. I would need to speak to Sir William, to see if he could advise about the matter of the common recoverie, for that was the chief source of her difficultie. As for Ormesby, she was clerely in the right there and she must withstand all comers, een tho they use main force against her.

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<sup>64</sup> Coroner.

We talked more about our childhood and my toys and her poppets. Boats made from pieces of bred, speres from sticks, ragdolls from rough cloth, small houses in the bushes. When we were older we had a game, as I have said, based on the Friar and the Boy and the three wishes he was yeven, and another on the life of Robin Hood in the Greenwood. I asked her if she would have those days back. She said they were the happiest of her life. I wondered if this could mean she had not bene content with Gladman, despite her fond memory of hym.

There hadde bene manie another displesing thinge happen in Norwich, apart from the Riot. She said she knew a woman Hawisia Moon, married to Thomas the cordwainer. Thomas was comfortable and hath several prentices. But Hawisia attended schools where she learned Loller doctrine, and later became a techer herself of heresie in a school in their home, to which people came from a distance, including several priests. At her trial she recanted, to avoid being burned at the Lollard Pit and confessed she hath bene right homely and privy with manie heretickes, knowing them for suche, and hath harboured, concealed, comforted, supported, mayntayned and favoured them, including significant manie of London, which have oft times kept, held and continued schools of heresie in privy chambers.

I could see that the horror of this was with her still but she semeingly wanteth to confide in me now.

*But surely, dere Kate, thou couldst not have had anythinge to do with all this?*

*Of course not, dere William, of course not, for Shame. But I thought I knew this woman. To conceyve the stench of the bottomless Pit was so close....*

*She saith They had a diabolical form of the Commandments. And among these*

*There should be no sacrament of infant Baptism. And everie man and woman was sufficiently baptised by Christes passion or when body and soul were united in a mothers womb.*

*There should be no Pope of Rome, for he is Antichrist.*

*There should be no sacrament of matrimony, for marriage in the eyes of God is sufficient, as when a couple exchange their vows in a field or barn.*

*There should be no fasting in Lent, Ember Days, fysh days nor vygils of saints.*

*There should be no pilgrimages.*

*That Walsingham was Falsingham and Canterbury was Cankerbury.*

*I saith Well that is a complete Devils Catechism, Kate, and one that should have earned that woman a byrning if the law had bene strictly applied.*

*But no, William, for she recanted. Surely all sinners, however grave their Sin, must be yeven a chance to repent?*

*Well, yes. But is this the end of the iniquitie in Norwich?*

*I fere not. For in the last several yeres the Bishop hath discovered several coils of the serpent, as William White of Kent, who hath preched heresie in that county but came here with his pestiferous waies and was convicted of the breche of thirty articles and burnt here at the Lollers Pit.*

*And then there was Margery Baxter, wyff of a carpenter who declared that William White was falsely condemned and invited her neighbors to come secretly at night to her chamber and hear her husband rede the law of Christ to them, though he be a lay man onlie. Agnes Bertham, her servant, told me that the Saturday after Hasshe Wednesday, when Margery was not at home, she found a brass pot standing over the fire with a piece of bacon and oatmeal seething in it. And the said Margery believed it was allso lawfull to eat pigeons in Lent.*

I was stunned. It was evident to me that she could have gone on anent these abominations for sum tyme but I told her to stop. I had not thought that Norwich could hide such evil. And at the same time I was afraid for Catherine. I told her she must have nothings to do with these pore people, especially if they were obstinate heretickes, as they soundeth. They were clerely deranged but, instead of being chained up and put on straw, Holy Church would hand them over to be burnt.

She said, of course, she now kept house.

But, I saith, supposing she was denounced by one of the Tuddenham spies, even though the evidence be lacking? Could she be sure to escape the inquisitors? How close had she bene to these people?

She assured me she had a good reputation with all the priests of the cittie and especially with those of Peter Maincroft. Her husband had a reputation before his disappearance. Tuddenham and Heydon had no grete influence with Holie Church.

We talked of Gladman agayne. She said it was an arranged marriage and although he was an amiable companion when she first marryed him, he soon after became surly. It was the drink or liefer the demon which enters the drink when a man hath hadde too much. Else he would never have taken part in that wretched procession. God forgyve me but my heart leapt then when I lernt of her misfortune in marryage.

At the end of our interview she asked me where I stayed and I told her Opie Street. She blanched.

*Thou shouldst change that, William, and sone.*

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*Why so?*



*That street formerly went under another name, and was generally reputed to be the worst part of the cittie. True they have cleansed it and changed the name but it doth not change the odour of the place.*

## 12 November

On my way back to Caister I thought of one thinge onlie. What a sweet name is Catherine. And how marvaillous to be met once more with my childhode sweetheart, after alle these yeres! But I fere I must prepare for disappointment. A widow in her station is pursued by manie, and doth not marry for love. I have little to offer and Sir John tells me I still have my accent of Bristol. She semes to have lost hers alltogether and not acquired the rough speke of Norwich nayther. She spekes like a trew-born Ladie.

## 13 November

We had golden leeks and onions. I asked the Chaplayne whether he knew Norwich. He said he did. I asked him if he knew Opie Street and the name it was formerly known by. For Shame, he said it was formerly clept Grope C---t Lane.

My God I said, there was one of those in Oxenford, and they changed it to Magpie Lane a while ago. I should have known.

He saith it is a change common enoughe in our daies. There is a Blackfriars Bridge in Norwich, clept by the vulgar *Tickle C--k Bridge* and the common at West Caister is known by some as *T---y Common*. The Church cannot control the whole of a mans life or thought or tongue.

But I saith this hath brought shame on me with a lady. I told him why.

He saith he knew little enoughe of women, but he thought this lady of mine might forgive me in tyme.

## 14 November

Pies of Paris with White Leek Sauce. I have bene talking long into the night with Stephen Scrope, Fastolfs sonne by law, in his chamber within the Castle.

We talked of Englishe Normandie and of the Duk of York. I said Sir John semeth to conceyve York hath done good service there, not once but twice, and is the man to replace Jack Napes before hi long.

Scrope saith, as for York, men should allways remember who his father was. For he was not the Duk of York who died a manly man at Agincourt, but the foul

traitor executed for treason at Southampton before Harry and his meyny set sail for Harfleur. I should have known he would not favour York. For Scrope allways takes a view contrary to his Father Fastolf, if not from conviction, then to shew he is not beaten. And before too longe he started on what I came to realyse was his favourite theme.

*Thou knowest, William, my Father Fastolf likes everyman to conceyve he made his fortune by his own efforts, just as he likes us all to conceyve that his military career was one long glittering success, without any fuckups. So he saith he was the first man ashore at Harfleur, when I am not sure he was, and how he fought at Agincourt, when I am not sure he did, and how he killed the prisoners himself, which cannot be true.*

*And the truth about his fortune is that his mother gave him West Caister and the manor of Repps, and his father had tenements in Yarmouth. And these be but litte more than muckheaps. It was his marriage to my mother which was the makynge of him. God man, he was onlie a commoner, and still is for that matter, while she was the daughter of a Lord and inherited the Tiptoft arms. So I am come of blood and Fastolf was nobody at all before he married Mother, though he now has a poursuivant herald and apes his betters with a cote of arms on which he quarters hers.*

I asked him how his mother had come to marry so far beneath her, iff what he saith were trewth.

*She was living in Ireland with my father, who was her first husband, and a soudeour. Sir John was then under his command, agaynst the Wild Irish, as was a gentleman clept Olandyne. And my father was oft away, campaigning agaynst those Irish. And so my mother was oft left on her own, with Fastolf and Olandyne in Dublin.*

*And was thy father killed then, by these Wild Irish?*

*No, as I hath bene told, there was an expedition, followed by an outbreke of the plague in Meath, and my father died of that Visitation by the pestilence. And then Fastolf and Olandyne both paid court to Mother.*

*And she chose Sir John?*

*She married him very betimes after my father was put in his grave.*

*And what of Olandyne?*

*Olandyne was disappointed and some said he was never the same man agayne.*

*But did not the better man win?*

After Agincourt

*No, William, I am sorry to disappoint, but I conceive quite simply that Fastolf was a quicker man up the scaling ladder. But also I think that Olandyne was older and richer and would have made the better match. Fastolf was 29 and my mother was already 41 and she far richer and more noble than he. She had no proper reason to marry him in haste, for she was past the age of childbirth.*

I saith, perchance sometimes a man falleth trowlie in love with a woman and perchance it happeneth the other way around also.

*Love is it then? Oh, love! That may be a reason for an attachment, but not for marriage. Nobody conceives that, not even the French romancers, nor their courts of love. No, I can only conclude that Fastolf took advantage of her loneliness and grief to put his ladder against her bulwark. They were married in Ireland by the way, and there are few civilised people there to object, absent Olandyne, who had departed in haste.*

*And what sort of father was Sir John to you?*

*The worst. Of course I was a disappointment to him, I see that now. I have not been able to make much of my life, outside letters. But he need not have treated me with such cruelty.*

*He sent you away, I expect?*

*Aye, that he did. But then I daresay your father did the same with you?*

*Not at all. I went to the grammar school in Bristol and returneth home each night.*

*Well you are lucky. The first year my mother married my father Fastolf sold me to William Gascoigne of York Shire for 500 marks without any title or right, but claiming I was his ward. And this monster Gascoigne kept me for several years, whereby I contracted a sickness which stayed with me some thirteen or fourteen years and I am disfigured in my person and my soul. And shall be while I live. I complained many times but Fastolf was never willing to listen and my mother took his part, though she was of a gentler disposition. I am sure she loved me, but she thought it best that I be sent away, like other sons of the gentility.*

I said I thought this was a cruel practice, confined only to England.

*I can't speak of other lands and I do not condemn others. I only condemn Fastolf, for it was not right in my case.*

*But surely, as I have heard Sir William Gascoigne was the Chief Justice of England and not only a Puny Judge. And uncle of Thomas Gascoigne, now Chancellor of Oxenford! Can he verily have been the monster you make him out to be? Were there not some advantages to be got from that position in York Shire?*

*None that I could conceive of then, nor none that I can conceyoe of now. Being a lerned man, of a lerned lyne and pillar of his profession did not prevent the man from being the most consummate practitioner of crueltie and miserly conduct. In dede he was a crafty cruel manne. He used me as a menial. I cut bred for trenchers. I laid the table. I took care of the wines. I washed the knives. I cleaned and polished the pewter. I set the trestles. I laid the table cloths. I set the cups on the board. He all but had me cleaning the shite out of the cold skytehouses. Then he arranged a marriage for me but it was with a maid of lesser position so my mother insisted that Fastolf buy me back and then he sold me as a beast agayne, agaynest all right and law, to mine hurt more than 1,000 marks.*

## 15 November

I asked Sir John for his views on Gladman. The accompt I had from Catherine about the Riot, or Rebellion as some call it, was so confused that I craved some light. But I got more facts than understanding.

*The immediate cause of the disturbance was a meeting of the cittie assembly clept to confirm an arbitration made the yere before by Jack Napes. This in turn was an attempt to settle a dispute between the Abbot of our abbey of St. Benet Holme and the men of Norwich regarding some watermills, built on the Wensum. The Abbot claimed they obstructed the flow of water to his own mills. The arbitration award required the city to demolish the mills, but some of the hotter sort of citizens, mad with rayge agaynst the Abbot, decided to destroy the City seal, to prevent the confirmation. This it was that sparked the riot. The rioters held the city for a week, even refusing to admit the Duk of Norfolk and the Erle of Oxenford who had bene appointed by the King to deal with the disturbance.*

*But who then was Gladman?*

*He is altogether mysterious. He was not the the leader of the riot or even a rioter. The nature of his procession, and its connection to the riots, is likewise obscure. Tuddenham and Heydon manufactured evidence agaynst the mayor, twain Shire Reeves, eight aldermen and sixty eight others but they never indicted Gladman. Some said the city authorities hired him to ride in the city on a horse, like unto the knight Sir Christemas with a sword carried before him, and twenty four others to likewise ride on horseback, with a crown upon their arms and carrying bows and arrows, as if they were varlets of the Crown. Others saith he acted on his own accompt. We shall probably never know for, as thou knowest, he disappered and was found quite mashed up dead.*

*But Methinks there is no evidence that Gladman was in any way tresonable. He was a man of sober disposition, though he liked a drink of ale. True and faithful to God and to the King, as the lady trowth.*

I asked Sir John if it would be in order, for me to ask Sir William to advise on a privat matter that was important to me and the widow Gladman. I told him of her treatment by the common enemy. He was glad to assist and was sure that Sir William would help, and without fee, since it was all for the affinitie.

In the barracks the men say that Jack Napes will die by water, and that Somerset should beware of castles.

## 16 November

I went to meet Sergeants Basset and Mundeford in their mess, to tell them of the project. They bowed to me when I first entered the room but I made sure to shake hands. They did not hold back, especially when the ale began to flow. Both men have long bene soudeours. But Basset allso hath a way with words. He oft writes bills for the men to their families, to tell them of their news. And Sir John hath asked him to write a chronicle.

*We are fucked in Fraunce saith he, for all Sir Johnis talk.* And Mundeford agreed. *Its lyke this he saith. The Frensh people hath stood up.* This did not seme much of an explanacion but Basset is a scholar and set it out for me thus in a paper

- 1 *The wheel hath turned.*
- 2 *King Henry his heart not in it. He prefers the companie of holie men to werrelike.*
- 3 *We once had Harry Fift and his good captayns but they have better now.*
- 4 *The Parliament will not commit.*
- 5 *The gentility is no longer willing to mayke sacrifyce of their bodies nor their purses nor their sonnes. They crie what for.*
- 6 *The Frenshe are no codards,<sup>65</sup> for all we saith, and they are deffend their own countrie.*

## 18 November, the Feast of St Piran, Bishoppe

Sir John saith the Englisshe at the Counsaile of Constanz wonne the separate right to speke for England at theyre meetings because of Agincourt, but Sir William saith the evidence for this was pore. How so, asketh Fastolfe hotlie, but Sir William then doth demolysh hym.

He saith the most promynent of the Englisshe delegacion were Bishopps Hallum of Salisburie, Polton of Worcestre and our own John Wakering of Norwic. Did any of them relie in theyre argyment on Englisshe victories on the battlefield?

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<sup>65</sup> Cowards.

The answer was noe. They used several argyments but they were based on size, geographie, historie, language and suchlike. Agincourt was not referred to. And it was hardly likely to be, when a man considereth, for these men were all preystes and Church men, and it had been long tyme since our Churchmen made werre. Evene the Cardinale<sup>66</sup> confined his manhooverings to the Counsaile chambre.

## 20 November

To Norwich agayne. As I was passing through Runham, and had got beyond the hi hedges, I hearde footsteps behnd me. Next moment, afore I could spurr my horse into flight, I was way layd by several villeins who had come out from eyther syde of the hedges. One threw him self at me, knocking me out of the saddle, another took the bridle, a third set about pummelling while a fourth poured oaths on my head.

I hearde little more than fucker and shitster, or perhaps it was shit stirrer, before they ripped off my patch, blind folded me, gave me several kicks more and threw me face down in a ditch with a placard round my neck. Fortunately the ditch was drie and after they hadde fled, I contrived to struggle upp out of it, to find my horse tethered nearbie.

Theyse were not comon theyves, for they had taken no thinge from my person and no thinge from my saddle bag. Their soule aym was perchance to frighten me, the whiche they certis dydsucceded, especially when I tore off the placard and red the words inscrybed there

*Jack Napes shall rewl all Norfolk*

I was wynded and wounded but nott so muche that I felt inclined to return to Caister for the Physycyan. I decided to carry on my waie and arrived ons more in Norwich, where I mayde straight for the lyttle house by the churche.

Catherine's companion let me in and when the ladie herself saw my estate she kissed me. Incontinent I felt the better for her ministrations. And I resolved to avoid Runham from nowe onne. And carry a big stick at alle tymes, and a Sheffield thwittle.<sup>67</sup>

We spoke of reliques and I asked what she thought of them of St Petre Main Croft. She smiled and said it was a most wonderfule colleccion.

I asked if she thought all these wonders were verily associated with Christ and Moses.

She frowned and asked why I doubted it.

*Master Chaucer told tales of men who sold relickes of Holy Martyrs that were made from the*

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<sup>66</sup> Doubtless Cardinal Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester.

<sup>67</sup> A small knife.

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*bones of a pygge saith I.*

*She said Master Chaucer was not concerned with the pilgryms of Walsingham but with the pilgryms going to Canterbury and there was a difference.*

We moved on. We spoke about our nacion, now recognised by Holy Church at Constanz for what it is, separate and apart.

*Catherine saith We Englisshe are a much travailled people. Margery Kempe of Lynne went to the shrines of the Saints in Rome, Jherusalem, Santiago de Compostela, Norway and Cologne in Allmanie.*

*A much travailled woman in dede. But she did her travailling after she hadde abandoned her husband, and after she had enforced on him a celybate marriage, the whiche is playne contrarie to Holie Scripture.*

*Well, yes, but hadde hadde numerous children allredy. She had come to feel the union was sinful.*

*Was she the Judge in that? And how did she, a mere woman, write those accompts of her travailles? There are those who say that it must have bene a manne who wrote those bokes.*

*A mere woman, William, is that what you conceive? Do you conceyve a woman incapable of logical thought and memorie? Granted she has scriveners to take her words down. And how do you conceyve Catherine Beninseca wrote all those bills? And how does the King and his barons deale with al their affayres? And what do you spend your daies doing for Old John Fastolfe?*

She conceyves that all all men of Norwic and East Anglians and have a peculier virtue. They are all devoted to Godde and there is a grete re-building going on, a grete renewal of Holie Church.

*William hast thou noticed our buildings?*

I said I had seen an extraordinary number of angels everywhere I went, wooden angels, stone angels, angels in stained glass, feathered angels, angels swinging censers full of incense, angels kneeling, praying, even fighting. If angels point the way to Heaven, East Anglia is surely half way there.

## **25 November, the Feast of St Catherine of the Wheel**

*Nota bene. The monasteries and religious houses of this County are very numerous. There are no White Monks here, but several shades of Black. The Premonstratensians hath three abbeyes, at Langley by Acle, Wendling by Dereham and West Dereham by Downham Market. At Carbrooke by Watton the Knights Hospitaller hath a Preceptory, The alien Pories, attached to grete abbeyes of Fraunce, but lately dissolved by King Harry, were seven in number. The Austin Canons are strong near the sea. The most famous of them is the Priory of our Lady of Walsingham, famous for pilgryms throughout all Europe. At Crabhouse on the Ouse is a house of Austin nuns, and at Shouldham nearby is a Gilbertine house, with monks and nuns who hath a common church but sleep in separate buildings, to avoid criminal conversation.*

I went to see the Holy Anchorite. He lives in conditions of remarkable austeritie, unlike some of his kind. He talked of a prophesie of the Monks

*Oh, there shall come King Henrie who  
Will beat them for brekeing the Rewl  
And amend all nuns, monks and canons,  
And chasen them out of the land  
And then shall the Abbots of England  
Have a knock from this king and incurable the wound*

I asketh who be this King Henrie?

*Some say it was fulfilled when Harry Fift did dissolve the Frensh pories.*

*But he did that for Reform, He was no rebel agaynest God. The pories he dissolved were used to fund new monasteries and after his death, to augment new colleges and schools.*

Then, saith I, the prophecy doth refer to some other Harry, if not to Tom and Dick, but I knowe not. Perchance tis all idle banter.

## **27 November, Advent Sunday**

And now we begin to fast. Fysh, soups and stews from now till Christemas, refraining from roasts and pies. *Stinking fysh, not worth a louse, saith Jack.*

We harde that at last the land at Cherry Hinton, acquired by Harry Fifte to found a house of Celestines, hath bene yeven to the Bridgettines of Syon. And the Lord Pope Eugene hath Bulls to condemn the enslavement of the peoples of the Canarie Islands and, under pain of excommunication, ordered all such slaves set free within fourtene daies.

Sir John never had time for Universitie redeing, save that it produced useful



riding servants who could rede and write, reckon accompts and do all kindes of busyness. Nor has he tyme for the wranglings of Schoolmen, nor the disputes between Catholickes, Wycliffites and Lollers, all of whom he doth condemn. What he values is direct connection with God, as proposed by an obscure Norfolk sayge who wrote a boke known in these partes as *The Clowd of UnKnowinge*. He knew this passage by heart

*Cast out of thy heart all sin, and sweep thy soul clean with a besom of dred of God, and with water of thine eye wash it. And thou shalt find thy drachma Jhesu. He is thine heritage, he is thy penny, he is thy drachma. This drachma will not so lightly be found or cast off. If it be cast off, it will behove a man to find it once more, whatever the cost.*

I have some litle payne in myne eye. Sir John hath told me to speak with the Surgeon, who hath a chambre by the Barge House. He saith that he was a good man, not one of those charlatans whom Grete Harry hadde made an Ordinance agaynest, who pretend to be well and sufficiently taught in the art, when in truth they are no more than leeches.

I went to speak to this Surgeon and we shoke hands which is a remarkable customme. He is a lerned man, though he is no priest and hath never known University reding. Some of his best frendes have bene burned as Lollers but he doth reckon he is too clever for the Bishop of Norwic. Besides, to be questioned by the Bishopp he doth need to be arrested by a Knight and the most powerful Knight in these parts be our Master. A subtle game of chesse indeed.

I asked him how he treated sore eyes, for mine eye that remaineth is precious to me. He saith if there is somethinge which enters they eye, it should be removed, by turning the eyelid outwards and wiping with a soft linen cloth, or else picking it out with the fingers and thereafter using drops of woman milk, or else lukewarm fresh water. In severe cases of pain and ache, he doth sometimes bathe with a mixture of woman milk and the white of an egg, or else fennel water in which is dissolved some Genova salt, or salt of Cheshyre, if that be not available.

## 30 November

I hath bene looking at the pedigree of Scrope. I was right not to trust the York Shireman his description. For I hath discovered that our Sir Stephen is but remotely related to the traitor Archbishop of York and Henry who was decollated at Southampton. There are Scopes of Bolton and Scopes of Masham, though these places be not far distant. So Sir Stephen is but cousin remote and the blood of the traitors runs not in him. But tis true he is nephew to the man executed summarily with Bushey, Baggott and Green, when Harrys father cast down Richard of

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Bordeaux, yere of our Lord M<sup>i</sup>CCCLXXXIX.<sup>68</sup>

But whether the York Shireman will take my evidences as proof be another matter, for the race of that countrie is descended from the Norse Viking stock, mene as a Northern Winter and obstinayte as mules. Suchelyke men are not distracted from a passionate belief by the facts.

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<sup>68</sup> 1399.

## IV

### 1 December

**DAME MILLICENT** draweth fast homeward and is right low now and feble.

The archers hath bene practicking at the butts, which they set up in the Yarmouth Road. This caused some alarum amongst the travaillers. Complaynte was made to Sir John, who likes to act as his own Provost.

There was a proclamation that at Varna, Sultan Murad crushed the Hungarian and Polysh armies bearing the cross of Jesus. And not one man left alive to tell the taylor. But Pope Eugene hath sent a flete agaynst the Turk, under the command of Francis, Cardinale preste of St Clement. And another fleet, under Mark, Patriarch of Alexandria, agaynst the Sarrasynes in Rhodes, Cyprus, Egypt and Syria. And the Pope hath allso decreed that all those who traffick with the Turk and other infidels are excommunicayte.

I asketh the men in the barracks whether Grete Harry spake to the ranks before Agincourt, as the chroniclers and poets do say. I do not understand how he made himself harde thereby but Basset saith he did, making the same speche several tymes as he rode up and down on his litle whyte horse. He jumped on a benche and shouted this out, very loud

*Sirs and fellows, the Frensh want to stop us recheing our homes. And if they bete us, they will invayde us and suppressse our Englissh tongue! And have your wyves and daughters for strumpets! All England will become a Frensh Stewe!*

Basset glowered around fiercely as if they were all pieces of cowskyte, then made a rude gesture with his finger and all the man laughed.

*But they will not attack us. So we must attack them. Every man must prove himself a trewe Englissheman. But yhou will never have to ransomme me. I will fyght to the deth Boys. Do*

*you the same. For the love of Jhesu, help me maintain the ryght this daie. Englisshemen never did fly the field. Shew them what we are made of, Laddes.*

He jumped down and they all roared. Basset saith that, on that day, they would have followed Harry into the Gates of Hell.

But Basset saith all the soudeours and settlers in Englisshe Normandie now are for York not Lancastre. He knoweth this from bills recevyed from soudeours there, written to their comrades in Northfolk. And they would all fight Jack Napes if York were to strike a blow. For he hath betrayed the Good Old Cause, with this talk of Peace. He hath persuaded the King to betray his own father, aye and his uncles too and in dede the whol countrie.

And Basset told the story of how Good Old Duk Humfrey hath greted the Emperor Sigismund when he did arrive in England in the Hi Summer of fourteen sixtene. Twas the onlie time that ever an Emperor had visited these shores, but what did Humfrey do but treat the visit as in invasion of our Souverainty! So he rides out into the waves when he spies the imperial boat, and challenges the Mighty one to a duel. Which he the Mighty one declined, as every one ecspected. But Old Humfrey did us proud with this insolence to the Allmayne Emperor.

## 2 December

I went to see the Surgeon. When I arrived, he had stepped out and there was a boke open on a lectern, which I took a quicke loke att.

### *Chapter XVIII The Yard*<sup>69</sup>

*In a man.... there be divers grievances, to wit, too much standing that is clept satyriasis, and flowing of a man his seed agaynest his will, and pimples, and swelling and cancre. Satyriasis cometh of a grete boisterous hot wind that falleth down into a man his stones and into his rod and makyth the yard to arise. And this cometh of no fleshly desire, nor of no liking that a man hath thereto, but with ache, grievance, and swelling.*

Redeing on, to discover the remedy, I noticed this

*Anoint the yard and the stones and the reins with oil of henbane and oil of mandrake.....*

I wondered who hath sene this Surgeon last. Could it be Sir John? I would have thought he was long past such malady... but then the Surgeon himself came in. I turned round swiftly to admire his instruments, and asked him what one was for.

That he saith is a Morstede screw. Surely you hath harde of it? Nay, saith I,

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<sup>69</sup> Penis.

tell me more of itt.

Well, you know, King Harry was a lion of a man. He saith, *War without fire is like sausages without mustard!* What a scourge of the Gauls. But there are thinges that everyone knows about Harry, and thinges that very few know and some thinges is both cock and balls. Everyone knoweth, for the minstrels sing of it, that he hath had a wild grene age, performing feats both of Venus and of Mars. But, thereafter he amendeth his life, after he hadde confessed himself to the anchorite of West Minster Abbey.

Everyone knows that he died of the dyssenterie. What few men know is that he allso worked himself unto his own death. For he returned to Fraunce where he died. And when he was in England he took no rest, nayther for the hunting, nor for tournaments, nor for the courtly diversions, but gave himself onlie to work. And this be not good for a man, as He craveth to be recreated constantly and if he doth not, he becomes as dull as your man Jack.

I wanted to say that I happen to know that Jack was not a man gyven to work and I hathe witnessed his play, which was virile. But he was in full flow about Harry.

*What thou wilt not know is that Harry hath a bloodie grete scar all down the left side of his fayce. He got this at the Battle of Salop<sup>70</sup>, when he was just past the age of first knyghting. He was struck full in the fayce with an arrow. I have a copie of Morstede his owne accompt of how he treted him. Twas a very miracle the Prince did not die.*

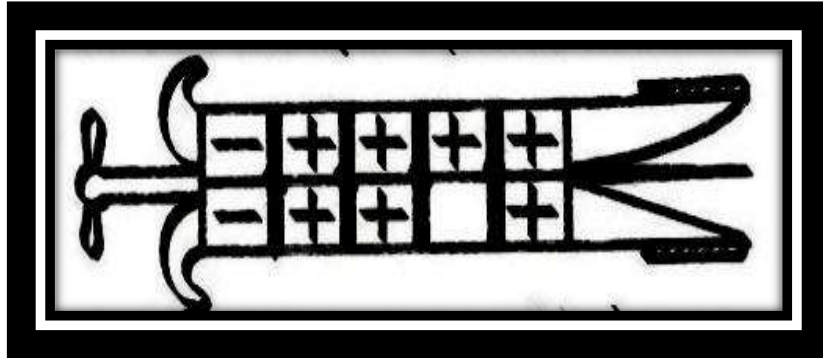
*Morstede writes that the arrow entered overwharte<sup>71</sup> and the shaft was taken out, but that left the head of a bodkin in the hindpart of the skull. The wound was six inches deep, for bloody Jesu his sake. Henry was taken from Salop to Kenilworth where, as thou wilt know, the Duk of Lancaster has a grete sete. That was over 20 miles and tis a wonder the travail did not kill him nayther. But, after several loud chattering leeches were consulted, and fayled to offer a remedy, he was heled by the royal Surgeon Bradmore. This man was consulted very late but knew exactly what to do. He made himself a screwing instrument, I jest not, and was able to pull that bloody arrowhead out, from deep within the head. Morstede hath made a drawing of this thinge, which I will not keep from thee.*

*So then he washed the wound with wine and mundificatype and four parts of populion, which be an ointment made with poplar leaves and allso containing the fourth part of honey. After a further seven days the place was healed with unguentum fuscum cirurgicum. Grete God! The Agony! Thow they plied him with the best wines before they turned the screw, Bradmore must have had some strong fellows to hold the Prince down. Even so, Harry needed that core of iron, of which manie Frensh hath complayned.*

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<sup>70</sup> Shrewsbury, 1403.

<sup>71</sup> Sideways.



I asketh this Surgeon about my piles, though I did not want him screwing, any where near my arse.

He asked me to describe my symptoms, as men can have divers grievance of the posterior orifice. He also took a look and saith it was the piles all right. I asked him what they were and he saith that they were veins that came into the arse to deliver the bodie of malencolie blood that will annoy other members. And sometimes they blede and sometimes they are hard and sometimes they are swollen. And sometimes they are all three.

I told him mine did not blede but just went in and out, and when they were out they were fulle out and it was night impossible to sit, let alone ride, and the skyteing was abominable. Could he cut them away, without risk of my life?

He saith there was a lot written in his booke about piles, under the Greke name of haemorrhoids, the complaint is very common but very various. But he would not recommend the surgerie, for it was oft possible to treat without.

This Surgeon obtains his drugges and medicaments from the Apothecary, who hath a kind of shoppe within the castle, which also serves as a laboratorie or workshop. He obtains the raw materials for his syrups, elixirs, suspensions, and emulsions from the herb garden. And supplies the men directly with the armour of Venus.

### 3 December

We had Chicken with Rice in Almond Milk, all within the terms of the Fast. While I was asleep I dremed, it semeth to me all night, of an encounter with a woman. The dream had me in a field by a bridge with a chantrie chapel on it, and she crossing, dropt hand kerchiefs one by one, while I was ment to run after them. But whether this was Catherine or someone else, I know not. From whence do these visions come? God or Satan? Body or ghost? I must ask the Physician. Certis these dremes of womankind have an effect remarkable upon the bodie.

I walked in the daylighte, and pleased with a pretty woman that I saw going and coming in the way of West Caister, with whom I could have bene content to spend half an hour and make her acquaintance further, but at such times I am oft at a grete loss, having no confidence in myself, nor any redy wit.

As I walked back to the Castle a phrase from *Ecclesiastes* came into my mind

*Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a childe.*

And though the King is now long past the age of first knighting, some men still recite this passage and others, tho they fere the charge of hi treason, say the king is simple, and worse. There was a yeoman of Kent chargyd with saying that the King is a lunatick, as his father was. There was a gentleman of Reding who saith that if the King were as much a man as the Dolphin of Fraunce, he would be holding the Frensh lands in peace by now. This man was sentenced to die but was instead, on the order of the King, confined in Wallingford castle. A husbandman of Norfolk saith out right that the King hath oftimes held a staffe with a bird on the end, playing therewith as a fool.

## 4 December, the Feast of St Barbara

I put it to Scrope that Sir John hath bene a good landlord to manie, including Dame Millicent her tenants at Castle Combe and Bath Hampton, and thereby improved the value of the manor there, which would revert to him one day. Hath not Sir John purchased broad cloths, and built new edifyces, augmenting the wealth and store of the town and ittes inhabitants? Some clothiers, villeins by birth and status, were thought to have become very rich. Some een had Frensh servants, who went by the name of Jack Frenshman or Jill. But Scrope will have none of this

*All that is true but can not take away from the original sin. My Father Fastolfe married my mother and got his hands on her wealth, not just for her lifetime but for his, despite the testament of my trewe father. They say this is courtesie of England but I call common discourtesie. My mother died onlie last yere but Fastolf holds onto her manors still. I have become his slave, having long bene his prentice. My reversion is worth little. He enjoys rude health, despite his age, while I do not. He may even outlive me! And I, as should have bene a gentleman.*

Scrope confesseth he once used badde language in a letter which he wrote to Sir John from Englishe Calais. And Fastolf objected thus

*I marvell gretely of those words, for I cannot remember in any way that I ever said anythinge to thee or anyone else which deserved this lack of respect. And though I pay attention to whatever thou writest to me, for I must treat thee with respect, I would not have thee write in*

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*this way to any other man, for the words thou used are not appropriate, unless they be used between adversaries, as between an Englishman and an Arminake.*<sup>72</sup>

But thou hast become frendes with hym since?

*That is what Fastolf saith. And he pays me to flatter him, so why should I not? The truth is, he is my oppressor and I must not bite the hand that feeds me, like a dumb mastie hound.*

*Give me an exemplar of thy flattery.*

*Here is somethinge I penned when he came home from Fraunce. He reached into his recess agayne and started to red from a grubby text*

*And now, seeing that the natural course of events, through the turning and passing of sixtie yeres upon you at this time of age and weakness, hath started to reduce your physical labours, takeing away thour natural strength and power from all labours which involve the carryeing out of chivalrous dedes...*

I said this made me feel a little sick allredy. But he went on

*And you exercised your knightly labours in three areas... in the first place, in victories, dedes of chevalrie and arms, in defending the Realme... The second was in helping to form policie, giving the benefit of your wysdom on hi matters, giving counsaile to promote justice and tranquillitie, and in keeping the peace for the common welfare of that noble Kingdom. The third was in ghostlie dedes, even for the health and welfare of your soule.*

I saith *Stop it Scropie. Thou will drive me out, eyther to the privy chamber or the publicke skytehouse.*

He said *Take care with the piles then Will.*

*How doth he know, I wonder?*

## 6 December

I went to Norwic and saw Catherine once more.

We spoke of the Bishops of Norwich. *Never underestimate them she said. They are grete men, though some say they be grete persecutors and others say they be grete defenders of the Faith.*

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<sup>72</sup> A Frenchman who adhered to the cause of the Count of Armagnac and Charles VII and therefore rejected the Treaty of Troyes, made with Henry V in 1422.



*It would be safer to say the latter saith I.*

*Bishop Despenser will be remembered for his disastrous crusayde but he did grete work in his tyme for this cittie. He gave some beautiful paintings to Holy Church. Thou canst see them there still. And Bishop John Wakering completed a fine cloister, paved with coloured tiles, leading from his palace to the cathedral, and a chapter-house adjoining. And He presented our cathedral with manie jewels, and was famous for his generosity. And He left monie for the choir stalls.*

I asketh of Old Sir Thomas Erpingham, a good Norfolk man, remembered for his part at Agincourt. She said he was responsible, with my Master Fastolfe, for obtaining Norwich Charter, lost now through the sadde late Riot. He funded the Dominican firary and Blackfriars and built the gatehouse for the cathedral close. He is on the north side of the presbytery, with his wives.

*Wives? Dyd he have more than one?*

*He hadde two. But canonically, for he married the second when the first dyed. Unlyke the Count of Thuringia.<sup>73</sup>*

And then, in the middle of all this idle talk, which I was beginning to fere would last forever, she fell into my arms.

## 7 December

Scrope and I talked today of Lollers. He saith it is folly to conceyve they are all crazed rebels and traitors to Church and the Kinge. He hath met manie a good man who agrees with some part of their doctryne. And Master Wycliffe was never condemned in his lyfetye, though he was silenced.

*But yet I must be careful, saith he. Sir John is allways very hot agaynst all that smacketh of Lollery and very active in arresting the Lollers wherever he findeth them. Onlie a few yeres ago, one of the most notorious heretickes in the Diocese was found to be living on one of his manors. This came as a shock, because the man was a preste and Fastolf makyth every cleric within his jurisdiction swear that he will never favour that pestilent sect which, reviving*

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<sup>73</sup> There was a legend in the Middle Ages that the Count had been given permission by the Pope to take a second wife, who was a Saracen who had rescued him while on Crusade. This was based on there being two female figures on his tomb; but in fact one was his mother: see Simon Winder, *Germania*.

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*ancient heresies, attacks the sacraments, and the position and the endowments of Holy Church.*

*Well then Fastolf found that this preste William Smith was spreading Lollardie and hadde him arrested and brought to the Castle. Smith was brought before him and Fastolfe spoke to him very roughly. I was there at the tyme.*

*Come near, thou hereticke and kneel near, ha, thou hereticke, thou hath bokes here! Saith Sir John. Smith replied mekely*

*Yea my Lord, the New Testament I have.*

I demed that harmless enoughe as a reply but Fastolf is never a man to mince his words. He snapped back *The New Testament nought thou hast* meaning that it was blasphemous and pestiferous to have the Scryptures in Englishe at all.

Having questioned Smith about his Testament, Fastolfe went on to ask him about the Soul, whereupon, said Scrope, the preste had verily let fly with his trew opinyons. He said that after death we must go straight to Heaven or to Hell - there was no such thinge as Purgatorie, and therefor prayers for the soul were without value.

Well then Fastolfe hath behaved like a wild man. He saith to attack the notion of Purgatorie was to do away with all chantries which pious men in times past hath created and was therefor an attack on all his plans for Caister. It also meant that his own father and all our fathers hath bene liars and told lies all their lives.

Smith then explained that all our fathers *might have bene good men, but they never knew Scripture and now it is come forth.* So then old Fastolfe lost control all together. He started bawling

*Thou art an obstinate hereticke, contrary to thy oath to me, and but for shame I should thrust my dagger into thee.*

Smith remained silent and was put under close confinement here for seven days. After which he was sent to Norwich to be held in the Bishopps gaol. He probably ended up as a hepe of cynders in the Lollards Pit.

*And the moral of all this?*

*Don't allow thy thoughts to become words, or thy words to become dedes, William. In generalle Kepe thine own counsel. Thou mayest attack some of the practiques of Holy Church when thou converseth with me. But do not do that within an ereshot of Sir John and do not even dreme of a acquiring a Testament in Englishe. For I know there are places in Norwich where they may be obtained.*

I did not say that my dremes at the present are alltgoether of a different

nature.

Scrope conceyveeth that most men, especially those who rede not, do live onlie in the present, like the animals, or else in some future world they have created for themselves in hope. While those who rede live allso in the past or in another world of their ymagyning. And therefor, a man who does not rede is not likely to be deterred from evil, or rash endeavours, since his mind is narrow and he doth not understanden what follows from what he doth.

Jack can nayther red nor write, and knows onlie a verie few well worn phrases of Latin, and even these I must forever be explaining. For all Scrope saith, I wish for the Testament in Englisshe, not so that Jack may rede it but so that I can rede it to hym and makyth him to understand it is the best boke of all, far better than any Frensh tale of chevalrie. And, as Pecocke saith, a short compendious Logick boke, written in our mother tongue, would allso be full precious. But when I saith all this to Scropie he saith

*Short compendious Logik boke! Whenever did your Pecoock write such a boke himself, to talk of suche an thing? All his wrytinges are repetitive to the point of tedium. And this was Pecock his error, he thinks, that he wanted bokes written and translated into English to be red by the common man, and yet wrote onlie for Universitie men.*

## 9 December

I asked the Chaplayne what he thought of London. He saith it is a heap of foul stinking skyte, the sink and pit of a false failing world.

I asked him how he was permitted to perform the miracle of the mass here in Castle Fastolfe and if he had a dispensacion. He saith the Lord Pope Eugene hath made special provision for Sir Johnis privat devotions. He hath bene allowed both to have a portable altar and celebrate mass before daybreke, if he wishes. Oh and to choose his confessor. All was in accordance with the law.

I asked him what he thought of the reliques they have in Norwich and Walsingham and St Benet Holme and Bromholm Priory. He said it hath become fashionable to deride them on accompt of the excesses of the Pardoners. But he defendeth the veneration.

*This is our link with the Saints! Do you doubt that there have bene holie men in every countrie where Christ was recognised these last one thousand four hundred yeres? Do you doubt they left thinges behind which can be unearthed, discovered, preserved, brought back and presented so as to provide a direct and visible link with these auncient men and women? And I myself have seen the hed of John the Baptist. And the arm of st George and the relics of Chirst himself, parts of the holie blode. I have seen fragments of the true cross and nails from the Crown of Thorns. And the Frensh our enemies, both Arminakes and Bourgonons, all*

*have relicks. The blessed St Louis of Fraunce, who establisheth peace between the Kingdoms, spent half his income on building the Holy Chapelle in Paris, for the Crown of Thorns. He had no doubt. And the standard bearer of King Jean the Good acquired the Shroud of the Crucifixion.<sup>74</sup> And in Cantorberie we have the holie hairshirt of Thomas a Becket, though the holie lice which sanctified it hath departed long ago for greener pastures.*

## 10 December

I spake with Jack about the Duk of York. I told him he is descended from a noble lineage and might one day claym the throne of England for his heritage.

Jack saith he did not credit that, for there are manie scions of Lancaster living - the Good Duk Humfrey for one, and the whole trybe of Beaufort would mayke several other.

I told him the Good Duk Humfrey is not long for this world and hath no issue relevant, though he hath a bastard son and bastard daughter. The Beauforts all descendeth from bastards and are forever barred the throne by Act of the Parliament. And the King hath no issue either, though he is like to marry incontinent. And therefor York hath a claim to be recognised as heir apparent, by virtue of his descent from Edmund of Langley, son of Edward the Thirde. And he is married to Anne Mortimer, descended from Lionel of Clarence, another son of that Edward, so that York's son, Edward, born in Rouen, has a double claim to the throne. And therefor the Duk hath conceyved a lust of principalitie. And his son Edward would be Fourthe of that name, after the Conquest if the ambicion ever come to fruicion.

I said een more serious is, York allso hath a pedigree from Brutus the Trojan, who founded Britain, and Cadwaladr the Welshman, back to Japhet and his father Noah the Grete of the Flood. But the King can trace his line to Woden the Dane onlie.

Jack said but I hath harde that Woden was allso descended from Japhet and hence allso from Noah the Grete of the Flood. And Jack saith too that all Yorkis claims, even those of the Old Testament, would be confounded utterly if King Henry were to marry and engender a child.

*Yes but men saith he is frit if he spieth a woman starke naked.*

*Oh, that is for lack of the use of his Thinge.*

He looked at me in a pitying way. And I found it hard to fight the rushing of blood into my face.

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<sup>74</sup> Now known as the Shroud of Turin.

## 11 December

I have bene redeing Master Chaucer His Tales of Cantorberie agayne. Sir John hath the semblance of the Franklin but not his temperament

*A Franklin was one of our companie,  
His beard was as white as a daisie;  
He had a sanguine temperament, face redd.  
At brekefast drank wine, in which he dunked bredd.*

But I would opyne the temperament of Sir John is not sanguine but cholerick.

We spoke of prophesies. The York Shireman saith that all the prophesies of Merlin, Gildas and Bede are as bullskyte compared to the sayings of St John of Bridlington

*I tremble to describe plagues there will be, and destruction of men through fyre and water, through bad governance and evil rewl by cursed Henry.*

This is his answer to our present woes. I asked him which Henry the Saint of Bridlington spake of, since this Saynte dyed soon after Richard of Bordeaux was crowned. He saith it was of our present king, for it was a prophecy. I said but the Saint died before Henry the Fourthe usurped the throne and that was twain Henries before the present one.

He saith, if a man could predict one Henrie, he could as well predict another. But this is more than is dreamed of in my philosophy.

*Nota Bene. St John of Bridlington is depicted in glass above the tomb of the Erle in Warwick in Warwick, alongside St Alban, St Winifred and St Thomas, and hath a boke of his prophesies in his hand. The glass is all of red, white and blue and there is no black, white or green glass there for the King's glazier doth not like such. But it would be strange if the Saint verily did prophesy agaynst the King who employed the man who glazed him.*

## 14 December

In the morning, I walked towards West Caister and met with one of the maids of the Castle. She did sit with me, and I allowed her me to put her hand on my legge. And I did pull off some clothes and touch her at various points. But I would not allow her to do more, though she would have let me do much. Being much pleased with this, yet ashamed, I came home.

Sir John asked me in to his Chamber, where was his *Poursuivant*, who hath returned from Fraunce, but must depart agayne forthwith. He hath bene there all

yere on Sir Johnis secret affayres. And Sir John asked him to tell me what he knew of the late expedition of John Beaufort, the Cardinal his nephew, created Duk of Somerset in honour of his expedicion. I might find this instructive, for the boke, on which Godde help me I have scarce started.

*Thou knowest that last yere, Somerset took an expedition to Fraunce, though the Duk of York should by right have had the command, as being in charge of alle Normandie. We allways fered the worst, but Somersett was a worthy man, a veteran of the Werres, though captured at Baugie in one thousand four hundred and twenty one, when the Duke of Clarence fell, and held prisoner seventeen yere, where he may have learned manie Frensh waies. Yet he served after as Captain of Cherbourg, Avranches and Tombelaine, the fort on the rock opposite the the Frenshe Michael's Mount.*

Yes, yes, saith Fastolfe, but pursue the matter more swiftly. Come to the expedicion.

*Well, saith the Poursuivant, Somerset was created Duk and enfeoffed with Anjew. The object was to conquer territorie beyond Loire and thereby make both Normandie and Aquitaine more secure. The starting point for his expedicion would be Maine, where Sir John knew the ground and we hath provided some knowledge. We allso advised further upon the matter. Sir John urged that a grete and mighty meyny should pass by a part of Normandie and so pass over the water of Loire into the ground occupied by the adversary and there use most cruel and mortal werre. The new Duk led 7,000 men to Cherburg, and marched south for Guienne. It was the first such expedicion in over 20 yeres, sent out from England.*

*But it all came to naught. The Duk fell ill, or his powers semed to desert him. Almost no thinge was achieved. The Duk set off in the wrong direction. He blundered into Guerche, a town of Bretayne, with which we had signed a Trews. But then did not follow through even there, setting all prisoners fre, accepting monie from the Duk of Bretayne. Marching aimlessly through Maine, he returned that winter to England and committed the ultimate Sin by slitting his own throat.*

What a mess, saith Sir John. The strategy was right, and the men were valiant, but the Duk left the most egregious pile of skyte behind him a man ever did eject. It must have bene the leder shippe to blame. With 7,000 men Grete Harry could have stormed the walls of Jherusalem. But thou must draw thine own conclusions, William, as to what hath gone wrong with this countrie since the gode old day.

## 16 December

John Paston comes for a counsel. Sir John hath desyre to found a chantrie college at Caister; but this is not a simple task, not lest because a license in mort main is requyred from the Crown, before any land at all can be given to Holie Church. Such hath bene the ravages of frankalmoign in the Age of Austeritie. John Paston is

legally trained and could help to settle the appropriate fee for the licence.

Paston of Mautby is a man of property, a persuayding man in Norfolk. His grandfather Clement was but a rustick who kept a plough and married a bondwoman but his father William was a right conning man in the Law, a Justice of the Common Pleas, well known to Wm. Yelverton, who bought much land in Norfolk. Though he hath played no part in the Werres, John Paston conceyveeth he knoweth all about them. He taketh the strange view that they were begunne over salt, wine and wool, though the salt from Bretayne hath continued to flow, the wine from Guienne hath continued to be drunk and the wool and cloth to flow in the other direction to Flanders. But in my opinion the grete ones have never bene the least interested in these silly thinges. They concern themselves more with their estates, especially those encumbered by dowagers.

Paston doth not see the least litle reason why he or any of his frendes should shed their blode for the sake of an ancient royal quarrel and heritage which even our present King doth despise. They have privat quarrels of heritage of their own enoughe. Yet Paston is allso a literary man like Sir John and Sir Stephen. He owns bokes. I know he hath a dozen or more, of romances, poetry and heraldry, together with the *Old Age* and *Frendeship* of Tully. And there is allso a Grete Boke which his familie scrivener doth prepare.

## 20 December

Huge quantities of food have bene arriving for the Grete Feast of the Nativitie, to which Sir John invites half Norfolk. He hath paid Perceval and Cawdbeck for their labour in the sewing of the Hall and attendants, 10 shillings. And 10 dozen of white cups with raies and tappes. Bred main Frensh from the Baker, bushels of chete bred and dozens of sale bred and trencher bred and bushels of flower. And wafers into the Kitchen to flourish the service. Five barrels of 3 halfpenny ale and 2 barrels of penny ale and one barrel of good ale and a kilderkin of bere, from Barnaby Brewer. A pipe of red wine and whyte set at the Kingis Head in Yarmouth. 7 gallons and a quart of Tyrhennian. And gallons of milk and verjus and vinaigre from the Chandler. A dozen pykes of various sorts. 2 salmons. A dozen rabbits. 500 eggis and 6 dozen geese from the Poulter. Pigeons 6 dozen, and hens 1 dozen, and 3 chyckens, apart from those supplied by the Castle. And a dozen herons, and 2 dozen quails, and 10 dozen sparrows. 2 gallons of butter. Bushels of peascods. A gallon of strawberries. A gallon of mustard. Curds, cream, honey and vinegar, packthred,<sup>75</sup> oatmeal. And Sir John hath laid in 10 quarters of coal and 60 faggots for the byrning. And fresh rushes and candles. I never saw the like, outside of Master Froissart his pages.

But it is hard to refrain from the temptations of the fleshe eem when a man

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<sup>75</sup> Strong thread.

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hathe busynesse. I doubt that women feel this Itch and yet it is written of the Lady Chastity that

*She knewest not what to do  
For Venus doth assail her so.*

## 24 December, Christmas Eve

Sir John hath bene in full flow agaynest the iniquity of modern dress. He saith that the Parliament no longer enacts and the Justices no longer enforce the Statutes requiring men to spend according to degree, and therefor each man spendeth and weareth what he listeth. Which is a shame, and the King sets a bad example to his courtiers and the courtiers to the countrie. In this matter too, he fails to match his father, for Harry Fifte made sure that a sumptuary law was enacted, in the eighth yere of his reign.

I asketh, if our present King be at fault in this matter, is this a sin of omission liefer than one of commission? Hath he bene but negligent, he could surely be forgyven, since he was but a child for so manie yeres of his reign?

*Tush, saith Sir John but he hath bene a man now allmost a ten-yere, and besyde it is no sin of omission when he alloweth his affinitie to come into court dressed in bagsleeves and pointed shoes, and the ladies dressed in those low-cut bodices which doth offend a plain man his eye. Nayther men nor women nowadays seme able to dress with decency. But the worst thinge is the hats. The men wear chaperons, roundlets, mandarins, beccas and streamers, cappuchinos and berretinos, tall conical hats of fur, with hi fur brims, cut and scooped out. And the women wear fantastical turbans, headdresses in the shape of hearts and crescents, towers and minarets and excrescences of every shape, as if they be Saracens in a harem. The worst is the horned head dress, with its lewd suggestion of virilitie, fit onlie to be thrown on a bon fyre.*

I could see his objections were verie strong and asketh him if this was why he avoided the Royal Court.

*Aye, and because they never listened to what I had to say, even when they commissioned a tract.*

We talked of dress agayne. I said Thomas Hoccleve did inveigh agaynst these immodest fashions in the time of Richard of Bordeaux and now Master Lydgate hath penned a ditty, which I hearde before I left Southwark

*A Ditty of Women's Horns  
Or*



*Horns Away!*

*Clerks record, by grete authority,  
Horns were yeven to beasts for defence;  
A thinge contrary to femininitie,  
To be made sturdy of resistance.  
But arch wives, eager in their violence,  
Fierce as tygers for to make affraie,  
They have despyte, and act agaynest conscience.  
List not to pride, then horns cast awaie.*

*Well at last the Poets agree with me, saith Sir John.*

## Christemas Day

Before dawn, to the parish church, for the mass of Matins. And a man stood in the rood loft and sang the genealogy of Christe, in Latin, from St Matthew his Gospel. And another held a candle to lighten him, and Jack and others carried tapers. And the interior of the church decked with holly and the porch with ivy. And some say holly is Man and ivy is Woman

*Holly and ivy make a great party  
Who should have the master  
In lands where they go.*

And Open House on our return, and food ordered for the Banquet to be consumed by the household and the whole neighbourhood. And yet men say my Master Fastolfe is a miser.

The Physycian astonished us all by insisting that every man wash his hands before dinner. And he saith every man must strive to eat with his thwittle and not use his fingers overmuch, for that doth spread the Plague. There were manie who deigned to follow his advice, but Sir John did not make it an order. He is inclined to conceyve the Plague a vysytation from God, which will strike in any case, whether we wash our fingres or no.

And then Sir Christemas<sup>76</sup> arrived on his horse and we all sang the carol

*Wellcome, my Lord, Sir Christemas  
Goday, Goday, my Lord Sir Christemas  
Our King for everyman old and younge  
Is glad and blithe of your coming*

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<sup>76</sup> Sir Christmas was the medieval English equivalent of Father Christmas, or Santa Claus, but his function was to announce the Nativity rather than distribute presents.

*Nowell, Nowell, et cetera*

And then we saw that Sir Christemas, was verily pore Scropey, who hath agreed to play the part and fool, on this rare occasion.

There is a wide choice of plays a man may see in Norfolk, as *The Creacion of the World* by the Mercers and Drapers, *Paradyse* by the Tallow Chandlers, *Pharaoh and his Granaries* by the Tanners, and *The Holy Ghost* by the Worsted Weavers. But the mummers gave us the best which is the *Harrowing of Hell*, which showed how Christe descended into Hell after he was crucified and there did liberate the Patriarchs who lived before his tyme, as Adam and Abraham, and delivered them safe unto the Archangel Michael.

Then came the tumbling and juggling. There was a man who could light his own fart while performing a somersault and another who could swing from the rafter and put out a candle with his nose. And a third who appered to chop off his own head and another his own rod and stones. And a fourthe who stood on his hands on two swordes. The men roared much for this last tricke and passed round the hat. And it all finisheth with another song of the holly and the ivy.

Then, after Sir John hath retired, one of the most drunk of them insisteth we play the Arminake game. This consisteth in each eligible man donning a suit of armour, whether of mayle or playte and attempting to run the gauntlet. But I had seen enoughe of this when I first arrived at the Castle. The pleasure of it escapeth me but it entertained the rest of them right royally. They laid on with gusto, as the Lombards, say and the harder they drank, the more they laid on.

At length, after much more drink, they laid hands on me, who hath bene standing on the sideline and saying litle. I protested, but they would not be estopped. They laid me down, and slowly clad me in iron. Then they set me on my feet at one end of the hall, and set the masty hound Harry after my ankles to make me run

I shuffled and kicked at Harry, but he was brave. He even jumped on me as if to duplicate the unclean act, which made them roar the more. I makyth it allmost as far as the chimney, while they laid on hard. I hated all this but they calleth for more. At length, buffeted and bruised, I collapsed at the bottom of the Hall, and knew no more till I awoke some houres later, when they had all forgotten my shame.

## 26 December

Next day, the Apothecary laid on a display with his finest gunne-powder. The man hath bene improving the powder, since our expedition to the Sands, adding liquid to the constituents, and making a paste which he shapes into corns, which he alloweth to drie. He telleth me that the flame then lights all the corns at once when it is set to the gunne and certis this Apothecary hath produced some mighty bangs and flames this day for our entertainment, though not so entertaining as the man that could

light his own farts.

And at dinner a redeing from Brother Higden on the Discoverie of Brittain. He tells us that we live at the outer edge of the world. At the opposite end of the Ark from the Garden of Eden.

*And Brutus was a Trojan that, after the sack of Troy, travailed to Greece, discovered a group of Trojans enslaved there and became their leader, and after a series of battles and some hostage taking, forced the Greke king Pandrasus to let his people go. He was given Pandrasus his daughter Ignoge in marriage and ships and provisions for the voyage and set sail. The Trojans landed on a deserted island and discovered an abandoned temple to Diana. After performing the appropriate ritual, Brutus fell asleep in front of the goddess her statue and was yeven a vision of the land where he was destined to settle, which was an island in the western ocean inhabited onlie by a few giants.*

At this poynt the men began to pay attention for they knew what was coming and it was allways the telling of the familiar parts of a taylor that warmed them most.

*Brutus renamed the island Britain after himself and became its first king. Corineus became rewlr of Cornwall, which was named after him. They were harassed by the giants, but killeth all of them but their leader, Gogmagog, who was saved for a wrestling match agaynest Corineus. Corineus threw him over a cliff to his death. Brutus then founded a city on the banks of the River Thameisis, which he calls Troia Nova, or New Troy, siting his palace where is now Guildhall and a temple to Diana on what is now St Pauls. He created laws for his people and rewld for twenty-four yeres. He was buried at a temple at Tower Hill. After his death the island was divoyd between his three sons, Loctrinus in England, Albanactus in Scotland and Kamber in Wales.*

*And this Brutus spake Welsh, for the language of the Trojans was Welsh, and this doth now persist in Wales, and Cornouaille. Bartholomew the Englisshe man doth write also that the Saxons were descended from the nacion of the Grekes, onlie they did not speke the same variety of Greke as the Welsh do.*

What a pile of skyte, methinks.

Today a reding allso from John Mandeville

*EGYPT is famous for the granaries of Joseph. And they be mayde of stone, full well mayde of masons' craft. Of the which, twain be marvellously grete and hi, and the other not so grete. And every garner hath a gayte for to enter within, a little hi from the earth. For the land is wasted and fallen since the garners were mayde. And within they be full of serpents. And above the garners without be manie scriptures of divers languages. And some men say, that they be the tombs of grete lords, but that is not true, for all the comon rumour and speke of all the people there, is that they be the granaries of Joseph. And, if they were tombs, they should not be voyd within, nor they should they lack gates for to enter within. And ye may well know, that tombs be not made of such greteneess, nor of such hiness. Wherefore it is to trow,*

*that they be tombs, but liefer they be granaries.*

I asked the Surgeon why they told so manie tales of Arthur and his court in England. Were all these stories true? I understand he was one of the Worthies and I hath hearde that in the time of the first Edward after the Conquest, the bodies of Arthur and Guinevere both hath bene discovered at Glastonbury. And that King Edward hath caused his noble ancestor to be reinterred there in grete estate.

The Surgeon said that manie men marvelled at this Arthur, whom Geoffrey of Monmouth extolleth. But how half the thinges should be true that are saith of him, he knew not. Since Geoffrey reporteth that he conquered 30 kingdoms. And if it were true he subdued to him the King of Fraunce, and did the same to Lucius the Proctor of Rome the Grete in Italy, then it is a marvaille that nayther the chroniclers of Rome, nor of Fraunce, nor of the Saxons, should have expressed of so noble a prince in their stories, which expressed litle thinges of men of low degree.

And therefor there is a lot of excrement voided when men speak of this Arthur. But peradventure the consuetude of every nacion is to extoll some of their blood in laud excessive, as the Grekes greet Alexander, the Romans Octavian, Englisshen men Richard Cœur de Lion and Frenshmen Charles the Grete... So the Britons extolleth Arthur. Which thinge also happens, as Josephus saith, either for fairness of the story, or the delectation of reders, but not the accuracy of the fact.

## 27 December

Sir William Yelverton comes for a council. I hath bene observing him. Truly, Master Chaucer hath a keen eye

*A Sergeant of the Law, cautious and precise,  
An advocate much sought for his advice,  
He could quote each case and the judgements explain  
Which have made common law, since William came.*

This is Yelverton in verie trewthe. I asked hym whether our Parliament was somethinge unique to England or it was somethinge which all nacions hath, and whether it was, as I have harde it saith in Southwark, nothinge but a nuisance and a hindrance to good government, and a home for a pack of rogues, begging his pardon. He saith

*England is neer so well governed as in parliament time. The king obtayns his taxes from us, but at the same time he redresses our grievances. And Parliament is an excellent plaice for amending the law, when there are discrepancies between different partes of the kingdom. Of course there is a lot of ordure spoken there. But a man doth well when he rids himself of a*

*turd. And the Frensh have nothings like it which is why they are so divided and so quarrelsome. Look at what is happening in Burgundie where the Duk controls the countrie liefer than their King, and in Bretayne too, and for that matter in every part of that benighted kingdom and nowhere is there a parliament like ours.*

Before his appointment to the Bench Sir William hath practised manie yeeres in the Court of Common Pleas and sometimes even in the Court of Exchequer as Barrister, attaining to the office of Sergeant of the Law.<sup>77</sup>

## **28 December, Childermesse Day<sup>78</sup>**

We spoke of leaders. Sir John said that without a leader, a meyny, even of veterans, is like a crowd ungoverned of men in the Rifling Time. But then we had Harry the Grete. And he knew Harry. True twas that hee hadde little experyence of battaile before Agincourt but he was a leader born.

*Did he not have experience in the Welsh wars with Glendower?*

*Men differ on this. Some say he learneth the trade there, some saith the Werrefare was of an altogether different sort than that he did nede in Fraunce. But I know he shewed his mettle on at least one time, when he wrote to his father about it. The story was that Harry thought he had Glyndwr in a Welsh corner, near one of his principal mansions, at a place clept Plas Sycharth. As usual Glendower escapeth like the coward he was and when the Englishe reached the place, they found no body. So, naturally, they caused the whole plas to be burnt, and several houses nearby, belonging to the traitor his tenants. But Prins Harry did not leave it there. He marcheth straight to Glendower Plas at Glendowerfordy to seek for him there, and caused a fine lodge in the park to be destroyen by fire, and layd waste all the countrie round. And lastly he captured one of Owen his chieftains.*

*That was Harry, allways direct and thorough and uncompromising. A lion of a man, who won all the old factious nobility round to his affinitie, before ever he set sail for Fraunce. All those who hath bene for Ricard of Bordow at heart, and all those who had rebelled agaynest his father, were charmed by his smile and swagger. Yet he made no vast royal grants out of the Exchequer lands. He was a fierce extorter of monie from foreigners, to make them pay. Why in Agincourt yere he closeted himself with ten rich merchants from the parts of Italy and asked them for a chevysance of £2,000 and they refused. So he clapt them all off to the Flete Prison, where they betimes changed their minds. And as for the matter of the Exchequer, when Harry was King he raised enoughe in subsidies and levies of all manner to pay for his wants and paid cash for nearlie all this. And so the deficit was allmost reduced to nothings, until he started the Werre agayne. And do not suppose Harry was a less religious man our present King, or than Richard of Bordeaux, though they favoured Peas and he*

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<sup>77</sup> The equivalent of a Q.C.

<sup>78</sup> Also known as the Festival of the Holy Innocents.

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*promoteth Werre. For he wageth Werre agaynest the Lollers, as all set in authority should be. And he favoured the strictest of Orders, Carthusians, Bridgettines and Celestines, and founded new houses at Syon and Sheen because he liketh not the laxative of the old.*

*And was he popular in his own day?*

*Oh yes, oh yes. We all loved the lovely bully save heretickes and traitors.*

*But saith I, did he allways mean to make an expedition into Fraunce, even before he became Kyng, or was it somethinge forced upon him?*

*Of course, he allways did intend to claim his rightful inheritances in Gascoigne and Guienne, but in addition he wanted all that any King of England hath claimed ever in past time, as in Normandie and Maine and Anjew and Ponthieu and even in the Frenshe kingdom as one whole. He hath caused to be examined the abstracts of the titles of all these manie lands, as well as any conveyance, and he thought one time long before there hath bene a single monarchy of England and of Fraunce and he wanted to have that once more. And I some time conceyve we could have won it, Harry had liveth the longer.*

## **29 December**

We spoke of what had changed in England and in Fraunce since Agincourt. Sir John saith that our Henry Sixt started well.

*He, being in his cradle, was much doubted and dreded, even by the Frensh, because of the grete Conquest of his father. But, when he grew a man, he took more after his mother. All softness and tenderness and revulsion from Were. And who knoweth but that he hath inherited a touch of that malady that inflicted her father, Charles Sixt.*

*He that conceyveeth that hee was made of glass?*

*The same. For, whyle Grete Harry excelled in all thinges, this Henrie excelleth in none. Why, when the Frensh embassie visiteth last yere, the King attended the sessions but stood about grinning. And every now and then, when the name of the Frensh king who is his Adversary was mentioned, he shouteth Saint John grant mercy! Like a bloody fool at a feast. What he means by this no man knoweth. The snivelling royal Chaplaynes conceyve he is one of them, and that his foolishness, since it cannot come from the devil, must come from God. But I conceive he may simply be madde. Why, on another occasion, when I was in his presence, the man asked me why I was not a bishop!*

*I saith such a man must be difficult to advise.*

*Thou are not wrong there William. Difficult, as you put it, is right. He agreeth to everythinge put in front of him by his counsellors. He hath granted the stewardship of the Duchie of Cornwall twice on the same day, to different men. As for pardons, for the offences committed by Napes and his cronies, he granteth them most liberallie, once he hath the nod from Jack. So law and order brekeeth down day by day and the villains let go, when they would have bene strung up in Harrys time. And the traitors, instead of being disembowelled and castrated as they were in the good old time, occupy the hiest positions in the land and reap most rewards. And he is surrounded by appeasers and lightweights like Napes and Somerset where his father had a race of mighty men around hym.*

I asked him about the last Duk of York, as lost his life at Agincourt. Sir John said this man was a counsellor. Then, on the march from Harfleur to Agincourt, he led the rearguard, along with the Erle of Oxenford. For the verie battle, Harry put York in command of the right wing, while Lord Camoys had charge of the left, and Harry retained the centre.

*And dost thou know he asketh me twas York his conceyte that every archer should cut a six foot stake to defend himself?*

*I thought that was King Harrys conceyte.*

*No, twas York who thought on itt, for he got it from his experience of hunting. He was a grete authority on that, thou knowest.*

I saith of this Duk of York *Some said he was fat and some said he was childless.*

*Is childlessness a disqualification for hi command?* Sir John roareth and glareth at me.

*And, as for fat, he said, rubbing his paunch, he was no more fat than the average man who likes his food and drink.*

I know not whether to trow Sir John about this. He hath told me so manie thinges which turned out upon due examinacion to be less than full truth. But he was adamant that this York had died a manly man. Of that much I am satisfied is true.

## 30 December

Sir John saith there are three kinds of dog, as first generous, per exemplum hounds used by hunters and ladies. Second rustic, as watchdogs and sheepdogs. Third curs, used as turnspits and suchlike. His favourite was the masty hound, used as a watchdog in Werre, and for the baiting of bears in peastyme

The Surgeon saith he hath little time for masty hounds for he doth suspect their libidinous nature knew not the limit of its own kind. He hath known a deformed child of a woman of Norwich, which had origynally bene begot by a man but a masty hound dog had gyven the semen some sprinkling and that had bene the cause of the deformity, he was sure. Allso dost thou not observe the way that Harry and Bedford sometimes tried to mount each other, and even a human leg?

Fastolf looked impatient. *Well as to the mounting that may be so. But every house nedeth a masty hound. And they are damned useful for shepherds in parts of the countrie where we still have wolves. And they were capable of defeating a bear in a fair fight. He hath seen that. And Sir Piers Legh, knighted at Agincourt, hath so much of them he hath started a whole breed at Lyme Park in Cheshire. And buried his dogs in state in the Park. And we were mighty glad of them in Harfleur during that winter of fortene fifteen I can tell thee.*

We talked of castration. The Surgeon saith he hath performed the operation on manie animals, as horses, pigs, calves and rabbits. In some cases, it is for better mete, in others to mayke the beasts easier for to handle. And to sayve them from spending their energies on the pursuit of the unclean act, though it bee a necessarie part of the duplication of mankind and all beasts.

I asked if he hath ever bene asked to perform the intervention on a man, to save him from the canker. He saith not. For that would be to save a man by making him no man at all. But the executioners dyd sometime perform castration as part of execution for treason. And Sir John hath suggested that young men of a certayne kind, too prone to follow their sensual natures, should be castrated like the beasts. He saith he will talk to Sir William about a Bill to bring this into the common law.

That might increase the work of Surgeons, methinks.

I saith I supposeth the vow of celibacy a kind of castration, for those who enter Cloister and Priesthood, which must be one man in three.

He saith mere words byndeth no man. Hath I not hearde the *Canterbury Tales* of Master Chaucer? From which it doth appere that my third hath just as much desiye for the Flesh as my twain thirds who stay in the World, and their desires doth oft govern their behavyors, more than their oaths.

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# V

## 1 January, yere of our Lord 1445

A HARD FROST last nyght. There is a superstition that this day should be marked by magical enquiryes as to future tyme. But Sir John and the Chaplayne forbade it, as likewise caykes and ayle, as impyous and remnants of paynim tyme.

The York Shireman saith that in some parts of his shire, as in Scotland, men progress from house to house, to place their feet in some house the first of the yere. And they bring a morsel of food for the table, and some kind of fuel for the fire. And this is because of the pagan superstition that, if a woman crosseth the threshold the first in the yere, that bringeth bad luck.

Despite the cold, the archers were making the near practique at the butts, for which they had set the targets close, in the Outer Court. In the Inner, the men were playing with theyre swords. There was a man wounded there to day but onlie weakly. He did not need the Surgeons hands, thanks be to God.

Sir John thought the menne were in need of refreshment. So he told them Master Froissart his story of Robert Salle, another of his tales of chevalrie, though embroydered by local tradition. He is so fond of it he forgets the need to divert his audience. It doth seme to me they hath harde it all a dozen times, by the fayces they pulled.

*These events took place in the yere of my birth, but I had it from my Father and he from his and tis true. The rustickes from Norfolk were marching on London, following one William Lister. In their road they stopped near Norwic, and forced every one to join them, so that none of the commonalty remained behind.*

*The governor of the town at that time was a gentleman clept Robert Salle, from a village not far to the North. He was a gentleman, but, having acquired grete renown for his habilitie and courage. King Edward, third of that name after the Conquest, hath created him a knight; and, let me say, he was the handsomest and strongest man in England. Lister and*

*his companions decided to make this knight their commander, in order to be the more fered. They ordered him to come out and speke wyth them, or they would attack and byrn the grete Cittie of Norwic. The knight, conceyveing it was much better to go wyth them than that they should commit outrages, mounted his horse and went down alone.*

*When those evill men saw that he was comeing, they shewed him at erst every respect and courteously entreated him to dismount, and talke with them. He did so, but this was a big mistake because, when he had so done, they surrounded him, sayeing with menace in their voyces, Robert, thou art a knight, and a man of grete weight in this countrie, but we know thou wert born the son of a pore mason. Thou art just like us, verilie. Come with us, as our commander and we will make a lord of thee. Thou shalt have a quarter of England.*

This struck me as a surprising offer, when some said the rebels had onlie wanted for to restore good governaunce under the king, and I said so; but Sir John shut me up swiftly.

*Thou knowest that the vile Welshman Owen Glendower, or Owain Glyndwr as he calleth himself, demanded a thirde of England for his treacherie when he rose agaynest us. But to continue, The knight, on hearing them thus speak, was exceedingly fumous. He would never have consented to such a proposal and, he answered with a glint in his eye, Begone, false traitors, would thou have me desert my natural lord for such a companie of knayves as you be? Would thou have me dishonour myself? Go swyve thyselfes upright.*

*On saying this, he attempted to mount his horse but, his foot slipping from the stirrup, his horse took frit. They then shewed their true colours, crying Put him to death on all sides.*

*Whereupon, when Sir Robert harde this, he let his horse go, and drawing a handsome sword of Bordow steel, he began to defend himself mightilie, cutting and slashing and thrusting and piercing those knayves. It must have bene a grete pleasure to see the base blood flow. Some of those villeins attempted to close with him but with each stroke he gave, he cut off heads, arms, feet or legges. There were none of them so bold but were afrayd. And Sir Robert performed marvailous feats of arms.*

*But those wretches were upwards of 40,000 strong. They shot and flung at him such thinges, that had he bene clothed in stele of Hallam Shire, instead of being unarmed, he must yet have succumbed. But he killed twelve of them, beside manie whom he wounded. At last, he was overthrown, and they cut off both legs and arms and rent his body in piecemeal. Thus ended Robert Salle, a doughtie man who died in the service of his countrie, just as if he had fallen in the partes of Fraunce.*

I would like to say that the men were dylie impressed with Sir Johnis tayle. But trewth to tell, I think they would as well harde a tale of the Stews as of chevalrie.

### 3 January

We are confined to the castle by the snow. I have time for mappes of the Heavens but feel no desire to draw them since Silvio his advertisements. And yet few lerned men doubt the significance of horoscopes. But when I asked one of the men of the barrackes what he thought, he saith

*If any man hath besought God on a day when Caput Draconis is in the mid Heaven with Jupiter, and the Moon moving to him or, if distant, have moved to the House of the Stars, it will not fail that he shall shortlie obtain his posytion.*

I saith this be but vulgar astronomie and saith nothings at all. He saith he knoweth it for fact and likewise. He also saith, as if it were a verie wise thinge

*If thou wouldst ask anythinge of God, look when Pisces is ascendant and Jupiter on the midHeaven in Sagittarius in the same degree with Caput Draconis, and let the Moon be in favourable conjunction and the hour be of Jupiter if thou mayst. If thou shalt find these positions, doubtless God will grant thee whatever thou ask of him.*

I had no reply to this. It semeth to me that, whatever the scientists of astrologie concludye, it will be mangled by men such as this. And I heded those words of Silvio.

Later, another redeing in the barracks round the fire, of Mandevilleis Travails, this time on Syria.

*Damascus, that is a full fair city and full noble, and full of all chaffares,<sup>79</sup> and a three journeys long from the sea, and a five journeys from Jherusalem. But upon camels, mules, horses, dromedaries and other beasts, men carry their chaffare thither. And thither come the merchants with chaffare by sea from India, Persia, Chaldea, Armenia, and of manie other kingdoms. This cittie founded Eliezer Damascus, that was yeoman and dispenser of Abraham before that Isaac was born. For he thought for to have bene Abraham his heir, and he named the town after his surname Damascus. And in that place, where Damascus was founded, Cain slew Abel his brother.*

*And St Paul himself was there a Physician for to keep men in health, before he was converted. And after that he was a Physician of souls. And St Luke the Evangelist was disciple of St Paul for to learn Physicke, and manie other. For St Paul held then school of Physicke. And near beside Damascus was he converted. And after his conversion he dwelt in that cittie three days, without sight and without mete or drink, and in those three days he was ravished to heaven, and there he saw manie privities of our Lord. And fast beside Damascus is the castle of Arkes that is both fair and strong.*

After supper they were very rude about the Welsh. It pereth they played very

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<sup>79</sup> Merchandise.

After Agincourt

little role at Agincourt. And manie of them were traitors in the Werres and some fought with the Frensh in the time of the noble Edward. And then came Glendower, who led the Oostay<sup>80</sup> into Worcester Shire and was never captured and punished for it, as he should have bene.

## 4 January

Pumpes<sup>81</sup> for dinner. I asked the Surgeon about my piles.

*What dost thou wipe thy arse on?*

*Hay, like everyone else.*

*But nowadays hay is not the fashion. Those with the means wipeth themselves with wool, lace or hemp, while those without use their hand when defecating into rivers, or clean their backsides with rags, woodshavings, leaves, grass, stone, sand, moss, depending upon the countrie and weather conditions.*

*Well, I use hay.*

*Good hay?*

*Whatever I can get.*

*Well make sure to use onlie the best of the hay from now on.*

*But there was no interoention he could recommend for piles. I should speak to the Physician.*

*The Physician saith we must treat it as if it were the flux. I should take frequent baths. And agayne he would make me suppositories and fumigations as with the flux. And I would have to drink the juice of Mifoil, mixed with warm wine, both in the morning and in the evening. And I would have a plaster made of Milfoil on my arse. And a fumigation of leeks, soaked in wine. He could make all these medicines up for me. And help me administer if I wished.*

I asked about the coste but he saith that he was in Sir Johnis servys now, as I was, and there would be no charge mayde, either for his close attention to my arse or the medycaments. After all I was Sir Johnis man. As if I was not aware of this.

The Physician saith the Surgeon is a Loller and a foul leche. The Surgeon saith the Physician is a foul leche and a dimwit. The difference between them is, the Surgeon hath not bene at either of the Universities, whereas the Physician hath so

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<sup>80</sup> Great Raid, or *chevauchée*.

<sup>81</sup> Meatballs.

bene. The one hath learned what he knows by the sweat of his brow and by meteing and treteing. The other hath lerned what he knows, initially, through University Redeing. And I would entrust my life to the former, but not the latter, who semes too interested in bokes and hath little of humanitie.

The Surgeon and the Physician agreed upon this one thinge onlie. That medicine has to be approached in a scientific manner, with the patient acquysition of knowledge, and the testing of tretement in the field, both field of battle and other. But the doctrine of **similia similibus curentur** (like curyth like), is nought but nycromancie, which is allmost meyre witch craft.

## 5 January

Twelthe Night. But no final celebration, for Dame Millicent hath died. As I returned me to the castle a white owl whooped from the bellfry and blundered between my legs. The superstytuous say he is the harbinger of death. But this is not Christian Philosophie. I felt onlie a confusion of the fluttering of my herte with his winges.

Sir John is bereft but Scrope sheddeth not a drop. For he conceyveth Sir John hath bene harsh unto to hym, and his mother suffered it to be so, these last forty yeres. For my parte I conceyve it harsh that a man should speak ill of his mother, whatever the circonstances. But Scrope regaleth me once more with his ancient grievance

*After my time with Justice Gascoigne in the wilds of York Shire, I spent some time in Sir Johnis service, in the penurie which I guess thou art used to seeing me in. And to escape my seroytude I put myself to service with my lord of Gloucestre, or at least I tried to.*

*The Good Old Duk? That would have bene a wonderful opportunity. His fame for his service at Agincourt, and at the taking of Cherbourg, must allredie have bene widespred.*

*Aye, but he was not allways so virtuous. He hath no discretion when it came to women. He should never have taken up with his first wyff, Jacqueline of Brabant, known to all as La Desirée. That woman was nere fatal to him.*

*But they saith that he fell in love with her.*

*Love, what is love? Love or no, she was a lady in wayting and it was his job to escort her to see Harry, not tup her upp. And she hath bene married twice before and was an heiress so it was scarce a dreyme of grene age, now was it? And then he walks out on her after a short time, as onlie Princes can, and takes up with her lady in waiting. Fastolf didn't approve of the Duk his behavyors at all, so he bribeth me to leave his service, promising endowments he failed to delyver. So then I lost the chance to govern the Isle of Man.*

I remarked that this must have ben a grete disappointment, though tis well known the Isle of Man is full of pirates and thieves.

*Well I was full sick at the time and had no way to contest it. So I set up in Honfleur in Englishe Normandie, and sold red herrings, unto the time that Fastolf took partie with the marshal of the town, more than with me that was his stepson, which methought a trifle unkind, I being in the right. But Fastolf all ways knew the price of fysshe, better than any man, even when it came to Frensh herrings.*

*Didst thou leve that countrie then?*

*I came home to mother. Fastolf being in the Werres, I thought I should lyve free and easie; but he afore the yere was out sent word to my mother, to tell her I should paie for my mete and drink. Though I had no lyvelihood to pay, which cause me to marry agayne for default, and not to my avail.*

*Did Sir John arrange that marriage?*

*Naturally, that he dyd.*

*And thou were not contented with the choyce?*

*Nor was either of us. We were childless and she left me, and after that I beganne to lyve in this wretched state of dependencie thou findest me in still, with no refuge save God and human frendshipp.*

He told me to beware of false prophets but that is more easily said than done in our nowadaies. I asked him for his most favoured soothsaying. He said

*Harry Fiftt will win all and Henry Sixt shall lose all.*

Which be a gloomie thinge. I asked him what he knew of Pope Joan of England, and saith that the Chaplayne trowth not in her.

*Methinks allso it is fable, designed to say there were twain Popes of England, when there was but one, in the Age of Austeritie. But, if there ever was a Pope named Joan, she probably reigneth, in the Dark Time, when Holy Church was under attack from heathen Danes and Sarrasyne Turks and Hungarian horse archers, and reigned between a Leo and a Benedict, both equallie obscure. And her reign was verie short. Some claimed she came from Athens, in the days before the Grekes became Schismatickal, and was dressed in the clothes of a man by a certayne lover of hers. Somehow she became proficient in lerneing, and with that application that women hath, she outdid the best masters and taught the liberal arts and so was chosen Pope.*

I saith it semeth to me that rather a lot was known about this woman for her never to have existed at all. But what hath become of her?

*The sin of Eve was her downfall. For she became full with childe by her companion. And, through ignorance of the exact time when the birth was to be ecspected, she was delivered of a chylde while in procession in the Sacred Way, and was torn to pieces by the righteous mob for thatt.*

I asked the Physician about the eating of frogs and snails. He saith it is a thinge abominable to eat creatures which hath bene engendered out of the excrements of the Earth, the slime and scum of water, the superfluitie of the wodes and the putrefaction of the sea, to wit all frogs, snails, mushrooms and oysters. As so oft with this man, I feel he is not talkeing but citeing from one of his Fathers books.

I saith *but the Frensh doth eat all these thinges commonlie, as our men hath oft found in Normandie and the conquered countrie.*

*That is no reason for us to do the same. The Frensh revile all our food, as was shewn when the young King was crowned in Paris in the Isle of Fraunce.*

I asked him if a man should marry.

*St Paul hath gyven advice. It is, he states, good or advisable for the unmarried to remayne in in their single state. But, if the situation is such that these personnes cannot control their desyre to duplicate, they should then marry. He saith it is better to marry than byrn. And a man should followe the counsaile of the Saint.*

## 6 January, Epiphany

The countrie folk return to work after the Twelve Days of Christemas. In the morning, writing a letter for Sir John to Thomas Howes about the lawsuit at Titchwell.

Dame Millicent hath left direccions for her funeralle ryte.

*I wolle have 12 torches of the price of £6 and 4 tapers of waxe of the value of 26s.8d. to be brent about my body ... and I woll that the said 12 torches and 4 tapers by holden by 16 pore persons during all the tyme of mine exequies, every person of the said 16 to have 20d. And to be buried at St Benet where my dere husband hath created the chapel, nigh unto the tomb of St Edmund, where he is to join me, I hope, aforelong.*

She hath bene duly buried in the Fastolf chapel at St Benet his Abbey, on the

south side of the church, under a curious enarched vault of freestone.

Twain of Sir Johnis riding servants came to the funeral, but left eftsoons, after onlie taking a slight refreshment. But not before one tells me that Sir John hath allways bene cruel and vengible and for the most part without pity and mercy and that I should keep a watch. For he caused manie of the men he had once employed to be thrown into jail for debt, and others hath bene made to pay swingeing fines. The other said Fastolfe once fayled to pay him a sum of 13s 4d which this man hadde given to a Frensh prisoner who had nothings in his purse.

But I find my master a good lord. And I know for a certayntie that he hath gyven generously to charitie and Holie Church and I am sure he will not forget us when he dies. He hath bene out of his way to help old comrades. Steward John Rafman told me the Master had once paid for his finance and ransom 100 marks and quitted him out of close prison in Fraunce, where all the masters and frendes that ever he hadde may not have done it, for it is not the guise of every man at arms to requite every prisoner that is taken.

Yet some conceyve Sir John hath no humour and no sense of proportion and is a pore host.

## 7 January

A plough race was held at West Caister in the common fields. In Caister by Sea they led the plough around the fields, as for good begynnyng of the yere. At Mautby, they call this Plough Monday.

The Christemas Feast hath cost Sir John excedeing much. The Steward hath told me he is sure the Coke is an honest man but there were so manie other items of expense, as players, tumblers, minstrels and harper, all this hath cost more than the customary price. And the extra kitchen men, and the garnish of pewter vessel, hath cost even more.

I put it to the Chaplayne that it was a matter of some consternacion for Holy Church that so manie priests and monks and friars were found to be lacking, when the Vysytors came around to inspect. He said you could not critique Holie Church, which was of Christ his foundaycion, for the fact that men were sinners all. Though the means might be fallible, the end - which was Salvaytion - was still on offer, in the miracle of the Mass and through prayer and intercession. Holy Church still satisfied the best crayvings of the wholle man, his love of beautie, his desyre for goodness, his endeavour for the truth, his rising above the dross and ordure of everyday lyfe.

I thought this sounded as if he had rehearsed it but I said of course that was so, I hadde not meant to question it and he putte it very well. Perhaps he should become a precher.

*No William, there is no higher calling than that of priest for by that means I deliver the bred of life directly to those who would not attend any preching.*



## 10 January

I asketh the Physician about the bloody flux at Harfleur, in Agincourt yere. Master Lydgate wrote

*Grete sickness among our host was, in good fay,  
Which killed manie of our Englisshemen:  
There died beyond seven score upon a day;  
Alive there was left but thousands ten.*

The Physician saith there was nothinige poetick about it. The flux of the bowels is a sanguinary discharge and an excoriation of the intestine. If it could be treted man by man, a Physician could do somethinge. But when there are thousands huddled together for a siege, there is not much to bee done, save clene up the mess and try to give them rest, but there was precious little of that.

But what was the cause of it? I saith I had red in the chronicles that it came from the habit our men had of eating unripe grapes and other fruit and shellfysh, together with the lack of clean water, and the habit some men had of skyteing where they camped, amongst the salt marshes of the Lezarde, where they allso drank.

The Physician saith there was no general theorie, as there was for the playgue. But wherever a large many men are assembled for a siege, there are rotting bodies and carcasses, and offal and yes they were short of fode and did eat what they found in the Normandie orchards and crekes. But remember even Harry Fift died of the flux, in the castle of Vincennes near Paris. And that is the finest and most sumptuous castle in Europe and was the best provided with doctors of all kindes.

## 13 January, the Feast of St Hilary

MEMORANDUM. The date when John Fastolfe married Millicent, ladie of Castle Combe, daughter of Sir Robert Tiptoft and widow of Sir Stephen Scrope knight was in M<sup>1</sup>CCCCIX<sup>82</sup> in Ireland on the feast of St Hilarie in the tenthe yere of the reign of King Henry the Fourthe. And Sir John bound hymself in the sum of £1,000 to provide her with pin monie.

Jack sang an old song sung in the Englissh Rifling Time by Jack Straw

*When Adam delved and Eve spanne,*

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<sup>82</sup> 1409.

*Who was thenne the gentle man?*

He saith that William the Bastard hath imposed a yoke on England and the Saxons groaned aloud for their lost libertie and this was the grievance in the Rifling Time and the cause of all the Rebellyon. But now King Harry of famous name hath removed that Yoke and allowed we Englysshe to lorde it in Normandie. I conceyve this History lacketh much. But it is not for me to subvert his loyaltie. I saith merelie that in that Ryfling Time, those who followeth Jack Straw did exchange one master for another. And all they did was byrne a lot of charters and kill a lot of scriveners...

He laughed. *Perhaps the world hath scriveners enoughe allredy, Master Willyam?*

I told him it hath bene no laughing matter, as Sir Johnis story of Sir Robert Salle doth surely shew. But some saith the rebels wanted onlie more equalness of traytment between themselves and the Grete Ones.

Jack saith he cared not a fig for this equalitie, not on this Erthe. It was the equalitie in the lyf to come that concerneth him. For what good doth it do for a man to gain the Worlde if he loseth his Ghoste? And yet the Grete Ones pay for 1,000 masses to be said after their death, verie quicklie, for their ghosts in Purgatory. And thereby escape at least some of its torments. But the pore must endure every one. Though that hath a **consolamentum**, in that the prechers sayen that Church doth consist of three partse, one militant here on Eerth, one triumphant in Paradyse and one aslepe in Purgatorie.

And I hath never met a single man who approveth of what the rebels did in the Ryfling Time, save our York Shireman, who hath bene known to say they was all good lads and God save them and a man should allwaies know and saie directly lyke whose syde he is on.

## 14 January

We harde from the pulpit by a proclamacion that a settlement was negotiated by Jack Napes on Christemas Day for the marriage of our King to Princess Margaret of Anjew. King Rainer her father gave no monie for he hath none to give. But he hath assigned to Henry his empty clayms to the Kingdom of Aragon, Majorca and Menorca, with all necessarie powers for reducing them into possession. Muche gode that wyll do anie man, whenne for that kyngdome is so fulle of armed menne from the partes of Spayne, who would openlie resist Frenshe and Englysshe alike.

## 17 January

In a breke in the snow back on Sir John his busyness to Norwich, where I now staye on Goosegrease Grene.

Catherine and I talked more about our childhood gaymes. And as for Robin Hode and Mayd Marian I saith in my mind Robyn was a yeoman and Marian was a

lady. But she saith it was not impossible for a common man to know a lady. And now we play too the game of chesse to make flirtation.

She asked what do they studie then at Oxenford? She never hath bene sure.

*There are the hier degrees, as of theologie, canon law, civil law, by which they mean the Roman, medicine. But at the start and the furthest I travailed, was to study the Arts, of which there are seven, as Grammar, Rhetorick, Logic, Arithmetick, Musick, Geometrie and Astronomie and the three Philosophies, Natural, Moral and Metaphysicalle.*

*My head is spinning William, at howe thou couldst get alle that into thy hed.*

I told her this was not the halfe of it, since we studied both the Old Logick and the New; that Rhetorick involves studying Cicero, Ovid and Vyrgil, though Musick and Arithmetick were regarded by some as the same subject. But I admitted that in my case, it was mostly Grammar, which means Latin, and Logick, which means argument, with a little Arithmetick, which means duplication. And I was onlie there for three yeres and so did not take the degree of Bachelor, which requires four yeres. Sir John did not requyre, and was not willing to pay, for more.

She asked if I knew any thinge that was useful.

I saith I knew the secret of the duplication of the chessboard told to me by Dom Hengham of Bristol. She asked what that was and I answered her as best I could, it being a thinge that hath bene told to me without explication. And she asked if there were other such multiplications. I saith that according to the Dom there be in a common yere 365 days, 8,760 hours, 525,000 minutes, 31,536,000 seconds, 1,892,160,000 thirds, and 113,529, 600, 000 fourths. She asked what on this Erth of Godde the use of this was? But she was not pleased. She saith that was too much. She wished not further to explore the secret of the Duplication.

## 19 January

Methinks I know now what is happening here nowe between Catherine and me. But I am not sure. Yet in my bed I conceyve of her and some of Lydgate his lines come back to me. Men say he is a poet far inferior to Master Chaucer but he semeth to know somethinge of the attracion of women, albeit he is a monk.

*Fresh lusty beauty, joined with gentleness,  
Demure appereance, glad cheer with governaunce,  
Each thinge demeaned by advisedness,  
Sad of speke, wisdom of dalliance*

Before we parted she asked me where I was now staying and I said

After Agincourt

Goosegrease Green. She laughed again with that chereful visage of hers.

*Well that is a little better.*

*Why onlie a little better?*

*Because it used to be clept Gooseturd Green and most of the good people of Norwich still call it that.*

*Am I to be forever condemned to wander the streets of Norwich in search of lodging?*

*No, William please do not move agayne on accompt of me. Stay where thou art.*

But I was determined to avoid alle such confuysion in future tyme.

## 20 January

Justice Yelverton cometh for a council. We talked about the tyrannie in Anglia. What do Tuddenham and Heydon do, to maintain such power, agaynest the right?

Sir John tells that they force juries to perjyre themselves, issue forged returns and inquisicions, make unjust presentments and imprysonments, falsely outlawe men, overawe law courts, commit trespasses of grayne and sheaves, breke houses and closes, fell trees and use other such mayne force. They hathe sent men to fysh in his stanks at Dedham, breke the dam and destroy the new mill, to the damage of £20. On another occasion, they took swannes and cygnets out of his waters of Dedham to the number of a score and fore.

Sir William saith there hath bene the gretest riots, horrible wrongs and offences done in these parts by the said Thomas Tuddenham and John Heydon and such eville worked as never was seen in our daie.

*Surely these thinges are rehearsed to the King?*

*The King hath no clere conceyte of anythinge. His ministers do but obey Jack Napes now. And Tuddenham is Jack Napes his man, and Heydon is Tuddenham his. And manie of the judges is partial.*

*Can no one stop these villains?*

*Sir John hath tried. An oyer et determiner commission was appointed and he hathe worked hard to see that suitable men were appointed as commissioners. Yet the tactic did not succeed. The case came on in Norwich yet some of the justices appointed to the oyer et determiner were Jack Napes his men. And Sir John they simply would not listen to. Even*

*the presiding judge, Chief Justice Prysot, was for Jack Napes and agaynest Sir John. He knew that if the oyer and determiner were held at Norwich, a favourable outcome, for Tuddenham and his cronies, could not be guaranteed. And therefor he adjourned the case to Walsingham.*

*And then Tuddenham, Heydon and other oppressors of their set came down to Walsingham, with 400 or more horsemen. And it was jepardieous and frightening for any of the plaintiffs to appere; and not one of the plaintiffs or complainants was there, except for bold John Paston.*

## 21 January

St Sebastian his day. The patron saint of archers. There are manie payntings of him in England now, though the bowes they use in them are oft crossbowes.

Everyone prayses the late Harry. He had the power of the sword, but also of the pen. He applied the fire to the Lollers and the axe to the traitors. In his day the judges were lyons under the throne, but there was a lyon sitting right on it as well.

The present kingge doth conceyve that the pen is mightier than the sword, when truth is he hath no power at all. There is no justice because he pardons everyone, or every one whom Jack Napes tells hym to pardon. And it is a grete evil that anyone should be above the law, or should be lett off the penaltie once it is imposed. People lose all faith and may well take the law into their hand. The menest of men may carry a thwittle.

Grete Harry was a diplomat as well as a soudeour – look at the agrements he hath reched with John the Fereless Duk of Bourgondy and the Emperor of Allmayne Sigismund, and at Troyes with the Frensh. There is no one of his habilitie in government now. And besides, as Sir John saith, the young men no longer wish to go for soudeours. They want to be lawyers and become rich, as Jack Napes hath become.

## 22 January

I hath hadde some success with Catherine her problems but now I rayed the matter of the Common Recovery with Sir William. After onlie a few minutes perusal of the papers, he gave judgment.

*Why, he saith, thou hast nothings to fret about at all, provided thou hast a good jury and a wise judge – and then he winked at me – and do somethinge for his comfort. We have to sit such long hours, and a little refreshment now and agayne is welcome.*

I asked him what Catherine might do for the comfort of the judge. And he said it was customary to arrange for him to dyne well. A gift of wine, or spice or a dish of salt fysh might be acceptable, or a pair of stately tenches, or a lamprey.

I resolved to tell Catherine hastilie. But I could not return to Norwich so betimes and the winter was settling in. I wrote to her.

## 23 January

Stuffed Piglet and Gingerbred.

I talked with Scrope of women, remarking that preachers of all kinds doth assault them. And not agaynest Eve onlie but agaynest all womankind, as if they were all infected with her guilt in the Garden. But Scrope reached in a recess for his boke of predications. *This is my favourite, Will saith he*

*In the teeth of all filthy revilers, I say that woman is cleaner and more precious in her flesh than man; and if a man hold the contrary, I say that he lies in his throat, and will prove it agaynest him. Will thou see? Why, tell me, did not God create man out of clay? -Yes - then, O ladies, the reason is as clere as day! For woman was made of Adam his fleshe and bone, so that she was made of more precious thinges than thou.*

*Lo! thou may see a daily proof how the woman is cleaner and daintier than thou. Let a man and a woman wash as welle as they can or may; and, when they are thus washed, let each take dean water and wash agayne, and then note which of the twain waters is the dirtier, and thou shalt see that the mans is far fowler than the womans. Why is this? Why, wash a lump of clay and see the water that comes therefrom, and see how fowl it is. Agayne, wash a rib with the flesh belonging to it, and the water will indeed be somewhat fowl, yet not so fowl.*

## 24 January

In the morning busy writing a bill for Sir John to William Jenney<sup>83</sup> about a common recovery and the notable men of Yarmouth

I hearde a good story from Froissart – the best story, told by a Gascon, in an inn clept The Moon, deep in the Pyrenees Mountaines. Imagine the weary Froissart, arriving through the snows of winter to hear such a tale.

*Louis Rombout and the man from Limoges were brethren in arms and hadde agreed to divyde all their profyts of war. Louis Raimbaut had at Brioude a very handsome woman for his mistresse and, when he made anie excursions, he intrusted her to the care of The Man from Limoges. But this man took such good care of the fayre ladie that he obtained every favour from her, and Louis Raimbaut had information of it.*

*This enraged Louis Raimbaut agaynest his companion and he ordered him to be seyzed by his servants and marched naked, all but his drawers, through the town, and then flogged with roddes. At every corner of a strete, trumpets sounded before him, and his action was proclaymed. He was then, in this state, and with onlie a plain coat on, thrust out of the*

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<sup>83</sup> An associate of Sir William Yelverton.

*town, and banished as a traitor.*

*The man from Limoges vowed revenge whenever he should have an opportunitie. He went therefor to the lord de la Voulte, whose page he had bene and cast hymself on his knees, and told him exactly everythinge that had happened to him, and how Louis Raimbaut had trayted him. The lord de la Voulte saith, frende I will help thee.*

*As sone as the man from Limoges could with honour bere arms, the lord de la Voulte mounted and armed him, and conducted him to the séneschal de Vélay, at Puy, to make them acquainted with each other. He was there examined as to the strength and situation of Brioude, and allso respecting Louis Raimbaut; at what times he made excursions, and whither he generally directed them.*

*They ambushed Louis at a pass in a wood near the Loire. Louis Raimbaut was strucke to the ground by a squire of Auvergne, clept Amblardon, who, advancing on hym, made hym his prisoner. The remainder were either killed or taken. Not one escaped; and they found in a privat trunk the sum of 3,000 francs, which gave much pleasure to the captors, for each had a share.*

*When the man from Limoges saw Louis Raimbaut thus caught, he shewed himself, and saith reprochefully. Louis, Louis! Do thou remember the insult and shame thou made me undergo at Brioude, on accompt of thour mistresse? I did not conceyve that for a woman thou would have made me suffer what thou did; for, if it had happened to me, I should not have bene so fumous. To brethren in arms, such as we were then, one woman might have occasionally served.*

*Louis Raimbaut was carried to Nonnay and imprisoned. Information was sent the king of Fraunce of the event, who was much rejoiced thereat and betimes after, as I have hearde, orders came for him to be beheaded at Villeneuve near Avignon.*

And what is the moral of the taylor, Sir John?

No moral that I know of William, except that thou should allways keep thy passions under control, and treat marriage, and even attachments with women in general, under some kind of controlle.

I asked Sir John agayne of Lollers and Master Wycliffe of Balliol and their prosecution.

He saith he approveth very much of the persecution, but the Bishoppes have bene too soft.

*They think they can resolve the problem by compiling lists of those they suspect, by the issueing of guidance to the paryshes and the devising of procedures for recantation, to be applied uniformlie everywhere, when twould be better to hand more Lollers over to the secular arm for byrning. That lights a candle that is seen everywhere and sets a good **exemplum** and a grete manie more should have been burnt in this fashion than has bene. The lack whereof I fere will make more burnt in future. The prelates fail to do their dutie, which will cause an inconvenience to the body politicke, by and by. Duke Humfrey hath tried to perswayde them to be more inquisitorial but they lack the vim and vigour for the task.*

*But surely, one man burned is a lesson to manie, and it is not everyone who wants to watch a human candle, Sir John. To my eye it would be a disgusting sight.*

*And somewhat paynful. Still, I would light the candle myself, if others could not be found who were willing. Heresy rots the soul, and the countrie. King Harry had a way with Lollers as with Welshmen. He stood there and watched that bad man Badby burn, though he had attempted his best to lerneh him his manners aforehand. Canst thou imagine the present king doing that, for all they talk of him as a Saint. Gad, the man hath no backbone. And so laxitie creeps in. I pray God that we will never see a complete toleration of religion in England. If they allow the Lollers to preach their Faith, then why not the Israelites, and why not the religion of Mohammed? That way perdition lies.*

## **25 January, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul**

I spent a restless night. Was then the Werre verily lost? We still held the Englisshe Isles of Normandie, Calais the grete, Guienne, Normandie, and the parts of Anjew. We still had manie garrisons all through Englisshe Fraunce. But yet we hadde bene turned back on the Loire and ejected from Paris and the Duk of burgundy hadde turned agaynest us. It was clere that manie people were no longer prepared to rise theyre lvyes or fortunes when the king himself had saith that he was in favour of pese. He hath released the Duk of Orliens, contrary to Grete Harrys last wishes in his will and testament, and the advice of both his uncles.

I spoke to Scrope agayne of my doubts. He conceyves that the crowning of the Dolphin in the city of Reims was some kind of turning point in the Werre.

*Mark you, at that date the cittie of Orliens had bene under siege several month. Bedford was marching on the Duchy of Bar, rewld by the Dolphin and the Frensh lords and soudeours loyal to the Dolphin were becoming desperate. Then, out a village no-one had hearde of, comes a young girl, whom everyone later saith was a witch, and marches to Chinon, where she impresses the Dolphin by telling him secrets about himself that he thought were known onlie unto to God and taketh him off to Reims, crossing enemy territory and braving grete jepardies, and stands there while he is crowned and anointed. It was a stroke, thou hast to admit.*

*But, a stroke of the Frende!*

*Of course, yes, she came of the Fiend, as Bedford used to say. But it wasn't long after that this Witch defeated Sir John and the others at the Field of Patay, of which we spoke softly in this household. And another thinge we do not wish to discusse, twas not long before some men in the garrisons of Normandie were deserting and making for the portes because they were afraid of her magicke*



After Agincourt

*Can this be so?*

*I hearde they mounted extra guards at Southampton and Dover and Folkestone and all along the South coast, at least for a time.*

*Yes, but what of the rival coronacion. Did not we aim to top what the Frensh had done by crowning the king as king of Fraunce?*

*Scrope saith yes we did. But the Frensh held the Champagne at that moment and Fastolfe saith we did not want to wayde through blood to Reims, to place the crown on his head. So we crowned him king of Fraunce in the Notre Dame of Paris, which at that time we still held. It was before the Bourguignons left us like rats.*

*But was that good enoughe?*

*Not for the Frensh it wasn't. Thou and I might attach small important to the military activities of the saints, but this single fact is likely to lose us the whole of Fraunce. Thou seeest William, the average man Jacques conceyves this shews that old Old St Remigius of Reims is with them still. He giveth not a flying fart for St George.*

## 26 January

And we are confined to the castle by the snow but there is Pochee for dinner.<sup>84</sup>

The Physician saith the sanguine temperament is fundamentally impulsive and pleasure-seeking. Sanguine people are sociable and Xarismatic. They tend to enjoy the companie of men, making new frendes and boisterous. Sanguine allso is sensitive, compassionate and romantic. They lack not faythe in themselves. But this is not me.

## 28 January

I talked to Scrope of prophecie. He saith according to Merlin the Wise

*King Vortigern builded a castle. Onlie it was a proper one, not a crenellated brothel like Castle Fastolfe. And underneath the Kepe they found twain dragons aslepe. And there was one Red and one White. And the red dragon doth defeat the Whyte, after the defyance. And this hath bene held a parallel for all time, for men to interpret as they will*

So...

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<sup>84</sup> Poached eggs with custard.

*So Glendower his Welshemen would have the Red Dragon be Welsh, and the White Dragon Saxon and therefor Englisshe.*

*And now?*

*And now the followers of Duk Richard of York saith the Red Dragon be Yorke and the White Dragon be Lancastre, since York traceth his pedigree from Cadwaladr, amongst manie others.*

## 31 January

Twain mendicant Franciscan Friers came to the gatehouse today. Dr John Brackley was one. I dislyketh this manne and I trowe he dislyketh mee. He is a teller of tall stories and faerie tayles, in amongst his godspells.

It happeneth that Sir John came up the lane at that moment and they rushed unto him, wisht pees upon him and asked hym for alms. Liefer than give them the penny, he told them to go to the Deville. As for peas, diy they not know that pees would be the ruinne of the countrie?

They saith they meant no harm and onlie came in a good cause, which was Holie Charitie. Sir John said he hadde made much charitable provision in his tyme, for the monks of St Benet and other places, and dyd not see the neded for their kind. Still they sought to argew with hiy. He said all his monie was in the hands of holie men who lived in the cloister, where he was sure they led holie lives. The same could not be sayd of manie of the Friers and how was he to know what evill they got up to as they wandered in the worlde?

Do not ye talke to me about St Francis, saith he, for he lived over 200 yere ago, in the partes of Italie, and thy way of life has about as much in common with hys as mine. The which is precious little. They started to back away but then one turned and said the monie was to help the agyd. He asked them how old they were. They replied, each, around sixtie. He saith he was 65 and they could fuckke away smartlie.

And there be manie villainous Friars, God wot, but I thought he did handle them roughlie. And tis not trew that hee is 65 yeres, not yett. And nayther that all his monie has bene lavished on St Benet his Abbey. For he keepeth a chest in the Treasury, astuffyd with coine, tho under tryple locke.

## VI

### 2 February, Kandylnas, the Puryficacion of the Vyrbyn

THE GODSPELL OF LUKE saith that Jesus was taken to the Temple of Jherusalem by his mother, so that she could purifie herself 40 days after his birth. And yet a man might wonder what she, of all mothers, had to purifie herself from, since she did not engage in the act of duplication.

We all carried candles to the churche and plased them before the altar and sprinkled them with holie water.

Sir John is strict on discipline, both in his manors and with the men. He punisheth misdemeanours, as shiteing in the fireplace or pissing in the stew, with a fine or a cutte in racion. This is meted out for any infringement of his ordynances, for which his bayse is Harry and Bedfords actes in Fraunce. More serious breaches of discipline carry whippeing, expulsion from the castel, or handeing over to the Shire Reeve. A whore would have had her arm brokyn and expulsion from the Castle, but I hath seen no so such women in Castle Fastolfe.

Sir John wolde even punishe foul language. For he saith it is that which the Witch<sup>85</sup> hath condemned us for, above all mysdemeanours and crymes, in Fraunce. She forbayde all maykeing of othes in her Frensh meyny – itself a miracle by our Lady – then damned the whole Englysshe nacion for immoderate swearing, such as taying the Lord his name in vain. She calleth us Goddons or *Goddams*. And so the Frenshe call us yet, when they are being polyte.

And truly I do agree there is too manie othes and fowl wordes in England now. My mother taught me that *men will all blede to death through the parts of the body they swear by*.

### 3 February, the Feast of St Werburgh of Chester

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<sup>85</sup> Joan of Arc.

After Agincourt

I wrote as follows to the men of Oxenton in Gloucester Shire and kept a copy

*I have remynded Sir John to give a chasuble to your churche and trust for certayne you shall have one. But thou must thenne send to Castle Combe 12 good lampreys powdered at the prys of 20d the pece. And they of Castle Combe shall send them uppe to London. And forgette not a couple of good lampreys for mine owne labour in recovering the £7 that thou hast allmost lost of my lord his monie, for thou knowest well the bailiff hathe spent it away. And let my lampreys come with the other lampreys. And if thou sendst no lampreys for me, I shall adoyse Sir John to conceyve agayne about the chasuble.*

Jack asked me if they teche anythinge useful at Oxenford.

*Meaning?*

*As plowing, or husbandrie of animalles, or carpentrie, or forestrie, or gaymekepeing, or fysseing? He saith*

*I saith These are all very useful trades and occupations but thou wouldst scarce expect a gentleman to pay for a servaunt to learn them, when he can redily obtain the servyces of a man who allredy knows how. Besydes, the Universities are concerned with the higher lerning. And, the difference is, when once a man has mastered carpentrie, he repeats the same work over and over but there is nothings new. Whereas a Master of Arts, who continues to rede and studie and teche, continues to expand his knowledge all his lyf. For there is an infinitie of bokes in this world.*

Jack looketh at me as if he had pain in the scrote. He saith, but Sir John saith the Good Duk Humfrey of layte had a translaycion made of an old Roman boke clept *On Husbandrie* and I am told it deals with bee keeping, chickens, muckspreiding and fysshe.

I saith I never harde the like, and from a rustick. But if twere so, then the purpose of the boke would be to teche Latin first, provyde a model of good governaunce second and onlie thirdlie teche the husbandrie, which was far below the interest of lerned men.<sup>86</sup> For husbandrie, as Sir William hath argued in the case of Master v Servant, be no Art, even when it be done well.<sup>87</sup>

*Name me some thinges you learn in these famous bokes, then said Jack.*

*There is Lectures, disputations and scrivening, poetry and the translation of ancient tonges*

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<sup>86</sup> But Jack was right, at least about the existence of the book. An anonymous author translated Palladius's *De Re Rustica* for Duke Humphrey of Gloucester between 1441 and 1443, entitling it *On Husbandrie*: see Wakelin, op. cit., p.25.

<sup>87</sup> The case is reported in the Year Book for 1440 (Trinity Term).

*and lerning. All these have their applicaycion, but they are worthe knowing for their own sayke allso, in a way in which the crafts thou mention are not, being but a means to a material end. They improve not the summe of human wisdom, though they may increase the fund of knowledge.*

But Jack doth appere unconvict, and I dowt I ever shall convict him. Yet the Masters at Oxenford live by this Art of disputaycion. Master Wycliffe saith *nothinge is perfectly known which has not bene masticated by the teeth of disputation.* And in this he was surelie right, though he was downright wrong and heretickal in most thinges he masticated. And some say those who masticate too much doth become blind to the truth that is avaunt them.

## 5 February, St Agatha, Virgin and Martyr

The monthmind for Dame Millicent, celebrated in silence by the Chaplayne.<sup>88</sup> There is no musick instrument at Caister. The Chaplayne spoke to me later of the musick in Norwich and asketh what I thought of the new PolyPhonie. He thought it very fine and Englisshe. I saith there were those who lyke better the Plain Chant, thinking it more suitable for the worshipp of God.

We spake of the musick of the Spheres. The Chaplayne saith I had best beware all astrologickal charts and fore casting. Such can lead to downfall, especially if it toucheth the hi and mighty.

*Pish, saith I, astrologie doth occupy the best minds at Oxenford.*

*Oxenford is not Norwich, William. Thou shouldst be more care full, especiallie since you cometh from Bristol and that cittie provided the most part of Oldcastle his rebells. And men will say anything in the tavern, especially when they are fyred upp with drink. Hereabouts manie saith that an interest in the starres berrs the mark of nycromancie and Lollerdy.*

The Apothecarie hath explained to me of the making of the gun-powder. It is mayde up of a small part of charcole and a small part of sulfur but three quarters of its wayte is Salt Petre. The char cole is easy to come by, but the sulfur is laborious to mayke, from eggis, mustard and garlick, unless a shiplode of the stuff arriveth in Southwarke from the vulcanoe of Sicily. But most difficult is the Salt Petre, which is mayde from no thinge but piss and turds. I said I hadde thought these would be in plentiful supply in any parte of England, as they may be the excrement of horses as of menne. But the Pothecharie saith tis not so. These things are not easilie come by in the right quantity, and then the treteing of them is most laboryous and noysome.

And as to the supply he uses well the ordure from the bricke skyte-houses in

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<sup>88</sup> Medieval Catholics often remembered a person's death one month afterwards.

the castle but also goes further a field in the hunting of the turd. And this they call **gong** farming. And the people lay complaint that he digges in dove cotes when the doves be nesting and casts up malting floors when the malt be green.

## 6 February

The Surgeon saith that alle monkes, White and Black alike be corrupted from their former stayte. The monasteries are alle dens of iniquitie, and the foraigne priories in this countrie, whom menne calleth aliens, were nests of spies. There is more vice in an Englishe abbey than ever there was in Rome the Grete. And the White Monks wear nothings next to their yarges, to preserve coleness in those partes, less sudden heat provoketh unchastitie and cause them to breke their vowe. And not without reason, for they are knowne to breke it oft.

I saith he spake too strong agaynest the Church. Was he not afraid of being clept a Loller?

*Pish, he sath, Some of my best frendes hath said more. I fere not that bastard Bishoppe of Norwich. Is he serious?*

He telleth me a new tayle.

*The grete St Bernard, who helped increyse the White Monks with our Englishe Saynte Stephen Harding, was asked to hele a sicke boy in an hous. On arrival, he discovereth that the boy was allredy dead and, although he threw himself on the body in prayer, it had no effect. A local wit saith this was strange for, normalie, when a monk throweth hymself upon a boy, the boy would get upp forthwith.*

I saith, *I would be more care full in my speche. Bawdie talk can be construed as seryious disputation.*

*More pish, he saith, all the regulars doth criticyse the seculars and alle the seculars doth criticyse the regulars and all monks and prestes doth grudge the Friers. Being agaynst the excesses of the Church is not the same as heresie.*

I admired his certaynty on the point. But I hath bene taught to revile all heretickal techeing. I saith *Dost thou not know it is heresy to have the Testament in Englishe? The Bishoppe must now licence all translaycon, save into Frensh.*

He saith, *So the gentry can rede all they like in the language of the enemy?*

## 9 February

Venison Custard and Lombard Mustard.

Thomas Knolles, grocer, Shire Reeve, mayor of London, died.

We talked of Monkes, and how they were so helde uppe for calumnie, not merelie by the Lollers, but by the poetts Masters Chaucer and Langland both, yet the power of intercessorie prayer some tymes can not be denied.

Sir John saith that Chaucer dyd grete hurt when he wrote of the Abbot that he was

*A rider, a romer by streets  
A leder of lovedays, a land bugger,  
A pryker on a palfrie, from manor to manor  
A packe of hounds at his ars, as he a lord were*

For the common man doth not distinguish between the criticque of the man and the criticque of the office. And, therefor, those that hear this verse doth lerne to despise all monks, which destroyeth societie. I asketh if he was sure the Poet meant land bugger rather than land buyer.

Sir John ordered that the whole companie assemble in Halle for a redeing. He thought the men were becoming unrulie and it would do them gode if they hearde a tale of chevalrie from Master Froissart. He thinks alle tales of chevalrie are eyther of Werre or else of Adulterie, and the Frensh tayles do often dwell too muche on the Adulterie. But yett Master Froissart, though Frensshe by tonge dyd favour the Englishhe cause in the late Werres and his Chronicle doth provyde some excellent exemplars. The tale was of the Frensshe Ryfling Tyme, Anno M<sup>l</sup>.ccc.lvj.<sup>89</sup>

*At the time when the Jacques<sup>90</sup> were plaguing the countrie, the Count of Foix and his cosyn the Captal de Buch came backe from Prussia. On the rode, when they were about to enter Fraunce, they hearde of the dreadful calamities which had overtaken the nobilitie, and were filld with horror. They lernt in Challons in Champaigne that the Dukess of Normandie and the Dukess of Orliens and at least 300 other ladies and their daughters, as well as the Duk of Orliens, were waiting at Mow in a state of grete anxiety because of the Jacquerie Rysing. The twain gallant knights decided to visit the ladies and take them whatever support they could. Their force was made up of about forty lances and no more.*

*When those eville Jacques harde that there were a large grope of ladies and children of noble birth in the town, they came together and advanced on Mow and were joynd by others from the County of Valois. In addition, those of Paris, hearing of this assemblée, set out one day in flockes and herds and added their numbers to the others. There were fully 9,000 altogether, all filled with the most evil intentions.*

*Now let me tell of the grete mercy which God hath shewn to these ladies, for they*

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<sup>89</sup> 1356.

<sup>90</sup> Peasants.

would certaynly have bene violated and massacred, grete ladies though they were, but for the knightes who were in the town, and especially the Count of Foix and the Captal de Buch.

These twain good knights and their men, who were redy armed, formed up in the market place and then moved to the gates of the market and flung them open. There they faced the villeins, small and dark and very porely armed, and prepared to defend them selves and to protect the place. In all, they exterminated more than 7,000 Jacques that day. Not one would have escaped if they had not grown tyred of pursueing them. When the noble men returned, they set fire to that mutinous town of Mow and burnt it to ash, together with all the villeins of the town whom they could pen up inside.

## 11 February

In the morning a young married woman was broghte to me by her father, to begg a favour of Sir John about a matter of rents. A man could have done an unclean thinge with her, but I did nothings. It is not right, when a man holds the advantage. But I thought about it much in the after math.

They came agayne in the afternoon about the rents. I promised to help and she kissd me. I reflect that in most noble house holds, the steward would at the leste have made her put her hand upon his thinge for a tryfle.

## 14 February, St Valentine His Feast

Master Gower of Southwarke saith that ravens, crows and rooks choose their partners on the Fests of Valentine. Master Chaucer saith that men and women express their love now by presenting flowers and sending cards. And sometyme gingerbred. And Master Lydgate hath writ a poem of Queen Katheryn, relict<sup>91</sup> of Harry Fiftte who became lover to a pore Welshman clept Tudor, in which he saith that Englisshemen look and search Cupid this day and choose their choyse by great affecion.

Oh, strange innovation. I hath never before recevyed such greteing until this day. But now, *in mezzo del camin di mea vita*,<sup>92</sup> I did recevye such expression of love as hath set my mind aspinning.

Jack brought the letter from the gatehouse.

*Unto my right well-beloved Valentyne, William Worcestre, be this bill delivered. Right reverend and worshippful, and my right wellbeloved Valentine, I recomend me unto thee, full hertily desyring to hear of thy wellfare, which I beseche Almighty God long for to preserve unto His pleasure and thy hert his desyre. And if it plese thee to hear of my wellfayre, I am*

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<sup>91</sup> Widow.

<sup>92</sup> 'In the middle of my life', a quotation from Dante.



*not in good helth of bodie, nor of hert, nor shall I be till I here from thee. For no creature knows what pain I endure. And it hath bene so long since I saw thy visage.*

*If that thou lovest me, as I trust verily that thou dost, thou wilt not leave me. For if that thou had not half the lyvelyhode that thou hast, I would not forsayke thee. And if thou commandst me to keep me trew wherever I go, I will love onlie thee and forever. And if my frendes say that I do amiss, they shall not estopp me for to do so. My hert bids me ever more to love thee trulie over all eathly thinge. No more to thee at this time, but the Holy Trinitie have thee in kepeing. And I beseche thee that this bill be not seen of none erthlie creature save onlie thy good self.*

I replied in a fayr hand, sending it post haste with Jack and keping a rough copie herebelow.

*My own fayre ladie and mistress Catheryne, I recomend myself to thee with very sorrow full hert, as one that cannot be merrie, nor shall it be until it be otherwyse with us than it is yett, for this lyf that we lede now is a plesure nayther to God nor to the world, considering the grete love that is, as I trust, arising between us, and as was never greter on my part.*

*Wherefore I beseech Almighty God to comfort us as soon as it pleaseth him, for we, who ought of very right to be most together, are most asunder. It semes a thousand yeres ago since I spoke with thee. I had liefer be with thee than have all the goods in the world.*

## 15 February

Sir William addressed me as if I were in hys dock.

*Thou must finish thy commission from Sir John, William, for I know he hath plans for thee and mayde provision for thee too. Remember he hath no son.*

I saithe, *but there is Sir Stephen. Is he not a kinde of sonne?*

He saith *What of this Stephen? He is not his son but his wyfs onlie, and is well provided for under the terms of his mother her own will, of blessed memory. So Sir John will make alternat provision and that doth include thee. He aims to spend the mayne bulke of his estate on making the Castle into a Chantrie. But that will leave an ample sufficiency for other purposes. But there is a prior condition, in your case, that ye shall marry as he desiryth...*

I had allwaies thought that Sir John might consyder a marriage for me one day; but Sir William could see my hesitacion nowe.

*Thou art not in love with anyone else art thou?*

After Agincourt

And then for shayme I denyed her.

*Just as well, but in any case he will broke no objecion on thy part, William. Remynd thyself of that from time to time and thinke longe about itt.*

*But the law saith I can veto any marryage proposal?*

*Do not pretende to lecture me on the law, boy. Then he paused and started to cross-examyn. Hast thou bene redeing too manie damned silly Frensshe romaunces? Or hast thou bene spendeing too much time in the stews of Norwich?*

I was abashed.

*Kepe clere of all that kinde of temptaycion William. The paths of righteousnes are clerely marked, and I should avoid all parts of Norwic if I were thee, even the more salubryous. And beware a pretty face. The flesch is the fleshe even when clothed in silk.*

I saith that Bernardino of Siena hath remarked that the wodrie of a womanne should consist of her love for her husband.

*My God but thou art a silly asse, he saith no such thinge. He saith that women must possess a dowrie of virtue as welle as a dowrie of godes, if they are to be trewlie beloved of their husbands.*

We had a redeing from the *Travails of John Mandeville*.

*To speak of Jherusalem the Holie Cittie. You shall understand, that it stands full fayre between hills, and there be no rivers theyre nor wells, but water cometh by conduit from Hebron. And Jherusalem unto the tyme of Melchisadech, was clept Jebus; and after it was clept Salem, unto the tyme of King David, that put these twain names together, and clept it Jebusalem. This countrie and land of Jherusalem hath bene in manie divers hands, and oft, therefor, hath the countrie suffered much tribulation for the sin of the people that dwell there. For that countrie hath bene in the hands of all nacions, that is to say, of Jews, of Canaanites, Assyrians, Persians, Medes, Macedonians, of Grekes, Romans, of Christian men, of Sarrasynes, Barbarians, Turks, Tartars, and of manie other divers nacions. For God will not that it be long in the hands of traytors nor of sinners, be they Christian or other. And now hathe the hethen men held that land in their hands for manie a long yere but they shall not hold it long, if God wille.*

## **16 February, Fastynge Tuesday<sup>93</sup>**

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<sup>93</sup> Shrove Tuesday.

We ate pancakes, made from fat, floure and egges, in preparation for Lent, after the shryving of our ghosts. We shall have short commons for the next fortie daies.

*Pancakes I gladly will taste and after more gladly make haste.*

In manie parts of England they make pancaykes, hold rayces, truss their cocks and throw stickes at them, and play foteballe, but there is no fotebal plaied at Castle Fastolfe, nor in West Caistre nayther. Sir John hath forbidden it, as he forbiddeth all women, other than the wyves of trusted men, washerwomen and maids unless they be old or ugly. But his writ runs not in Caister by Sea, where they play at foot ball and with women alyke.

Jack liketh Sir John but conceyves he is too strict. He saith to prohibit foteball is to prohibit lyfe itself. But, if Sir John had his way he would allso forbid all disports, except the military, and chesse. The men practique at the butts oft but today they went roveinge on the land hereabout, shooting at random targettes.

I asked Sir John why Harry Fifte had chosen to attack Normandie and Harfleur, when the quarrel with the Frensh had bene about Guienne and Gasconie, and we allredy held bastions in Bordow and Calays.

He saith truly it might be hard now to understand. Bordow was in loyal hands and it had provided the Erle of Dorsett with a start for his expedycion of fourtene twelve. And as for Calais, we hath expended much treasure in capturing the port a 100 yere ago, and in creating a Pale. We hathe held forts in Sangatte, Guines, Ardres, Hamme and Finnes, all around Calays, which was itself nere impregnable.

*But the truth is, William, Harry allways aymed for more. He knew all about the treaties with the Frensh, knew every word and paragraph, and knew they had broken them tymes without mencion. He had red about the Worthies and Alexander and thought he could cutte the Gordyan knot. He had all the instinctes of the gambler. There were reasons for goeing for Harfleur and Normandie but the main thyng was to shew the Arminakes who was master. Smash in the front door, he saith and the whole rotten howse will come crashing down<sup>94</sup>. And the state that Fraunce was in, he could have pulled it off too. In fact he nerley did.*

He asked me to pass him a morsel of lamprey, of which he is as fonde as I.

*Harfleur was not just a plays to disembark. It was the grete arsenal of the West, important in ittself, as well as a safe havn for pyrates. Moreover, Bishoppe Bowfort saithh it was the Kingis lieges greteest enemy. It hadde recentlie bene used as a naval base when the Frensh sent assistance to Glyndwr his rebels in Wales. It was the gateway to Normandie and all*

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<sup>94</sup> Curiously this was also Adolf Hitler's strategy with regard to Soviet Russia in 1941.

*along the Seine to Paris.*

## 17 February, Puver<sup>95</sup>

The beginning of Lent and the lengthninge of daies. At Caister, in the Castle and in the village, we must refrayn from eting flesshe, as well as eggs, milk, creme, curds and whey. The Cook saith he once made hard boiled eggs of coloured almon paste dripped into the shelles but Sir John saith it was a fraud and banned it.

Sir John saith that he and a few others landed on the Frensh coasts nere Harfleur some days before the meyny disembarked and he explored all that part behind the porte of Harfleur telling the king that few preparations had bene made to resist us.

*We caught the Frensh napping. We were expected at various playces along the Channel coste – in Bouloigne, and in the Cotentin per exemplum – but not where we verily landed. Harrys fleet rounded the cliff known as Kiddycocks and landed unopposed near the mouth of the Seine.*

*We landed near a village clept Frileuse. And I was first off the boat, the very first to ump into the sea up to my sword-belt and stones. And my stones turned to ice.*

I saith the Royal Chaplayne had written that Harry had gyven orders, under pain of death, that no one should land before him, so how was it that Fastolfe landed firste?

*God, man, dost thou trow everythinge that snivelling Chaplayne wrote? Dost thou suppose I lie, or would forget how cold that water was and how I narley drowned in my armour in wading ashore? And how dost thou suppose I came to be knyghted that day and that the king gave me the manor of Frileuse for life, on payment merelie of a miserable fleur de lys each yere?*

## 18 February

Sir John saith that the siege of Harfleur was more difficult than ecspected. The town had strong walles, with twenty-four towers and the garryson hadde some fyne pieces of artillerie. The inhabitants flooded part of the land outsyde the walls. Harry broghte up siege-engynes of the old-fashioned kinde but we had grete gunnes, with screens of long thick planks, fitted with applyances of wood and yron,

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<sup>95</sup> Ash Wednesday

so that when the top was pulled down, the bottom was lifted upp, so as to give a view of the town, until a targette having bene selected, the gunnes incontinent discharged their stones by the explosive force of ignited gunnepowdre.

We spred the word by spies that Harry was completely without ruth and would do as the Black Prins hath done at Limoges if they did not surrender, which is to say, slaughter without excepcion. The people of Harfleur knew the rewls. The Law of Deuteronomy requireth that peas be offerred to an enemie before any attack. But, if the offer was rejected, the town could be sacked, th'habitants put to the sword.

They duly surrendered, after a siege lasting four weeks. The knights were released on parole to gather ransom, and all other people that in that town dyd dwell, and who were prepared to swear allegyance to Harry, were allowed to remayne. The rest were ordered to depart.

The king decided to march for Calays. He could have gone strait home and there were manie advised that he should but he hath decided to shew them who was master, and needed to make a shew of it. If the Frensshe chose to fyght him, so be it. He was so convinced of the justice of his cause and that God was on his syde, he thought he could never be beten.

*So why were we beten then?*

*We are not beten.*

*No, but we do not now so well as before.*

*What thou must realyse, is that Harry had the right strategie in Fortene Fifteen – smash the front door in, smash up the enemy in the field, then go home and awayt theyre terms. But this was not maintained.*

*What dost thou mean?*

*In the yere seventeen, when we went backe, they were afrayd to come out and fyght us, so we had to conquer the place town by town. That took twain yeres, and at the end of it, we were still onlie masters of Normandie, and that as thou knowest, is by no means even the halfe of the Frensshe kingdome. So we hath entered a bog, like as in Yreland, the more difficult to extracte ourselves from, the deeper we entered it.*

*But why not mount a series of Oostays, such as thou hast oft urged, Sir John?*

*Why because Henry issued Ordinances to prohibit that methode. He banned disobedience, lyeing, theft, gambling, robberie, plunder, drunkness, blasphemeing, lecherie, adulterie, prostitution, fornicacion and sinne. The whores had their arms broken and were marched out of the camp. He had one of the soudeours hanged on the march for stealing a pyx. And all to*

*please the Frensh. For he sought to courte them.*

## 19 February

Sir John continued his theme. He saith was a nonsense to trete the Frensh as if they were like us, when they were different. We should have continued to apply Harrys first rewl *war without fire is like sausages without mustard* but Harry himself hath gone easie on them because he wanted them to call him King.

I asked him about his Memorandum that he wrote in thirty-five.

*After the Witch hath relieved the siege of Orliens and after they started causing trouble for us in Normandie itself and after the Bourgonons hath ratted at Arras, I wrote that a field meyny of 5000 men should be placed on the borders of Normandie, to make war in Anjew, Maine and Chartraine. Twain more armies, each of 7000 men should be sent out from England through Calays or Le Crotoy on Somme, the first to make sharp and cruel werre in Picardie and Artois, Champaigne and Burgundie, the second to do the same in the region of Chartres and Anjew.*

*These forces should hold the field continually and oostay. They should fan out, riding six, eight or ten leagues aparte, and lay waste to the countrieside. They should come as avengeing angels, burning and destroying all the land as they pass, houses, corn, vines, and all trees that bear frute, and all bests that may not be driven should be destroyed. The raiders should shew no mercie, and they should refrayne from ransoming the territories they passed thru, because that would weaken the effect.*

*Three yeres of this sort of tretement would bring the Arminaykes to their knees. The cost to the Exchequer would be minimal, since troops sent out from England would onlie be paid five months wages each yere. For the rest, they could live off the Frensh countrieside.*

*That was my policy and my strategy and I stand by it*

I was horrified. Where was the just war in this? This is the way of Rome the Grete in the time of their Republicke, when their motto was to make a desert and call it peace. That is not the Christian way.

*I see thee raise thy eyebrow, sir. But the Frensh hath asked for this tretement. For they broke their treaty as usual. They are rebels and they never fight fair. They ambush us wen we are not looking and they enrol a monstrous regiment, for they sometime hath bene led by a woman, which is a thinge abominable to the Scripture.*

## 20 February

Henry Windsor told me he thought I was as glad to obtain a good boke as Lord Fastolfe was to purchase a fair manor. Certayne it is that Sir John hath manie manors. And he once made a profit of £300 by buying grain in Norfolk and selling it

at Colchester, while he avants that he hath 7000 sheep at the grazing, in this part of the countrie alone. But tis not trew he only likes bokes for to loke upon them. I hath had a chaunce to liste those that he hath collected and his tastes are wyde. There are manie works of Philosophie as well as of Werre and though manie came from the tyme when he was with the Duk of Bedford, he adds to them styll.

I will defend him. He hath trusted me through manie long yeres and manie shrewd journeys. He is allways redy to requyte, as far as the law and reason demand. I told Henry Windsor that our master was a good man to have on our side, and a devil incarnate onlie for his enemy. The question with him was allways whether thou were to be quit by Whitebeard or Blackbeard.<sup>96</sup> The paths of righteousnes are clerely marked in his mind.

I asked the Chaplayne about Purgatorie. He saith no tongue can express, nor any mind form any conceyte of it. Purgatory hath all the pains of hell, except one, which is the most horryble. This is the one seldom thought of by people, which is that the lost ghostes in Hell are separated from God FOREVER. The souls in Purgatorie retayne as their one hope the knowledge that one day, perchance manie centuries away, but one day, they MAY be united with God. And that is the dyference.

## 21 February

I went to see the surgeon. We discussed the question of war. He saith war is manslaughter by battle. It is express contrary to the New Testament on accompt of Christ his techeing to man, to love and have mercy on his enemies and not to slay them. Moreover the armourers are yncluded with the goldsmiths among the crafts not needful to man, which should be destroyed for the increse of virtue.

I saith, but Sir John doth live by war. I hath hearde him say so to beggars and Friars who ask for alms. And, after all, Master Surgeon thou serve him, as well as I.

But I am sworn to preserve life, not tayke it, he saith.

## 22 February, the Feast of St Milburga

We were walkeong outside the Walles on a colde Winters Daie. Though he is lerned in the art of scrivening, Peter Basset grudgeth the Frensh as well as the next unlearned man. And he conceyveth that those who led them are madde, like their erstwhile kynge, or badde, like the Witch they call the Mayd. He conceyves those that follow are either ignorant or cowerds or bothe.

I asked Basset to explain some thinge to me.

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<sup>96</sup> God or the Devil.

After Agincourt

*Willingly, Master, if I can.*

*How is it that the archers at Agincourt, and at Verneville, for that matter for I know that was a famous victory too...*

*...Second onlie after Agincourt...*

*Aye, well how is it then that the arrows could wreke such damaige on the Frensh, when manie of them were wealthie men and had the finest stele playte armour to be had from Milan in Lombardie?*

*That is easy, master, he saith, we need not pierce the armour to breke up a charge or disable a man. One gode arrow will bring an horse down, and then they all falle down, like pins in a bowling alley. And even when they come at us on fote, they have to cover their fayces, which makyth them blind as blindmen, begging your pardon, sir. And a good arrow will wound and bruise them, even it goeth not through playte. And then they are left floundering in the mud, and we go at them with longhammers.*

*Well, I knew you hammered them, Peter, but where were your swords, man?*

*Some had swords but most of us had hammers at Agincourt, and just as well we did, for that stele armour is strong and maketh the blows of a sworde glance off.*

Mundeford could see we were depe in our talke and he joined in

*Thou knowest, Master William, nowourdays nobody understands how we could winne that daie at Agincourt when the Frensh had so manie men – some saith 25000. When it is verilie quite simple. The Frensh had no archers at all, or none that I sawe And they left their crossbowemen behind the lynes, Gawd knows why. They sent in their horse men, of course, but it semed to me very few. So then their knyghts and men at arms chargyd into a hayle of fyre. And they came at us wading through mudde. It was like shoteing at birds that are caught in the lyme. There were full five thousand of us arrowmen. And we can fyre like no-one else for spede. Work it out Master William, it was like the plague of locusts of the Testament.*

*The pity of it, though saith Peter, is that we have bene quite unable to put a meyny like that together these last twenty yere. And archers are no use at alle unless there are a lot of them. Otherwise they get taken aparte, as happened to Sir John at Patay in Beauce.*

I decyded to ask a question whose answer hadde allways escaped me.

*Tell me, I harde that some of our archers strippd naked that day at Agincourt?*



After Agincourt

They both laughed.

*Why saith Mundeford why would we have done that, Master, we were not about to make sport with their women, now were we? Twas their men we wanted to come at. No, but tis trew we were lightly armed, compared to the Frensshe. Twas all a misunderstanding, if naked was what they wrote afterwards. The Frensh probably put it about that, because we had no mayle or playte, we came to battle naked. Or perhaps they saith we were still bare-arsed, as manie were on the march from Harfleur, to ease the flux. We hath not all the luxury of a rest at home after the siege.*

He paused and nodded at the Tower of the Castell.

*What meanest thou?*

*Why that Sir John returned home sick after Harfleur, when manie dyd not.*

*But returned to Fraunce in time for the battelle?*

*Not that I saw or harde of.*

*I was amayzed. God, manne, dost thou mean to say he was not at the grete Battle, for all his tales and avauntings?*

*At Agincourt, Fastolfe? Nay, lad, never he wass. He was at Verneuille, yes, and he was commander at the Herrings,<sup>97</sup> and lastly at Patay too for his misfortune, but never at Agincourt. He was sent home an invalyd, after we took Harfleur, with several others who could give witness, if they still thryve.*

I felt alle hot and stunned, as if someone had just stabbed my best frende in the back.

*He never told me this. And yet men conceyve that this Castle Fastolfe was built on the ransoms of Frensh prisoners taken there!*

*So they do, but tis all false. He may have bought and trayded prisoners, like he buys and trades manny a thinge. But no soudeour I ever mette, who fought with Harry at Agincourt, saith he was there, and twas not a day to forget. So trow whom thou wilt.*

*And were there ever any prisoners kept at Caister?*

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<sup>97</sup> Sir John Fastolf won his only significant field victory over the French at the Battle of the Herrings in 1429. The battle was fought at Rouvray in the Beauce, to the north of Orléans. In *The Real Falstaff* (2010) I argued that the battle was fought at Rouvray-Ste-Croix, rather than Rouvray-St-Denis.

After Agincourt

*No, they were all releysed before Sir John started for to build the castle, sav the Duk of Orlenes, who was kept longest.*

## 23 February

The Chaplayne lendeth me the Vulgate and sheweth me the *Song of Solomon*, on which the celibate scholars hath commented much. He saith he would be interested to discuss it. I asked if it was permitted to translate it into Englissh.

*Why would thou want to do that, William?*

*For to get the meneing aright in my head. For they told me at Oxenford that my Latin was pore.*

*Tis safer not to he saith for tis prohibited. Keep it allwaies in Latin in thy mind and thou will understand it aright.*

But, I finde I must translate it at some level of my mind. And when I do it doth seme a strange way to extolle the beauty of Christes intercourse with Holie Church for alle that the lerned menne saie this is what it intendeth.

*Thy neck is as a tower of ivory*

I canne see that some of our churches are very beautiful, though none of them made of ivory. Little marble nayther.

And then

*How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince his daughter!*

I can see that the foundations of Holie Church are solid and some of the buttresses that fly to support the nave are somewhat like curved slippers. But what of this?

*The joints of thy this are like jewels  
The works of the hands of a cunning workmen*

I can not see wot this hath got to do with stone or carpentrie. Perhaps there is some hidden lykeness beyond my ken. But lower down I find

*They navel is like a round goblet which wanteth not liquor  
Thy belly is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies*

After Agincourt

And above

*Thy breasts are like twain young roes that are twins.*

And

*Thy breasts are like grapes*

And most strange of all

*Let us get up erly to the vinyards  
Let us see if the vyne flourishe  
Whether the tender grape appere  
And the pomegranate buds forth  
There will I give thee my love*

If the man is a worshipper and the woman is Holie Church, I suppose this is worshippe of a kind. But perhaps it is no thinge of the kinde.

## 24 February

In the barrack, someone in his cuppes asketh how it was that at Orliens we were beaten by a FUCKING MAID. And another asketh if she was she a FUCKING WITCH?

*Why dost thou doubt it? The Duk of Bedford saith she was a limb of the Fiend. And that is good enoughe for me. And there be a lot of this witche craffte about. Thou art too young to remember when King Harry's own stepdame, Quene Joan was convicted of using witch craft to poison him. Such are the ways of the Deville. He oft sends his minions in female form, to ensnare us pore men more effectively. She was imprisoned in Pevensey Castle and at Nottingham, though they have buried her in Cantorburie later, next to old Harry her husband.<sup>98</sup>*

*And then there was the good Duk Humfreys second wyff! Who would have thought it? Dame Eleanor wanted to know the future, like all of us, and consulted the astrologers. These men, Thomas Southwell and Roger Bolingbroke, predicted that the King would suffer a sorry illness. Rumour of the prediction reached the Kingis guardians, and they allso consulted astrologers, who could find no such future illness in their predictions, a comfort for the king who had bene troubled by all this.*

*So then they followeth the rumour to its source and interrogated Southwell, Bolingbroke and Dame Eleanors confessor, and then arrested them for treason and necromancie. Bolingbroke named Elenor as the instigator so she too was arrested and tried.*

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<sup>98</sup> Joan of Navarre, Henry IV's second wife, was convicted of witchcraft in 1419.

After Agincourt

*She denied most of the chargis but she confeseth to obtaining a potion from Margery Jourdemayne, the Witch of Eye. Her explanacion was that it was a potion to help her conceive a childe.<sup>99</sup>*

*And what became of these pore people?*

*Pore people, pore people, he cried, that were in league with the Devil himself! Eleanor and her fellow conspirators were found guilty. Southwell died in the Towre of London, Bolingbroke was hanged, drawn and quartered, and Jourdemayne was byrnt at the stayke. That is what became of them, and so should perisshe all witches and traytours!*

And he telleth that Eleanor had to do public penaunce in London, despite her rank as Duchesse. On three days she was brought by barge from West Minster to the City. On the first of these, a Mondaie, she was met at the steppes of Temple Bridge by the mayor, Shire Reeves and notables of the Cittie and then progressed through the vulgar crowds lining Flete Street and Ludgayte Hill. She walked barefoot, with her hode drawn back, so that all could see her fayce and countenance. On she went until she reached St Paul and there at the hi altar made offering of the candle she had carryed all the way, of twa pounds weight. On Wednesday she landed at the Swanne in Thameisis Street and went in similar fashon to Christchurche Aldgate while on the Fridaie her route lay between Queenhithe and up Cheapside to St Michael Cornhill.

*And then was she made to divorce the Good Duk and was condemned to life imprisonment. She was imprisoned at Chestre on Dee, then moved to Kenilworth, where she remaineth a prisoner to this daie.*

The poet hath well put these words into this Lady her mouth

*I was so hi upon my wheel  
My own estate I could not knowe  
Therefor the gospel saith full welle  
Who will be hi, he shall be lowe.*

But what of the Frensh Witch Joan? If she was merely a Witche why were the Frensh prepared to follow her?

*Payn saith well there thou hast it, Master. The Frensh in their meyny did not conceyve she were a Witch onlie, nor even a Witch at alle, though some een in their Church had doubts. And because the Frensh meyny were prepared to follow her any where, that put the skytes up our men – worse than the flux and twice as bloodie.*

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<sup>99</sup> Eleanor, wife of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, was convicted of witchcraft in 1441.

*Well well tis true. But the Duk of Bedford had no doubt about it. He saith*

*The which stroke and discomfiture not onlie diminished in grete part the number of our people there, but as well reduced the courage of the remnant in marvellous wise, and encouraged your adverse party and enemies to assemble then forthwith in grete number.*

*He said it all lah-di-dah and could have put it simpler, but he was right. In the yere fortene thirtie an order was issued to the authorities in Kente, telling them to apprehend deserters from the meyny, saith to be returning home because of wide spred fere of the Girl Joan of Arc - **terriculamenta Puellae**.*

MEMORANDUM Sir John saith that the Good Duk his wyff was entirely innocent. She was made martyr because of his argueing strong agaynest the earlie releuse of the Duk of Orlens and in order to destroy his reputacion. For how could a Duk be good if he were married to a Witch? And bere in mynd she was condemned to life long incarceration by the Kyngge alone, without benefit of trial by peers, for at that time the *Magna Carta* did had no applicacion to women. But this hath since bene amended by statute law of the Parliament, saith Sir William.

## 26 February

Sir William left for West Minster this week where a Parlyament is to open. The first for three yeres. I asked the Chaplayn whether the thought the Mayd of Orlenes was a Witch to be hunted. He said he hath expected this question from me. But he hath looked into the matter and was satisfied she was.

*How so?*

*From the start she dressed as a man, despite all the dissuaysions of her frendes in Holie Church. Then, she rode as a knyght with her lord, predicted manie victories in the field, was even present at sum, and did other thinges which her followers regarded as wonders. Then she sent threatening bills to the Bohemians, among whom was a multitude of Lollers.*

*Why did that not gain her credit with her own Church?*

*I can onlie say it did not. Laymen and clerics, Seculars and Cloisterers began to doubt of the Ghoste whereby she was rewld, whether it was devilish or divyne. Then certayne men of*

*grete learning wrote tracts concerning her. Then, after she was taken by our men, she was examined by a grete number of masters both in the Civil and Canon Law; and as I have hearde with my own ears from one who spoke with Master Nicolas Midi<sup>100</sup> she at last confessed that she had a familiar angel of God, who, by the opinion of the most lerned men present, was judged to be an evil Ghoste. And they held that this Ghoste rendered her a sorceress. After which she was burned – by her own people, William, not by us.*

*Did it verilie have to come to this?*

*She set an exceedingly bad example to other women. There were cases of others who were inspired by her exemplum to follow the ways of the Evil One. In Cologne of Almayne there was a woman who allways went about in male clothinge, bore arms and wore dissolute garments. After she hard of the Maid, this blodie woman dances in dances with men, gives herself up to festing and drink and overpasses altogether the bounds of her sex, the which by the way, notwithstanding her male attire, she did by no means concele. Thereafter she lives as a concubyn and shewethd all men openlie by what Ghoste she lives. And this doth set a very bad exemplum to all woman kinde.*

*And she was not alone. There were others who claymed to be able to cut a napkin in pieces and suddenly restore it in the sight of the people. Or to throw a glass agaynest the wall and breke it and have it repaired in a moment. And other such idle devyces.*

I said, as to the Allmaigne witch, I was not sure that the story hathe not bene improved in the telling. And as for the idle devyces, I hadde seen these performed at countrie fairs before this day.

*By witches, William, or by mountebanks at fairs permitted by charter?*

*By the latter, of course.*

*A Mountebank is not a Witch, William. Surely thou knowest that?*

And as for this French Maid, I do wonder whether the larger consideration for we Englisshes is not whether she was a Witch but the fact that she was woman. For even the Romans did not have to fight with women, save Boudicca in their Province of Britayne. Their Poet sang *arma virumque cano, not arma feminamque cano.*<sup>101</sup>

I asked in the barracks about Pope Joan of England. The York Shireman saith *We all trow that taile, Master. But, after she was defrocked, later Popes were set to undergo holy examinacion whereby, having sat on dung chair, containing hole, a Holie Cardinale*

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<sup>100</sup> A Parisian lawyer, involved in the first trial of Joan of Arc.

<sup>101</sup> The first line of Virgil's *Aeneid* 'I sing of arms and the man.'

After Agincourt

*hadde to reach up and see if new Pope had stones, and then if so he saith somethinge to firm it, in Latin tongue.*

***Duos habet et bene pendentis?***

*Thatud be reet. Any road, it meaneth He hath both and they dangle nicely.*

*Just so.*

And they roared.

## **27 February**

Basset asked me of the Mouldwarp. He said that in the playce he grew to manhood, twas a tale told to frighten the small ones, of a monster with skin like a goat.

But I said there was more to it than that. The sixth king after John would be the Mouldwarp, proud and wicked. He was to be attackd by a Dragon, a Wolf from the west and a Lion from Yreland, the whych would dryve him from the land, leaving him onlie an island in the sea where he would pass life in grete sorrow and strife before dying in agonie by drowneing. England would then be divided into three parts amongst his conquerors: the Dragon and the Lion would rewl twain parts, and the Wolf the third.

The prophecy was first used by the rebels agaynest Henry the Fourthe, who was sixt king after John and the founder of Lancaster. People now say the Mouldwarp must be Henry the Sext because he is the sixt after John, if thou discount Edward Second, who men say was of the sodomitical persuaysion, and Richard Second as being too Frensh.

Basset saith that St Augustine saith

*The sign of Judgment that the earth will be moist with sweat is found in the letter Y and expressed in five words, namely JESUS CHSRIST, SON [of] GOD, SAVIOUR, and there are 27 verses, which number is the cube of 3. But these words are in Greke IESOUS CHRESITOS THEIOS YIOS SOTER, the which in Latin is Jesus Christus Dei Filius Salvator. And if a man should join the initial letters they are ICTIS, the which is FYSH in Greke, by which name Christ is mystically understood.*

I am amayzed by this man his knowledge of thinges that have passd and thinges that are to come. But Scrope says it is all turd of the goose.

## 28 February

Now doth the Frensh Colossus stand armed and wealthie, while we, if Sir John and Sir William are to be trowed, have nayther monie to pay our garrisons in Normandie, nor reinforce them, nor even monie for a flete, without begging for it from a hostile Parlyament. And the best of our soudeours seeks employment abroad.

And yet Lydgate, paid by some courtier no doubt, doth prate of Peas

*In this word PAX there be letters three  
P set for politick prudence;  
A for **augmentum** and more authority;  
X for Christus, most digne of reverence.*

And yet this King Henry, while talking of Peace, made war one last time. It was ill conceyved and ill planned and it deeply upset the Duk of York, who was then Leutenant of Normandie. However, in M<sup>1</sup>CCCCIII<sup>102</sup> Henry put John Beaufort, newly made 1st Duk of Somersett Shire, in charge of a meyny of 8,000 men, initially intended for the relief of Guienne and Gascoigne. This denied the Duk of York much needed men and resources at a time when he was struggling to hold the borders of Normandie.

Yet Somersett was a manlie man before this voyage. He hath bene kept a prisoner for XIX<sup>103</sup> yers, after he lost Meaux in Brie. But his voyage came to disaster and he achieveth nothings. And on that voyage were slain and taken to the number of iij. M<sup>1</sup>. vij. c.<sup>104</sup> whereof were nyne lords and a squire who was a grete captain.

Sir John saith it was this useless voyage which ruined the Cardinale of Wynchester. For he was uncle to the Duk, and with the wreck perished not merely the Duk, but the Cardinale his reputation. And with the waneing of Duk Humfrey and the Cardinal, and the absence of York in Normandie, there waxed the power of Jack Napes, the King finding diversion onlie in prayer and colleges at Eton on Thameisis and Bridge of Cam, and the dreame of peys.

*Nota Bene. This Duk of Somerset was of the tribe of Beaufort. He descended from John of Ghent, uncle to Harry Fiftt.*

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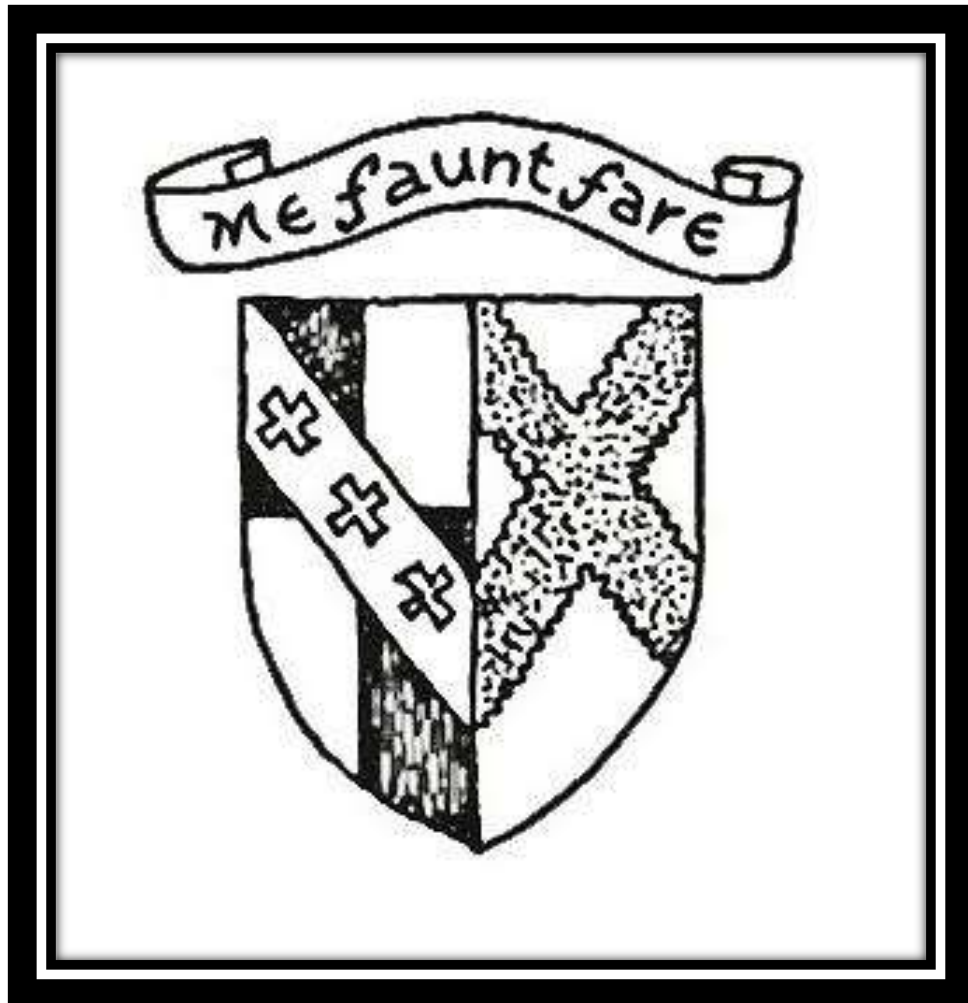
<sup>102</sup> 1443.

<sup>103</sup> 19.

<sup>104</sup> 3,700.



After Agincourt



Sir John's Coat of Armes



The Church at Norwich



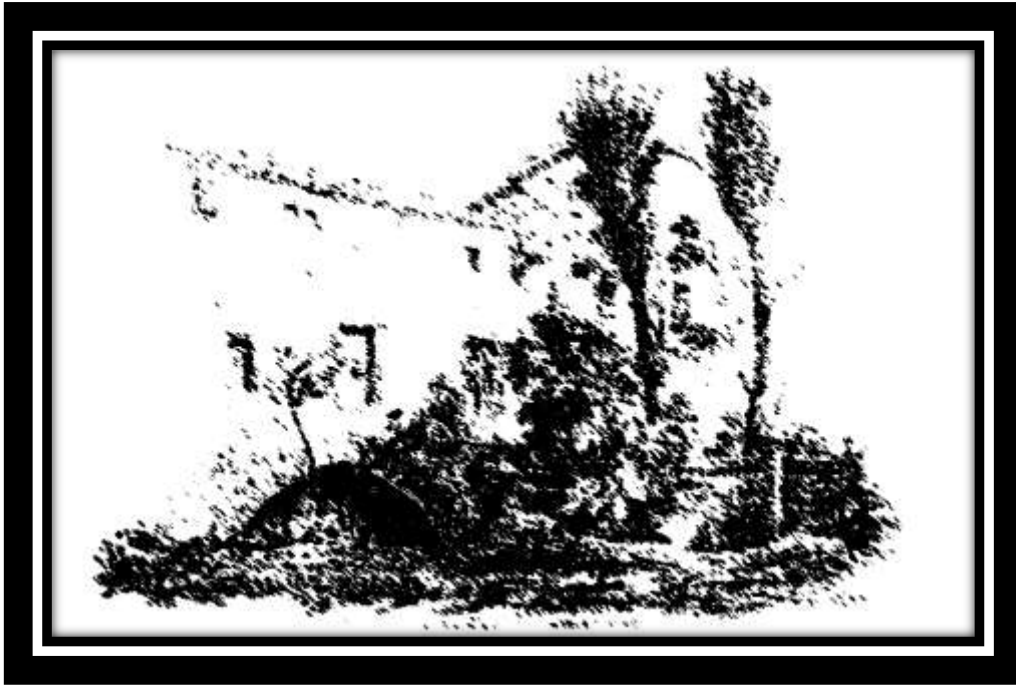
Norwich Cloister



The Erpingham Gate



The Divinitie School at Oxenford



**The Barge House, Castle Fastolf**



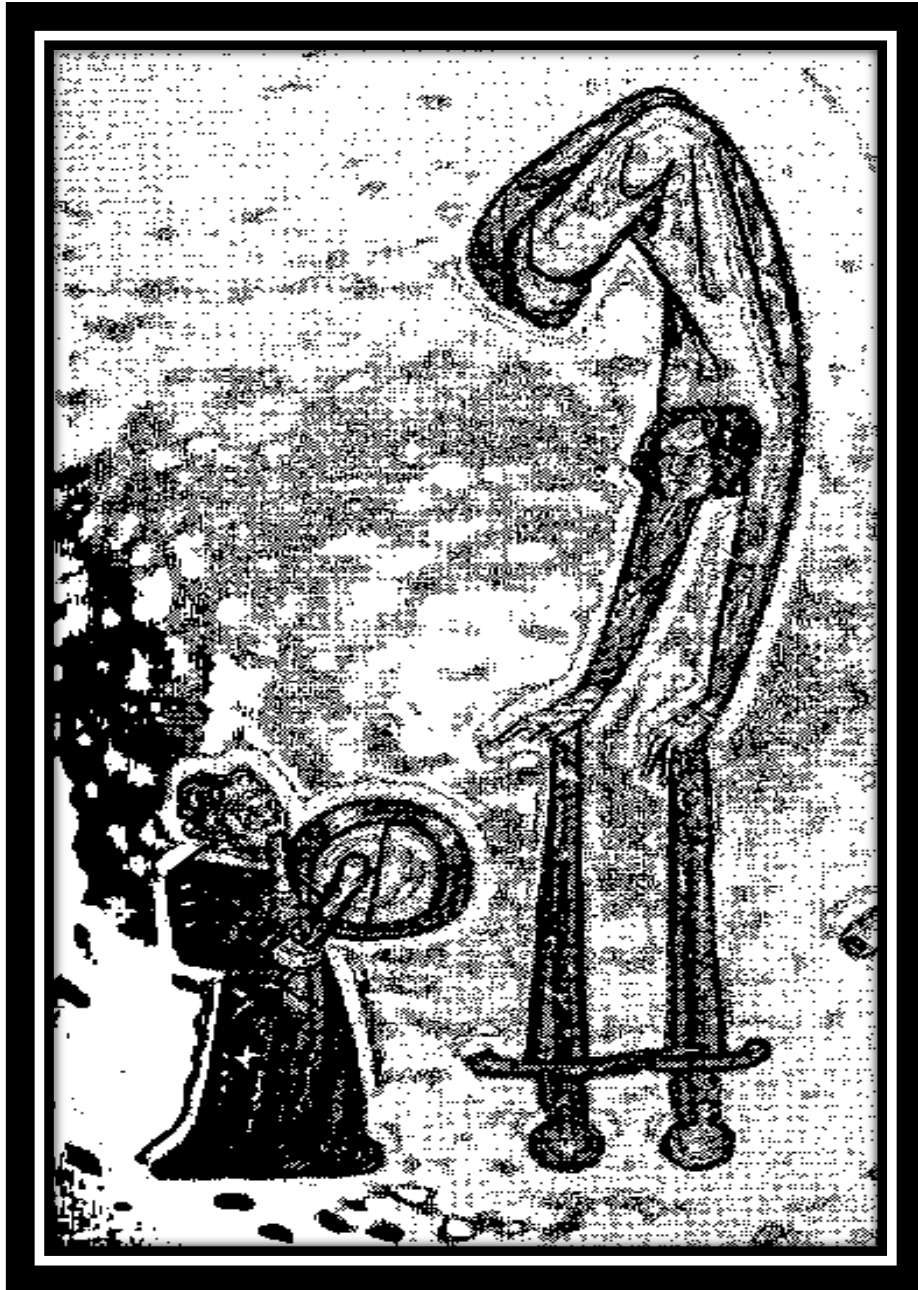
**The Grete Tower, Castle Fastolfe**



**The Barrel Tower of Castle Silly Gwillem in France**



The Court of Kingis Bench



Chrystmas Tyme

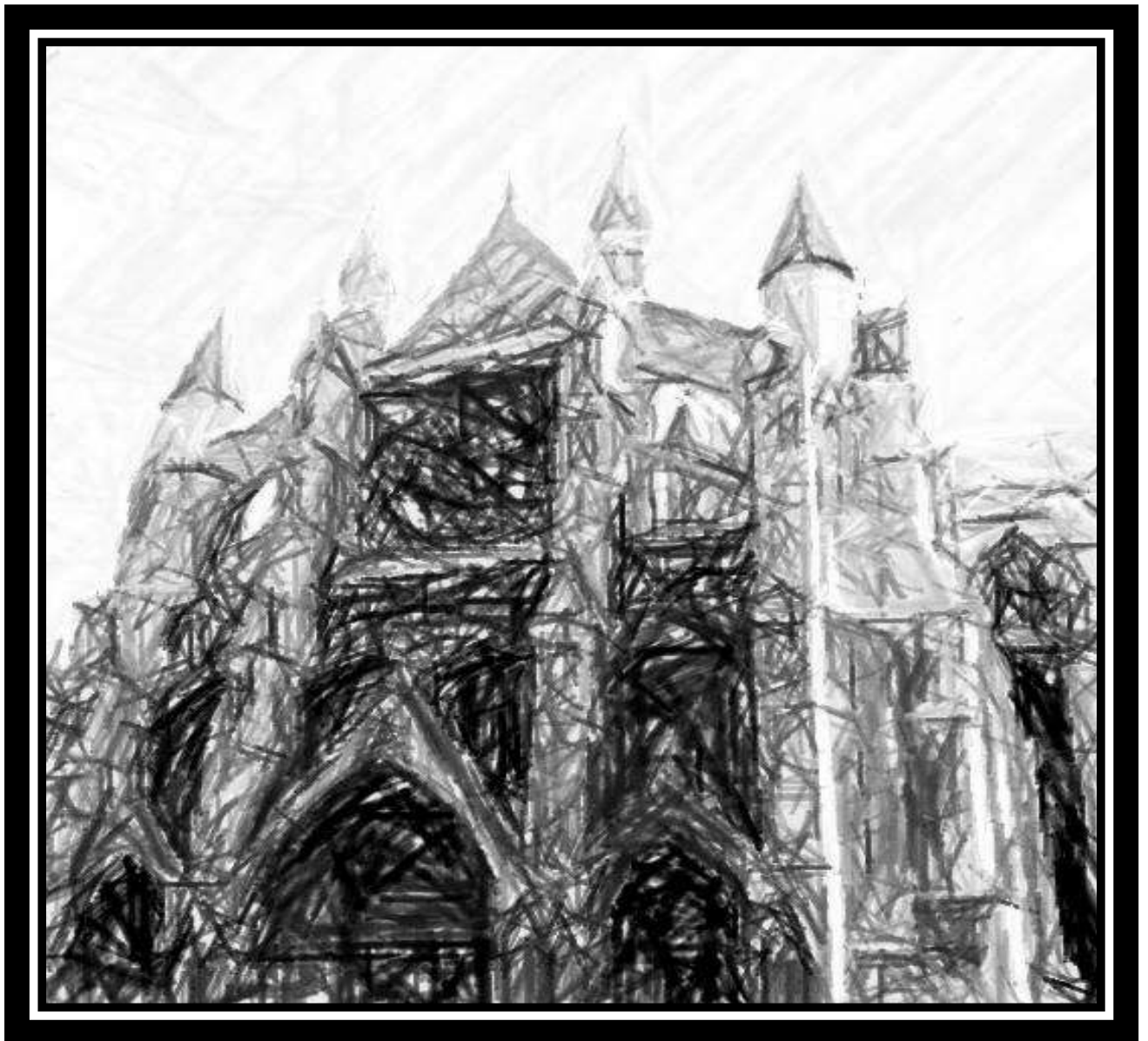


After Agincourt



*Fothering Hay, where the Duk of York doth lie*

After Agincourt



**West Minster Abbey**

After Agincourt



**Harry Fift in West Minster Abbey**

## VII

### 1 March

MATTHEW GOUGH writes that the Cittie of Metz hath surrendered to the Frensh. Jack Napes hath gone to Fraunce with a train of courtiers, to escort the Princess of Anjew to England. Agnes Sorel, mistress to the Dolphin bears him a third girle childe at Beauty on the Marne and he presents her with a chatow. The Portugallss have rounded the Green Cape of Afrik to reach to reach the mouth of the Senegalle River, satd to be a branch of the Nyle. They bring black menne home to Lagos and Lisbon.

The men of Bristol are famous navigators but their navigateing is not equal to that of the Portugalls under their Henry of that nayme. Our men hath never yet explored this Afrik. (Nor hathe Cornishemen found the land of Lyonesse or the Ysle of Welsh Brendan, though they proclaim they have sene the monsters of the deep. And experienced its raptures.)

We talked of the tayles told by saylors. The men of Bristol talk of sea-unicorns and the men of the Almayne Ocean talk of mermaids and pyrates. In truth they all talk the verie horseskyte.

I talked with the Surgeon of circumcision. The Monk of Chester saith that the Al-Koran doth not mention it and yet the ritual is universalle among those that follow the Profet Mahomet. The Surgeon sayth it be sometyme necessarie. But he cannot perform the operation now, even when necessary, because the Pope hath forbidden yt.

*What hath His Holieness to say about it?*

*The Cantate Domino of Eugene IV is very clere - All those who, after the yere of the Incarnacion M<sup>i</sup>CCCCXL,<sup>105</sup> observe circumcysyon, are declared alien to the Christian feith,*

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<sup>105</sup> 1441.

After Agincourt

*and not in the least fyt to participate in eternal salvacion.*

### 3 March

The Chaplayne confesseth me and I told hym that I hath eyten mete in a tavern with a wench, in breach of the Lenten prohibicion.

And then I asketh him what he thoghte of the Kyng. He saith he was a verie holie man but he hath 28 Chaplaynes and the number was yncreasing everie yere. These did nothinge to increase the Ghostlie health of the nacion, though no doubt it served to line the pockets of Jack Napes, and increase his affinitie.

*Can we have too manie priests?*

*We can certaynly have too manie paid royal out of the King's coffers. That doth gretely stoke up hatred.*

I asked hym about the miracle of the Masse. And whether the bred became fleshe by way of transubstantiacion or consubstantiacion, as Master Wycliffe dyd holde.

He said he wondered I dared speke to hym of a double-damned hereticke, who preached agaynst the Masse, the Holie Father, the Church and alle Lordshippe too.

I said *I see not the harm in logical disputation. And Master Wycliffe never said that the bodie of Christ was not present in the Hoste, onlie that it lyved there together with the bred and the bred was not displayced entyrelly. And as for the Church, he wanted a pure one, and how could any manne obiect to that, even the Bishoppe of Norwic.*

*Well I can see, he saith, thou canst have no objection, then, if thy bones are dug up 50 yeres after thy death and scattered, as Wycliffes were verlie at Lutter Worth in Lester Shyre. And remember, the Bohemian Master, who followed that grete hereticke, was byrned in a Lollers Pit in Constanz of Switzer Land.*

*Stedy, I said, I trow in Holiey Church, and in the trew Pope, and in the Counsaile of Constanz too, as welle as you. But I do not see why all lerning and Scrypture should be in the hands of the Prestes, when they hath not all the wysdom in the worlde.*

*Very well, let us leyve off from argueing this. The trewth is broader than any one man can ymagyne.*

I asked him whether he ever wanted his own parish.

*Nay master, that is a grave responsibilitie. I had a parisshe once but tis very onerous. Why I have known a parish preste be oblyged to help a woman give byrth to a suckling babe.*

I asked how this thinge most unnatural hath come about.

*It saith in the hand boke of John Mirk that the priest should allwaies be redy to give instruction to the midwyff, as followeth*

*And if the woman then die  
Dost thou be midwyff nigh  
For to undo her with a thwittle  
And so to save the child his lyf.*

*For when a woman is in labour the Preste must gyve attendance to see that she is shryven,<sup>106</sup> for nothings could be worse than that she dye in a state of sinne, seeing as it is sinne that hath brought to her bed in the first plyce. And then, when he is theyre, if she should go into labour, he must staie. And, though I have never witnessed it, they saye that chiydyrth is excedeing paynful, and sometyme the child and the woman doth both die of itt.*

## 4 March

At the inn in Norwich the landlady came by and supped with me, and I kept her very late, talkeing and makeing her comb my hed, though she charged me more for her combing than for a Maid. *But I did not breke my vow.*

Catherine said the King is a lyving Saint, who cannot bear to see brute beasts slaughtered by hunters, even when tis for the table.

*He revileth all werre and wyll seek peas with the Frenshe, in the name of Jhesu Christe. And there will be a new order in England and a new ayge of Puritie and Austeritie. And the King has petytyoned for the canonisation of St Osmund and St Alfred, for the reconciliacion of Holy Church with the schismaticke Grekes, for the educacion of his half-brethren, Edmund and Jasper<sup>107</sup> and for the redeing of bokes and foundacion of scholes. And loke at the treasyre he is pouring out of his own purse for his colleges at Eton and Bridge of Cam and marvoel at the generositie of the Marquess and his courtiers. And all the faculties granted by Pope Eugene for the purpose.*

I saith Sir John saith that Jack Napes bledes all Norfolk whyte to fund those colleges you mencion.

How so? she saith.

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<sup>106</sup> Makes confession.

<sup>107</sup> Tudor.

After Agincourt

*He used up all the revenues of the Duchy of Lancaster for the purpose.*

*I know naught of that. You should raise your heady from grubby accompting from time to time, William.*

I found that harsh.

*She saith the Marquess pours out his own treasure too. I mean **per exemplum** at Ewelme. And the same is trew of other courteours. Look at what the late Henry Chichele hath wrought in Oxenford and Higham Ferrers and in Cantorberie, with its Grete Cloister. And what the Archbishophe of York is planning for Wye. And then there are the colleyges in Warwick and Windsor and Cobham and Fothering Hay and Arundel and Bunbury and Staindrop and Tattershall and Pleshey, to say nothings of the new ones for Universitie Reding in Oxenford and Bridge of Cam. And the new buildings in Norwich and throughout all North Folke. Have you seen the paintings in our Cathedral – the merchants say they are the finest outside the Low Countries – and have you sene our new vault?*

I liketh not her replie. She hath become more formalle. I wondered how manie different waies there were to represent angels.

She disliketh my reply. She saith it was not just a question of angels.

*In St Peter there are busts of ledeing citizens, including my own pore husband, set on hi to contemplate the Heavens, even while their souls are suffering the paynes of Purgatory. In the cathedral, the entire church is being roofed ons more, as likewise at Salle. Throughout the countie, the merchaunts and the grandees poure out their traysure to build againe in the latest style, employing masons, glaziers, carpenters and joiners, craftymen of all kindes. The West Tower at Wymondham hath just bene completed. Within a few yeres every church in Northfolk, aye and Southfolk too, will look anew. We are lyving in a new ayge of plentie and if the good Marquess could bring about a lasting peace, they would get better still. Men are pouring out their monie on rood lofts, and paintings and effigies and stained glass and angels.*

I wondered whether the world can be remayde so easilie, simply by renewing the fabricke of churches. Is not a ghostly re-awakening necessary allso? She agreed but said it was essential that the awakening took place within the bounds of Holy Church, as it hath done so manie tymes before.

*Your Master Wycliffe and his followers would bring the whole edifice crashing down.*

I saith he was not *my* Master Wycliffe and I wondered if she did not say such thinges merelie to vex me. I saith *I never said I was a Loller, I merely hadde said I want to red the Byble in Englisshe so that I can follow Jesus for myself.* Sir John saith King Harry hathe

*allwaies written in Englisshe, in a clere hand, though he knew Frensh and was the equalle of any clerke in Latin.*

## 5 March

In the morning, busy writing a bill for Sir John to Thomas Howes about the bawdie house at Castle Combe and the heving and shoveing<sup>108</sup> at Bathampton. There is so much confusion in the audit there that it may be necessarie to tayke evidence in that playce. For men will say anythinge if it suites them, but when they are requyred to swear upon the Boke, that is a different matter.

In the afternoon the Chaplayne and I spoke of Sodomites. I hath harde they were kynd unto them in Ytalie, especiallie in Florenz so that the Almayn mercenaries even refer to those of Sodom as Florenzers.

The Chaplayne said they tolerate all degrees of fylth in Florenz, but the laws are not the same throughout all the partes of Ytalie. Not in Siena. The grete preacher Bernardino combed that cittie, and whenever he recevyed notice of some public sodomite, had him seized and thrown into the nearest bonfyre and byrned incontinent.

I said that in that long poem by Dante, it is related that the Sodomites were in Hell, and were made to runne nakyd over hot sand while it rayned fyre down from Heaven uppon them.

MEMORANDUM I asked Sir John at what age should a man marry and he said King Harry was born in a tower of Monmouth castle, and his parents married in the yere of Sir Johns own birth, when Henry the Fourthe as he became was fortene and his mother not yet twelve. There was no bulleshitte then about a couple having to agree to their marriage.

## 6 March, St Kyneburga, Kyneswild and Tibba

I confesseth agayne to the eting of mete during fast time and the temptacions of the flesshe. And then talked to the Chaplayne of the Vulgate Bybl in Englisshe. He saith he was agaynest it. He saith that Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradys for desyre of knowledge and cuninge. And Christ taught his discyples manie thinges that he did not disclose to the multitude. And any translacion is imperfecke, especiallie if it be out of Latyn into our rough and barbarous tonge. There agayne, the Vulgate Bible is such a mound of buried traysure, thou needest a sure guyde.

I said this Latin Vulgate he playced above all other was but a translacion itself

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<sup>108</sup> Quarrelling; litigation.



of St Jerome out of the Greke, which in turn was out of the Hebrew.

*He saith but consyder that reding the Bibel in Englisshe leads to disorder and rebellyon. The hereticke Wycliffe his techeing on the nature of Lordshippe led directly to the Ryfling Tyme, when the paissauntes wanted to throw downe all lawe. And shortlie afterwards Sir John Oldcastle played the Loller to the poynte of compassing theverie death of Grete Harry and his brethren. There hathe bene armed men and fyghting in the stretes of London, in Agincourt yere, before the rebell was arrested. He was both hanged and burned, two yeres later. And ever since then, everie Loller is suspect of treason as well as heresie though some of them be poor ignorant fools as are but witches and nycromancers.*

*We talked of marriage. Thou knowest, William, thou hadst better not leave it too layte before thou betrothe thyself, though Sir John himself dyd that. For he was young but Dame Millicent was old, when he dyd marry her.*

*What doth Holy Church say about the unclene act in marriage? Doth marriage make it clean?*

*All is fornicacion even in marryage. It is still a sin, hence churching and puryfycacion.*

*The men in barrack do not regard to regard it as a source of sorrow.*

*What hath that to do with the question? They are litl better than animalles. Surely even thou dost not trow that all men are born equal, as Jack Straw doth prate?*

## **10 March**

*I asked the Potheary of the makeing of a powdre. He said the best of it be formed from excremente. Turdes lying in the right condicions will, after a whyl, develop a whytish crystallyne poudre. This substance - the crystals, not the turds, marke you - are collected and washed to separate the kemical parts. The best crystals are to bee found on the bottom syde of the tyrd, next to the ground. But the smell of the mixture, William, is enough to scunner thee. A man never gets used to it. And tis not true that it may be used as an Aphrodisickal ointment.*

## **11 March**

*I asked the surgeon what he thought of our Master. He saith he thought he was a basic, sound man, and verie on the Earth. In very good form for a man of his age; and not at all portly, but some what set in his waies. It is clere to him that Sir Johnis view of the world was fixed in the time of King Harry. He was not at all open to*

new conceytes, especially none from Fraunce.

My pyles are a constant hearts disease. Each time I go for a long ryde, I need to spend a long time putting thinges right and a long time soking in a hot tubbe. But the medycaments provide some relyf.

## 12 March

How Sir John doth hate the Frensh, though he saith he hath just cause.

*The Frensh went back on their word at Arras as did the Bourgonons, whom God rot. But they are simply one shade of Frensh. Which is why Jack Napes his plan will never work. For give them an inch and they take a yard. Surrender Anjew and they will take Mayne. Surrender Maine and they will take Normandie, and so on until they arrive at Calays the Grete, and then Dover. Charles Seventh, or his son, will never rest till they breke our grip on Fraunce, which hath provided us some suretie these last 30 yeres. Better to fight the foe in Fraunce than on the stretes of London.*

## 13 March

I found two women of West Caister, a mother and daughter inside the court yard. Their busyness was a request her daughter was to mayke. So I took her into my chambre, and there it was to help her husband which I promised to assist in. And here I was offered the opportunity to kiss the yonger woman, or the elder, as I pleased, and touch them both, though not at the same tyme together. But I thoghe on my voew and dyd not. Lord how these countrie bumpkins doth ape the Wynchester geese in Southwark, onlie less polished and practiqued and not paid in casshe.

So, pleased with myself, as not having pleased myself, yet the Chaplayne tells me that all looking with lust in the hert is fornicacion and as bad as the doing thereof.

A bill for Sir John. He told me he had harde from the Good Duk Humfrey that the Kyng hath given the Duke the governance of all royal forests and parks but then hath permitted so manie to take trees, underwood vert and game. So the King agreeth one thinge one daie and another the nexte.

The men have bene practising with hammers, in the Outer Court. They swing them agaynest blocks of wood or old armour, which they smashe to peces hertilie. The men say this weapon is a part of being Merrie in England.

## 15 March

After Agincourt

The vulgar soudeours hath got to know somehow about me and fair Catherine and they taunteth me.

*Have you yet made the two backed beast with that one, Master William?*

I would have hit them if I hadde bene more brave.

## 18 March

And still we fast for Lent. In the morning, busy writing a byll for Sir John to Walter Shipdam about the cole at Bentley in York Shire. There is diceing in the barracks. I doubt not this contravenes some order of Sir John, but the men point out that the Blak Prins himself was fameous for dicing and lost monie regular thereby.

I asked Scrope whether true love was to be found in the tayles of Master Chaucer told by the Knight, Lawyer and Franklin, all educated men, or in those told by the Miller, Carpenter and Wyff of Bath, which semed altogether more churlish. Scrope said in nayther sort. Where then?

*Each man finds his own kind of love I conceyve, and it varies by degrees. I conceyve it would be difficult for the son of a carpenter to trewlie love the daughter of a lawyer, or she to love hym. They are brought up in diffierent ways in our worlde.*

*And what about the son of a whittawer and the daughter of a whittawer who hathed bene married to a merchant and soudeour?*

*What of them?*

*Could they marrie and hope to be content?*

*I thought thou said the daughter hath allredy bene married*

*Tush! Suppose she is then made widow and relict.*

*Thou semes to be very precise now with thy supposings.*

I asked the Chaplayne agayne where trew love was to be found, for that was what I was after.

*Why in the love of Christ and Mary.*

*Yes but I speak of the the love between man and woman. Thou must have hearde manie thousands of confessions. And know the heart and the soul well. I do not ask that you to*

*Speak of individuals or breke the seal of the confessional but generalyse upon thy experyence.*

*Well tis true that I have hearde some thinges in my tyme. So I will venture forth. I conceyve that trew love betwixt man and woman it lieth not in the love of a lord for his lady where the marryage is arraynged and remaineth of convenyence onlie. Nor in the wild desyres of the young for change or escape or adventure. Nor in the desyres of the loins onlie, and Old Adam his sin. Nor in what the minstrels sing of in those Frensshe ballads or what they practique in those their courts of love. Nor in the yernings of the prisoner. Nor in the adulterous complaynts of those who cannot lie together by lawe...*

*You have rewld out most places then. What is left?*

*It lies I conceyve in the slow affection of the goodman and his wyff, who cayme together manie yeres ago when they were yonge and still cling together as frendes, when all the ryvers of passion have runne drie. And they endureth all joies and sorrowes together as if there were no difference of feleing between them, bothe the grete and the smalle, and if they quarrel at all, they make upp the lost tyme sone after with swete forgyvnesse.*

## 20 March

Last night I harde this story in the barrack. Twas a tayle as must have bene broghte backe from Fraunce.

*Now there were not manie Englisshemen who went with the Frensh and Bourgonons to fyght the Turk in Bulgaria, and fewer still who lyved to tell the tyle. A man can forsoothe fyght the Saracen nearer home, for there be Sarrasynes on the borders of Allemagne and some knyghts go to Marienburg to fyght the heathen in Prussia and Lithuania. At least twas before the Russ smashed up the Allmayne Knightes so badde at Tannenberg. This is a tale of those far off days.*

*There lived a noble knyght, rich and powerfull, and married to a beautiful dame of hi familie. These two lyved together for long and passed their days in peace and happiness. And because there was then a trews with the Frensh, the Knyght, who was most devout, reflected that he ought to offer to Godde the bodie which had bene given him, and which was faire and strong, save that he hadde lost an eye in a battle. To perform the vowe he had myde, after he had taken leave of his wyff and relatives, he betoke hymself to the noble knyghts of Prussia and there fought valiantly and had manie adventures.*

*Now thou must know that his lady, who stayed at home, had bestowed her affection on a young squire, who one day hoped to be clept to knyghthood and who soghte her love, and she was gladde to have a substitute for her liege lord, who was away fighting the Saracen of the North.*

*Whilst her lord was fasteing and doing penance, my lady made good cheer with the squire. Oft did my lord dine and sup on bred and water in the Grete Hall at Marienburg of*

*Prus, whilst my ladie was enjoying all the good thinges which God had given her in plenty. And while my lord lay upon strawe, my ladie rested in a fine bed with the squyre to squyre her. To cut matters short, whilst my lorde was fighting the Sarrasynes, his ladie was indulging in another sort of combatte altogether with the squyre, and did so well thereat, that if my lord had never returned he would not have bene much missed or regretted.*

*But came the day when, the knyght finding that—thanks be to God—the Sarrasynes were no longer on the offensive, prepared to return, and started with the few retayners he hadde. Being more anxymous than any of his followers, he was allways the first to rise, and the foremost on the journey. In fact, he made such spede that he oft rode alone, a quarter of a league or more ahead of his followers.*

*One day, it chanced the knight had lodged about six leagues from his home. He rose early and saith to his followers, Come at your leysure, there is no nede for you to follow me. I will ride on faste that I may surpryse my wyff in her bed.*

*He made such speede that betymes he was in the court yard of his castle, where he found a serving-man, to whom he gayve his horse. Then, in his botes and spurs, he went strayght, and without meteing any one, for it was yet erley in the morning, towards the chamber where my lady slept, and where the squyre was een now doing that which the knyght had on so manie lonelie nights longed to do.*

*Thou may guess that the squyre and the ladie were both astonysed when the knyght thundered on the dore—which was locked—with his staffe.*

*Who is there? asked the lady.*

*Tis I, replied the knight. Open the door!*

*The lady, who knew her husband his voice, caused the squyre to dresse himself which he dyd as hastily as he could, She pretended to be aslepe, and not recognyse the voyce outside, and when her husband knocked at the door a second tyme, she asked agayne*

*Who is there?*

*It is thy husband, wyff! Open the door hastily!*

*My husband? saith she. Alas, he is far from here! May God betmes bring him back in safety. When he doth come, I shall know of it long beforehand, that I may recevye him as I oghte, and that I may call together his relations and frendes to wish him a hearty wellcome. Go away! Go away now! And let me slepe!*

*By St. John I will take care thou do not! Open the door! Do thou not know thy own husband? and with that he clept her by her name.*

*She saw that her lover was by that time quite redy, and made him stand behind the door. Then she saith to the knyght.*

After Agincourt

*Is it verily thee? For God his sake pardon me! Truly, just as thou knockt, my lord, I was much disturbed by a dreame I hadde about thee.*

*And what was that, my dere?*

*Faith, my lord! I dreamed that thou came back, and talked with me, and that thou saw as well with one eye as with the other.*

*Would to God it were so; saith the knight but there is nothings of the kinde. Thou must be mad to conceyve so.*

*Ah, my lord, she replied, thou wilt never make me trow it is not as I say, and, to set my mind at rest, I ask of thee to give me a proof.*

*Thereupon she opened the door, holding a lighted candle in her hand, and he, not displeased at her words, permitted her to make tryal, and thus the pore man allowed her to cover up his good eye with her one hand, whilst with the other she held the candle before his blind eye. Then she saith*

*My lord! on thy oath, canst thou not see well?*

*I swear I cannot, saith my lord.*

*And whilst this tricke was being played, the squire stole out of the chamber with out being perceyved by him.*

*No, by God, my dere, repeated the knight. How shouldst I see? Thou hast stopped up my right eye, and the other I lost more than ten yeres ago.*

*Then, saith she, I see it was but an idle, foolish dreame. But, be that as it may, God be prayesed and thanked that thou art here.*

*Amen, saith the knight, and with that he kissed and embraced her manie times, and they rejoyced gretely.*

The Chaplayne celebrated a mass for Harry the Fourthe. This king, who had bene a grete champion in the lists, a pilgrim and crusaader, dyed of a withering skin disease, which some clept leprosy, in the Jherusalem chamber this day in the yere of the Incarnacion, M<sup>1</sup>CCCCXIII.<sup>109</sup>

I asked Sir John what he thought of our present Henry. He saith

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<sup>109</sup> 1413.

*The king is a verie fine fellowe, though not halfe the man his father was, but he is surrounded by evill counsellors, of whom Jack Napes is prime mover.*

*I dislyke the king his relygyon. His devotion is too modern, it is the old virtues and practiques that need to be revyved.*

*A holie man more fit to be preste than king. And the two cannot be the same. And thou can not govern a kingdom or wage a werre by loving thine enemy, for Christssayke. He doth not conceive that we must make were if we are to mayke peace wth such as the Frensshe. Vegetius taught us this manie centuries ago.*

*And thou cannot govern by proclamation. A King must set a gode examplum. But this King setteth the badde.*

## **21 March, the Feast of St Benedict**

To defend his purity, Origen made an eunuch of hymself, St Benedict threw hymself into a thornbush, St Bernard plunged into an icie pondde and St Francis rolld in the snow.

After dinner we had a redeing of the mightie Prester John.

*This Emperor holds full grete land, and hath manie full noble cities and good towns in his Rewlme, and manie grete divers isles and large. For all the countrie of Inde is devised in Ysles for the grete floods that come from Paradyse, that depart all the land in manie parts. And allso in the sea he hath full manie ysles. And the best cittie in the Isle of Pentexoire is Nyse, that is a full royal city and a noble, and full ricche.*

*This Emperor Prester John taketh allways to his wyff the daughter of the grete Chan; and the grete Chan allso, in the same wise, the daughter of Prester John. For these two be the gretest lords under the firmament*

*This Emperor Prester John is an Christianne, and a grete part of his countrie allso. But yet, they have not all the articles of our faith as we have. They trow well in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Ghost. And they be full devout and right trew one to another.*

## **22 March**

There is Xaos in thys kyngdom. A commissyon issued to the Shire Reeve of Cornouaille and others setting forth a complaynt of a merchant captaine of Castile that, while he was sailing with a ship a-laden with woolls, yron and other chaffare, certayne pirates, being Englisshe men, took the said shippe and brought it to Fall Mouth, and spoyled the merchants and mariners thereof, contrary to the trews between the king and them of Castile. There was allso hue and cry atte

Wymondham after a yong woman who did stele a gowne, a hat, a pettycote and divers other thinges. The same thinge happened in Shering Ham after a suspcyous person, apparrelled in a gray horseman coat, dunnish boots, and dunnish stuffe britches and dublett, stole a black bay mare, with a white star on her fore head.

Then the Shire Reeve came and reported a cryme to us and asked Sir John to raise the hue and cry. Sir John got up a party and they dyd serch the countrieside around the castle. At last, they saw someone croucheing from a dystance and they, after much puffing, dyd catche by a fenny water in a wretchid condicion, held hym in our gaol for a day on bred and water and straw, then sent him uppe to Norwich.

Sir John saith in the gode old days they would have hung him from a tree summarilie. In those daies an outlaw was treated as a wolf and enemie unto mankinde. The local posse went out and strung him up, and had the backing of the law. Now, he saith, men sue for a writ of outlawrie and then must deliver the wolf up to a court, where the judges deliver law not trew justice and where the King may grant pardon by the by. And this be an out rage. The King becomes a wetnurse to his people, when he should be their Father, saith my Master.

## 25 March, Lady Day and Short Thursday<sup>110</sup>

The angel Gabriel visited Mary in Nazareth, and announced that she would conceive and bear a son, whiche was Jesus. This blessed Annunciation happened the twenty-fifth day of thys month.

Sir John, being ill, asked me to intende at the meeting of our manor court. He by custom makyth his wyshes known through his steward or bailly. But he liketh to be there in personne when the court metes and it pleseth the people like to have their lord there in person. Still, he would send wordde that I should be treted as his proxie. They would accept this, at lest they had better or he would want to know the raisin.

There was a meteing then of the court leet, court baron and view of frankpledge, a matter of grete portent. The bailly dealt with the frays and assaults first. There were men there who had had their heds broke on various Satterdays and the evidence took an eternity to attend to. Then we dealt with the smawll clayms. Those who allowed wains to stand in the strete for more than a nyght and a daie. Those who put diseased cattel on the common, laid skins in the 'broad water, put fylth in the broke, or dykes. Or failed to void their dung hills before St Luke his Day. Or washed filthy clothes or puddinges in the public wells, or laid ashes or dung at Holy Church Stile or in the layne by the tavern, or fayled to clene and mayntayn water courses. And the bellman was fyned for his faylure to scour the broke.

Then we made new rewls for the Common. Everie man should know his rate and stint, to wit (1) a mere cottager, two beasts or two horses, or one beste and one

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<sup>110</sup> Maundy Thursday.



horse (2) a farmer with a plow and a teme of oxen, as manie animals as he hath in that team, plus six shepe for every acre of land which he tills in the town field, provided that between Mayday and Lammas the sheep are kept under the hiway or London way. And we fyned those guilty of overpressing the common. We appointed bellmen, pinders and swyneherds, aletasters and serchers of the market, as allso constables and bylawmen. We fyned Thomas Lister for abuse of the bailly with evil words for his swine taken by hym.

We stablished who the heir was in sundry cases, and who had to pay a relyef. And fyned those who took burthens of wood out of Sir Johns wood; and we regulated the use of his mill and bakerie.

And at the end there was complaynte made that the Apothecarie, in his gonge hunting, hath searched for turds in privy bedchambers, in sickrooms, not even sparing women in childbed, yea, even in God's house, the Church. But he saith twas all necessity for the making of the securitie of the Realme. For without gunne powder, we shall never make a proper defence of the costes against the Frensshe.

MEMORANDUM. And by and large I was satisfyed. I told the steward so and said I would commend him to Sir John. But as for myself, I would not want that heavy burden of jurysdiccion. There were some murmurings and nastie glances, though the bullies were kept in check. Though, if the day ever cometh when these people should rewl, nothingshould save us from the xaos that would follow. It wolde be a return of the Ryflyng Tyme. The Lord preserve good lordshippe.

## 26 March, Good Friday

Men say there hath bene a monstrous birth in Almaynie. A woman in the bishopricke of Trier gave birth to a childe that had the lower limbs of a man but whose upper bodie was shapen somewhat like a toad. And this was regarded as a punishment from God for the mother.

I do not trow this was a punishment from Godde. It soundeth more like the work of the Devil to me, with the pore woman as an innocent victym, who recevyeth little help from Holie Church.

## 27 March

I met an old soudeour, begging in the streets. I found the sight so pathetick that I stopped to give him alms. He started to rail agaynest that villayn John Fastolf – not even giving him the courtesie of his knyghthode. He saith that Fastolf hath fled the field at Patay near Orlenes, after the Maid had liberyted that cittie.

I gave the man two kickes, one for the ordure that he spake and tother for the ordyre that he was. And betimes told him that at Patay my master hath bene wyse,

while Lord Talbot hath bene hardy.<sup>111</sup> For Lord Talbot hath putt the army into a playce where they were attacked, before the archers had time to prepare and they hadde no stayke nayther. They hadde rode into open countrie with banners and pennons flying and alle agaynest Sir Johns counsel.

The beggar said he hath bene taken prisoner as was the grete Talbot and he knew a different story from mine own. *Fastolf fled the field. The dirty coward. Goddamn him.*

## 28 March, Pasch Sunday<sup>112</sup>

The men foghte a battel on the waters of our mote. A shield was hung on a pole, fixed in the middle of the stream. A boat was prepared without oars to be carried by vyolence upon the water, and in the fore part thereof standeth a young man redy to give charge upon the shield with his lance, if so he breketh his lance agaynst the shield, and doth not fall, he is thought to have performed a worthy deed. If without brekeing his lance he runneth strongly ahgainst the shield down he falleth into the water. On both sides of the shied ride more boats, furnished with yonge men, which recover him that falleth. Upon the sides stand grete numbers of rustickes to see and laugh thereat.

This joust reminded me of the tournaments of old, which we doth rede about in the romances.

In the barracks our York Shire frende told this tale about a Scotsman. He had no hi opinion of them – all thieves and raiders since the days of Robert Bruce. His grandfather had brought him up to hayte them and he could remember tayles of the Scots raiders from being on his grandfaythers knee

*I will relate, as somethinge new lyke, an incident which formerly happened in Rome, and was as follows. There war a Scotchman of age of about two and twentie, who for spayce of fourtene yeres hadde disguysed himself as a woman. He clept himself Margaret, and there was hardly a good howse in Rome t'grete where he was not known, and he was speciallie welcomed by all t'women, such as wayting-women, and wenches of lower orders, and allso manie of greteest ladies in that grete cittie.*

*This worthy Scotsman carried on trade of laundress, and hadde learned to bleche sheets, and clept hymself washerwoman, and under that pretense frequented, as hath bene saith, all best howses in Rome, for there was no woman who could bleche sheets as dyd hee.*

*But you must know that he did much else besyde, for when he found himself with some pretty girl, he shewed her he was a man. Oft, in order to prepare the lye, he stopped one or two nights in howses, and they made him sleep wi mayd, or sometimes wit doughter; and*

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<sup>111</sup> Foolhardy. For Worcester and Fastolf's explanation of the difference between the 'manly' man and the 'hardy' man see *The Boke of Noblesse* (The Roxburghe Club, 1860), pp 64-5.

<sup>112</sup> Easter.

*very oft, if her husband were not there, t'mistress would have his company. And God knows he had a gud tyme, and, thanks to way he employed his boddy, was welcome every where, and manie wenches and waiting maids would fight as to who was to have him for bed fellowe. T' citizens o' Rome harde such a good accompt of him from wives, they willingly welcomed him to their howses, and if they went abroad, were glad to have Margaret to kepe howse along wi wives, and, what is more, made 'her' slepe with them, so gud and honest was 'she' esteemed.*

*For spayce of forteene yere did Margaret continue this way of lyoyng, but t'mischief was at last brought to light by a yong girl, who told her fayther that she hadde slept with Margaret and bene assaulted by her, and that 'she' was verilie a man. The father informed the offycers of justice, and it was found that 'Margaret' hadde all the members and implements that men doth carrie.*

*So it was ordered that this verie manne should be put in a carte and led through all the cittie of Rome, and at every strete corner his genitals should be hunge out to showe. This was done, and God knoweth how ashamed and vexed pore Margaret was. The women of Rome were allso much displeased, for they saithe there never was such a good laundress.*

## 29 March

The town of Yarmouth lies one hundred staydes or nineteen miles east of Norwich between two rivers and on an ysland; it hathe plenty of swete water for drinkeing, watering, and washinge. A town noted for its divyne worshippe, the beautie of its buildings, neatness in dress et cetera. It smells of the sea, of bere and sweatie strumpets.

St Nicholashis church was enlarged about A.D. M<sup>1</sup>CCL<sup>113</sup> and consecrated the following yere. The new Work at the west end of Holy Church begun M<sup>1</sup>CCCXXX,<sup>114</sup> CL yeres before the birth of Sir John. This is thirtie of my paces long and sixtie paces wide. St Henry the Bishopp was born in England – he was Bishop of Uppsala in the Kingdom of Sweden but lyes buried in Finland. He died 14 January in the time of St Eric, as set out on a board in his Chapel in the Carmelite Friars.

The new wall built and strengthened from harbour to harbour the yere of the Affair at Cressye in Picardie.

The ships of Yarmouth distinguished themselves at the town of Zwin or Scluse, M<sup>1</sup>CCCXL.<sup>115</sup>

In the grete plague there died 7,000 men.

Agnes wyff of Hugh Fastolf, mother of Sir John Fastolfe knight, a woman of distinction – and I daresay a match for my Lady Catherine – died full of yeres, M<sup>1</sup>CCCLXX.<sup>116</sup>

A bloodthirsty mob entered Yarmouth on the morrow of St Botolph in the

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<sup>113</sup> 1250.

<sup>114</sup> 1330.

<sup>115</sup> Sluys, 1340.

<sup>116</sup> 1370.

Ryfling Tym. They sacked houses, brekeing doors and windows with none to gainsay them. The next day they broke open the gaols and frede the prisoners, three of whom they beheaded. King Richard came to see the town next yere.

The new market, with a roof built in Yarmouth by the shipmen, M<sup>1</sup>CCCLXXXV.<sup>117</sup> The town hath a gracious charter, full of liberties. It is bound to send to the Shire Reeves of Norwich every yere one hundred red herrings, baked in twenty four pyes, which the Shire Reeves are to deliver to the lord of the manor of East Carlton who is then to convey them to the King

In the evening we visited the tavern by the dock. I paid and spent some time there alone, watching Jack play with the mayd in the back room, she suffering him to do unclean thinges with her brests. Methinks she would have come in and touched my thinge if I had asked for it; but I reminded myself of my vow and how that were even more unclene.

The flesh is flesh though dressed in silk.' Don't try to reason with concupiscence, butt scorn it. Remember that such matter is stickier than pitch.

At night at Yarmouth for meals and for two horses 4d. But 7d for Gascon wine for me and ale for Jack...

## 30 March

We had civey of coney and Chardquynce And Spinach Tart.

Sir William cometh back from West Minster for a counsel. He said that Lord Chancellor Stafford, whom he cannot abide, did preach at the openyng in West Minster on the text *Righteousness and peace hath kissd eche other*. It was as entertaining as a poem by Master Lydgate. He spoke interminably of three kinds of peace, quoting various storyes and parables.

He said both Lords and Common were in very ugly mood, as well they might be when the nacional treysure hath bene spent in transporteing Margaret of Anjew to London, and in her coronacion, and when there is so little sign of either righteousness or peace, despite all Jack Napeshis pretensions. The Commons had refused him the supplie he asked for and voted onlie half the usual subsidie, and that in November onlie. The King should live of his own, that is Sir Williamhis watchword, and he saith that a majoritie of the Commons are of the same view.

They take advantage of the hard place the King is in. The tax on aliens hath allredy expired and the levy on the tonnage and poundage is coming to an end any day now. This means the 'budgeyt' as the Treasurer Cromwell clept it, will be in 'defycyt'. And although the Crown can call on the rich for chevysances, the onlie way it hath for taxing the Commons and thereby the whole kingdom by assent, is through their House of Commons. They can borrow what they like in the Cittie of London, from the likes of Dick Whittington whose catte is so fatte, but one day the

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<sup>117</sup> 1385.

chevysances have to be repaid.

Sir John asked him what petitions were presented, then, to this Parlyament.

He said there were manie that were managed by Jack Napes, to approve the Kingis spending on Eton College and the College of St Mary and St Nicholas at Bridge of Cam. But others were genuine – for the putting down of the Welsh in Herefordshire; for the guarding of the quality of the textiles of Worstead and of the wine from Guienne; for the relief from taxes of the pore of Lincoln, Cheltenham, Alresford, Andover, Scarborough, Headington and Yarmouth; for the setting up of commissions of sewers to prevent the constant fluddes we suffer from in partes of the Realme; and for the enforceing of the grete Statute of Labourers, since the work men constantlie withdrawe their labor in manie partes for increase of waxis. There was allso a playnte about the lack of coins of small size – half pennies and farthinges - and proposals for to make the monie supplie more abundant.

I asked Sir William what he thought of the king who presided over this shambles.

He said he was a man of God and ruled by Divine Righte, but he accepted the advice of nerest frendes – and lavyshed the royal treysure on them. Why in the last few yeres, there hathe bene grants to six members of the nobility, twelve kinghis knights and thirty-eight esquyres, not to mention gentlemen ushers of the chamber. Jack Napes hadde become steward of the Chiltern Hundreds, constable of Wallingford castle, steward of Wallingford and St Valery, chief justice of Chester, Flint and North Wales, chief steward of the Duchy of Lancaster, and surveyor of all mynes in England and wales. And he had bene made a Marquess! A new fangled title. Next thinge we know Jack Napes will be a Duk!

I said it semeed to me that the king, god saving his majesty, still had need of a governor, despite hys comeing of age.

## VIII

### 1 April.

**ALL FOOLS DAY.** In the *Nuns Preests Tayle* of Master Chaucer twas on this day that the cock Chaunteclere was tricked by the foxe. The men came erley to put a cockerell in my chambre.

### 2 April

Sir John dictated a bill to Thomas Howes, about the machinaycions of Heydon and Tuddenham.

MEMORANDUM The Chamberlayn conceyves Fastolf a hard task master. So do other men make straunge reports in relaicon to the governaunce of Caister, especially the ordering and kepeing of the wyne cellar, the kepeing of the ward robe, the profit made from the warren and the ymprovement of the land. Did Fastolf conceyve he was Duk of Norfolke? I tolde him our master was not a kindlie man but there were manie worse.

### 3 April

Pigeons Stewd, Yellow Pepper Sauce, Peres in Composte and Leche Lumbarde.

Sir John is mightily releyved. Both his shippes arrived home tonyte, laden with supplies, though they hathe bene a long time coming. He hathe suffered grete losses in shippes and grayn in recent tyme and blameth Thomas Howes dailie for dallying.

### 5 April

To Norwich agayne to stave this tyme in a respectable house tho a cold bed. I took a bille from Sir John to the Lord Bishopp whom I found at home in his Place. I delyvered the bille with some trepidacion for the hand was myn. It was to ask the bishopp to go easy when he visits St Benet Holme for the vysytacion. Otherwise Sir John might be compelld to give no more monie to the Abbey and lavish his welth solely on the chantries at Caister.

The Bishopp sheweth me in and taketh the bille. He saith he will reply in due course but in the meantime I must tayke a drinke. A pleasant man and not at all austere, contrary to my expectation.

*Did thou writ this bille?*

*Yes, but tis from my Master Sir John, my Lord.*

*But thou knowest what lies therein? Is it about the vysytacions?*

*Yes, my Lorde.*

*Of St Benet? I know full well tis his favourit howse.*

*Well yes, my Lord tis trew.*

*I will reply unto hym, but tell hym nowe he hath no need to be conserved. We vysyt that Place every fife yere and there are allwaies howses that are muche worse. Places, William, where the bildyngs falleth down. Where there are free fyghts in the cloister. Where the Prior hath gone starke madde. Where the servants are in open rebellyon. Where there is habitual drunkenness and multiple swyovings with loose women in the night. At lest if a man were to trow all the complainant monkes hath to say. And vysyting a nunnerie may be as bad. Why, I hath bene chased out a nuns dormitorie with brickbats a flyeing.*

*I said I was very sadde and sorry for this indignitie, but I ymagyned my Lord hath met not with these extreme complaynts every where.*

*He semed weary. Dost thou say not? Well, I have just bene Vysyting and I know better than thee what the monks doth complayn of these daies. Every where I go I find complaynt. Tis true that the most common are of lesser crymes, as mean ness of food and shortage of mete days and constant bitchings in the Cloyster. Your monk is often like unto an old woman, een when he is not an old man. Even in the nunneries there are complaynts that would not have bene made yeres ago. Wouldst thou trow that in one suche the nuns complayned that the Prioress kept them twice a weke on nothings more substantial than bred and cheese? In another it is sayd that the Prioress herself hath bene sene talkeing with a man, as if that were sinne in itselfe. In another the Psalms were sung too quicklie and they could not kepe up. Another that they they ought to be allowed to crown a Queen of the May on May Day and*

*perform a mysterie play at Christemas tyde.*

I said I was verily surprysed. *Is there no hope of remedie for this appetyte for luxurie, even in the houses of strict adherence to the Rewl?*

He saith sadly and solemnly *Somethinge has bene lost since the Age of Austeritie.*

He saith he is allways on guard for heretickes and Wycliffites, vulgar soothseggers and Xarismatics. I asketh him about the latter and he said there was one had given him some vexacion and that was Margerie Kemp of Lynn. Such people allwaies had to be regarded for they might be secret Lollers and attract a following.

In a moment of lunacy I told hym we had a Surgeon at Caister who was Xarismatic. But it doth seme strange to me that the grete men of the Church doth condemn Margery Kemp when she doth no more than take her Relygyon fulle seryous. And when all agree that Caterina Beninseca of Siena in the partes of Ytalie, who was most Xarismaticke and enthusiastick to enfamyne herself to death, had the odour of sanctitie.

Divers proclamations in church. And then a preaching by a sly Brother Minor.

*CHRISTIANS and sharers of a heavenly calling, you filthy countrie folk, and all you sinners who come from the town, you seme to me to have abandoned your care for virtue, to have forgotten your zeal on behalf of your souls, and to have devoted all thour thought to the rubbish of Mammon and the busyness of the Devil. But transfer your love to the accompt of Holy Church, and Abandon the love of monie, that mad passion of the market.*

*Tell me now, O covetous man, what is thy goal? To accumulate? And what kind of an object in life is this, to heap up and gloat over unused substance? Pass over in thought to the time to come, when thou shalt be no more, when a small plot of earth shall hold thy body, insensate, returned to dust. Where then will be thy wealth and thy gathered treasures? Who will be the heir of what thou leavest behind? For it is by no means certayne that it will be he whom thou supposeth.*

I thought, this man doth speak most immoderate, but he may have the ryghte. For now there are so manie gyven over to the pursuite of filthie lucre, so manie usurers, pawnbrokers, monielenders, forestallers and regraters. So manie who make monie into their Godde and conceyve they can commit as manie sins as they like and gayn remission from the payns of Purgatorie by buying an indulgence from the Pardoners.

Catherine too was much smytten. But there was one parte of the sermon she did not understand. What did the Friar mean when he said that a man cannot be certayne that his heir will be he whom he supposeth? Is not the Lawe clere on such matters?



After Agincourt

*Well, I saith, I suppose he was speking to the fact that we none of us knowe when we may die and the personne who inherits depends on when that happens and what kinne a man leaveth behind him then.*

*Or the fact that a man, or woman, can in our daies be put out of his own propertie by craft and guyle, or else by main force, or corrupt judgment?*

*Well yes, any of these thinges can allso happen, tis unfortunayte but trew.*

*There are manie that have bene put out of their property by Heydon and Tuddenham.*

Then she talked of nunneries. Since Gladman died, she hath thoghte much on the proteccion they doth provyde. But manie of them in East Anglia are governed by a set of women who will onlie admit those they approve of. A fat purse doth help but is not sufficient. A ladie must conform in other ways. And, once you enter those playces, you are ded to the World and must forget all Societie.

*But, saith I, women say it hath all the joys of marrying the Saviour.*

(And the vulgar men in the barracke saith that a man who hath swyved a nunne has cuckolded Christ. And Jack Napes is one such, for what he hath done suche with a Frensh nun).

*She saith Do not talk to me about the joys of marriage William, for I have bene married to a rele man. I have no illusyons about the joys of the Cloister.*

## 8 April

We spoke of the Good Duk Humfrey. Sir John saith

*Now there was a man who combyned both the lyf active and contemplative. He was a soudeour – for he was sore wounded at Agincourt, and after brought into subjeccion Base Normandie, the castle of Cherbourg, the cittie of Bayeux, Coutances, with all the close of Cotentin, with all other fortresses and villages in that march. In the grene age of Henry the Sixt he was protector of the Rewlme, keeping grete justice, tranquillitie and peas in England. And when the town of Calays was besieged, without long respyte or tarrying, he puissantly rescued it. But it was sayd of him that he had no real pleasure, even of women, apart from the reding of bokes. He collected all kinds of these, as of theologie and historie, both ancient and modern, astrologie and medycine but little law. He hath bene generous to scholars of all kinds, as Hoccleve and Lydgate and Reginald Pecock. And Humfrey hath gyven near CCC bokes to the Universitie of Oxenford, and over £C for the building of the Divinitie Schole*

After Agincourt

*there.<sup>118</sup> He red Dante, Boccaccio and Petrarca. He made a frende of Zano Castiglione, bishopp of Bayeux and corresponded with Pier Candido Decembrio, Piero del Monte and Antonio Pasini of Todi. And the Duk his scrivener went on to become scrivener to King Henry. And helped the King with his plans for Eton College.*

I asketh him of that Tito Livy of Ferrara.

*He wrote comedyes in Venice then came here. He was employed by the Good Duk, wrote a poem of him and a Life of Grete Harry.*

I find Scrope much embittered by the way Sir John dyd treat his mother Dame Millicent after her deth. Her bodie was taken away to St Benet Holme in a black barge but without ceremony. Sir John saith she wanted none but Stephen conceyves she merited some shew of sadness, though her tomb at St Benet is doubtless costeous. A playne black barge, as might have bene used for a pauper burial at sea.

## 9 April

We harde in a proclamation that the Princess of Anjew hath arrived on the Cock of Cherbourg, at Hampton. And this announcement caused much merrymment.

I asketh Scrope how he endureth his life at Caister, considering how sadde he hath bene with his Father Fastolfe and even now the old man oft sued him for pretended dette.

*We agree about nothinge but have put cement in the cracks and have manie thinges in common, despite my antipathie. There are after all the Bokes. Whatever men say, Fastolfe is more than just a collector. He redes them and is red to, though no doubt not a reder like the Good Old Duk. He wrytes himself, as thou well knowest, and commissions bokes as thou may knowe not. He asketh me to translayte the Epistle to Othea from the Frensh of Dame Christine of Paris.*

I asked what was the purpose of this Epistle. He saith it is a moral tract, designed to instruct the young, as to how they should pursue the good lyf and avoid sinne, especially the seven deadlies. What is new is the devyce of a new Goddess, unknown to the Ancients, Othea. *It is not my device, but it may serve. I conceyve the Epistle can be of grete use, both for the young and older men. And allso thou shall find here in this saith Boke of Chevalrie, how and in what manner a knight may overcome and conquer his ghostlie enemies by taking care to defend his sowl.*

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<sup>118</sup> ~~The Divinity School still exists in Oxford and houses a library still known as Duke Humphrey's Library.~~

Scrope saith he is allso now writing a compendium of philosophie. What dost thou thinke of this as a short title?, saith he: *The doctrine of wisdom of the wise ancient philosophers, as of Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Ptolemy and such others, translayted out of Latin into Frensh for King Charles VI of Fraunce by the late Provost of the cittie of Paris, and now translayted out of the Frensh tongue into the Englisshe tongue for John Fastolfe knight, for his contemplation and solace by Stephen Scrope, esquire, son to the saith Fastolfe.*

I thoghte that this displayed all the worst features of Scropes wrytyng - too long, too confusing and indecisive. But I told him it was verie fyne.

## 10 April

I hath bene reding this laytest translaytion made by Scrope. Tis it is but a faint shadow of Dame Christine her Boke. He hath much lerning here, as passages from manie bokes of the Vulgate and quotations from St Ambrose of Milan, St Augustine of Hippo, the Venerable Bede, St Bernard, Boethius, Origen, Cassiodorus, St John Chrysostom, Gregory the Grete and others. But there is little that is originally thought and what he saith is set out in manner curyous.

He gyveth the reder a Text and then a Gloss and then an Allegorie. As for example with Narcissus, whose story I could give thus. *Narcissus was a hunter, renowned for his beautie and a proud man, who spurned those who loveth him. Nemesis saw this and drew him to a pool where he sawe his own reflection in the water and fell in love with it. Unable to leave his own refleccion, Narcissus dyed thereafter.* There, I hath putt it all in under five minutes. And how doth pore Scrope putt it? By Text, Gloss and Allegory and all sayeth the same, on and on, in different waies and greter length.

I tried other partes of it, as of the Hermaphrodite and Pygmalion. But I could not rede on, it was all so all equally laboryous. For a man to spend his life wryteing such stuff, and conceyve it a master piece, will drive him to distraction if the truth of it ever be reveyled to hym.

## 11 April

The Abbot of St Benet hath arrived. He came by boat with his wherryman, the headman of the crew, and docked in the Barge House. I harde them arrive with a great clanking sound in my chamber.

A mitred abbot, summoned oft to sit in the House of Peres, he syts there with his mytre on, lyk as on a chesseboard. A powerful man, and a worthie. A man full of confydence, for he conceyves that with their new Constitutions, the Black Monks are set fair to recapture the primacy in England, from new fangled Carthusians and

Bridgettines alike.<sup>119</sup> A man with a grete respect for Sir John, who be an abbey benefactor. He smelleth of Frankincense and Myrrh. I bowed to hym but he paid me no hede, looking around for those he might speke to with greater advantage.

At dinner we spoke of governaunce. The abbot saith it be mortal sin to rebell agaynest the lord His anointed, and to disagree in Parlyament time were noughte better than rebellion. If a man were to do that he would be nothings better than one of the rabble in the Ryfling Time.

I asked if the Romans did not choose their Duks according to ability, in the time of the Republicke. The Abbot said that may have bene trew, but twas hardly a fitly manner of chooseing a King, in the time of a Chrystian Republicke, such as we now hath, where God hath chosen the monarch in the time of the Conqueror and all his successors since that time, by divine right of hereditie.

We spake of pilgrimages. The Abbot said Walsyngham was now one of the most renowned and famous in Chrystendom. On a par with Canterbury. But far above West Minster, St Alban, St Edmund Bury, St David in little England beyond Wales, Chichester or Glastonburie.

*Harry Fift hath bene very severe on Black Monks. He wanted a return to austeritie – he disapproved of the habit of giving monkes wages for food and spyces, clothes and so forth. He commissioned a report. Hys inquisitors found there was in dede too much comfort in Englishe houses and it was wronge for Abbots to have their own lodges, and wronge for us to provide separayte rooms for men to study and doctors to practique and the sake of conveyence and comfort. But we sat him out, and avoided his enthusiastickal desyre for change, which the Church is bounde all ways to resist. Our General Chapter deliberated long and after his death decided that all these things were but lawfull custom and practique. Our monks should receoye and spend sums of monie both for necessitie and comfort. And the same was true for Abbots, we saith.*

He conceyves the rewl of silence was never meant to enjoin total silence on all the brethren all of the time. But it was a means to an end which was sobrietie and discrecion in the choyce of words and the manner of conversation and the length of speche. Thus it was a deterrent to all scoldes and bores and old women, who are to be found both wythyn the cloister and without, and to all those who conceyve that the highest goal in lyf is merely to make men laugh.

## 12 April, Hock Monday

I continued my talk with the Abbot and asketh hym

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<sup>119</sup> In 1444 the Benedictine General Chapter in England had adopted new Constitutions, designed to achieve a more uniform adherence to the Rule of St Benedict.

After Agincourt

*Did nothings come of Harrys attempt to reform the Regulars?*

*What came of it was his bylding of the howses of Syon and Bethlehem of Sheen. But Harry did not conceyve he could find monks and sisters strict enoughe to stuff them. And so he sent unto the parts of Almaynie to find Carthusians for Sheen and to Vadstena in Sweden for Bridgettines for Syon. And would have obtained Celestines from Paris for a third foundation, if the Werre had not supervened. It was all a strange foragne busyness but at leste we had no more nests of Frensh spyes when he had done.*

*Because he paid for his new houses with the monie taken from the spyes?*

*Yes, those alien priories had come under righteous attack for nigh on 100 yeres, as dens and covens of spies, but King Harry solved the problem at a stroke, as was his way. Kings in England hath oft bene full of piss and wind but Harry meant busyness.*

I told him the new work at Walsingham is 16 yards [50 feet] long and 10 yards [29 feet] wide within the courtyard. I said I could allso relate the length of the nave, the cloister, the Chapter House and so forth, as of Holy Churches of Yarmouth. The Abbot said, begging my pardon, but he found my discourse tedious. It was to mystake the substance of thinges for the Ghoste of them. One list was muche like another, which I found some wot insulteing.

But Our Lady of Walsingham is so clept because Mary appered in a vysion to a devout Englishe noblewoman, in the yere of the incarnation One thousand sixtie one. She hath a Holy House built there which became a shrine and allmost incontinent attracted pilgryms. There was a church and a chapel, with a miraculous bejewelled statue of the vyrgyn, and some of her milke too. People came in crowds, the road leading there was clept Palmers Way, and chapels were built along its lyne. The town was full of inns, hospitals and religious buildings.

The Abbot questioned whether St George did fyght alongside our men at Agincourt. John Lydgate hath writ

*St. GEORGE was sene over the hoste,  
Of verie truth this sight men did see.  
Down was he sent by the HOLY GHOST  
To give our King the victorie.*

But that was all horseskyte. Godde doth not stoop in this waie.

The Abbot saith that Grete Harry wanted to make very sure, after his triumph for God and the kingdom at Agincourt, that the battle would be remembered, forever, on the turning of the yere of the battle. Now that Battle was fought on the Feast of Saints Crispyn and Crispinyan, twin martyrs of Holie Church who lived in Soissons in Fraunce. But there was yet another candidate for veneracion and that

was St John of Beverley, a Saint of the Northe Countrie. Miraculously and conveniently, his shrine oozed drops of holie oil, resembling beads of sweat, on the day the Battle was foghte.

So Harry ordered the Bishopp of London to celebrayte the Feasts of St John of Beverley, as well as of Saints Crispyn and Crispinyan, the which be the Twenty-Fifthe day of October each yere throughout his diocese and in perpetuitie, in commemoracion. And the Archbishoppes decreed the same for Cantorburie and York.

*Nota Bene. Harry Fifte his sister Philippa married King Eric of Sweden and Denmark and wore a white wedding dress for the first time. And this led to much intercourse betwixt Englisthe and Swedes. She dyed betimes after having a still birth, the which led to a grete scandal. For King Eric, being somewhat libidinous of nature, doth incontinent stuff his bed with the lady in waiting to that same Philippa, though she was granddaughte to St Bridgette. Some naughty Swedes did call her death. And there was little enoghe intercourse thereafter.*

## 13 April

Today the men made free with handgunnes, out in the marshes, agaynest the wildfowl.

I walked out in the fields, kepeing well away from the marshes and spyed a maid at her work. I spake to her and she, seeing that I was a servant of Sir John made the usual assumption. She made it plain that, for a little some thinge, she would gladly oblyge me, and I, being out in the field and it being a spring day and I all aroused by her banter, allmost forgot my Vowe. She was one of the prettiest girls I had seen, though dirty and smellie. I resisted temptacion but God forgyve me, my mind hath bene running on her all the day since.

I asked the Abbot about Pope Joan. He solemnly assured me that this was all historical fact and that she had in dede bene Englisthe. But it were best not to inquire too far into the mysteries of this story, for it was over 500 yeres ago and the Religion hath changed a good deal since then. We have become less superstitious.

The Abbot asked Sir John for a favour.

*Tell me what it is thou want? And by the way if thou art asking for monie to bribe the Bishop to overlook thy brethren their vices, thou may ask till the Kingdom come.*

*John, the matter is not to trifle with. I fere not the Bishopp in respect of dyscipline. There is no buggery at St Benet and no solitary vice or Onanism nayther, or none that is lykely to be complayneth of. No, I fere him in respect of alleged failure of finance and fabricke.*

*Surely, St Benet is as well maintained and well endowed as any Abbey in these partes?*

After Agincourt

*That it is, but he will listen to any titty tattle that any complaynant places before him and they may complayn of a blocked drayn or of a lack of hay to wipe their arses on.*

*Well, if it is hay they lack I can provide a few bushels for next to nothinge.*

*I was methinking of somethinge more substantial. Some monie for new drains, happenstance?*

*Well but the place is impossible to guard agaynest flooding, especially the buildings set in the lower fields.*

*I have the Bishopp his Surveyor to advise thereon. Will thou at least pay his fee?*

*Well I will see what I can do, but it will have to be way of chevysance .*

*Chevysance let it be, I will ask the Treasurer to work out the fygures. Onlie he knowyth but the Roman cipher, which makyth the duplication long and difficult.*

*Well, the Arabic is clerely better, but I find I cannot get used to it. Let it be the Roman.*

*In calculation as in Faith, so let it be!*

## **14 April**

This afternoon came a married woman to ask a favour and she was fre. God help me, since she was so willing, I did kiss her on the mouth. But not more. Yet was ashamed. For kysinge is supposed to be the communication of the soul, yet I did what I did for the satisfaction of my sensualitie and not for regard of her sowl. And the bargain was not even frely entered into.

We spoke agayne of the prospect of peace. The Abbot saith there were two sides to every cause. The Frensh have their grievaunces as we. We will never achieve peas by trying to impose it on the Dolphin. We could start by recognising that he calls himself King of Fraunce now.

Sir John was allredy starting to foam at these mild words. For, as he hath become accustomed to foam at the pen, so he doth foam at the mouth. But for no he merely pointed out that the Dolphin was not the onlie one who laid claim to that title.

The Abbot sailed on in his barge, oblivious to the way the wind was changing, and determined to stick to his course.

*John, saith he, thou makyth much of the fact that the Frensh allways breke their treaties. But remember that this Dolphin never signed any charter att Troyes. He swam*

After Agincourt

*alone and allways held out agaynest it. He cannot be said to have agreed to any treatie that put him out of his kingdom, the which is not a thinge that the father should renounce on behalf of the son. And his followers, whom thou callest Arminakes and traytors, are but loyal to him.*

Sir John was starting to redden and boil.

*So we should rat on Grete Harry?* bawls he.

But the Abbot was nought afraid.

*We must, if there is to be any peace in our lifetime. And the Marquess conceyves if we play our pieces straight, we can arryve, as in a chesse game, at an outcome which suits us both. In short, a draw is all we canne hope for. We cannot hope for checkmate from conquest, and the Frensh will never capitulayte. But if we drew a line around our conquests, as was done at Bretigny near Paris in the time of the Grete Peace, we might negotiate a worshypfull draw.*

*This is not lyk any chesse game I ever played,* roars Sir John.

*And what would the Frensh settle for saith I, all a quiver, for I do not oft presume to venture depe into suche matters.*

*They might leave us with Normandie and Maine, if we give them back Anjew. At least that is what the Marquess conceyves and he hath met the Frensh numerous tymes, as well as fighting them. A good treaty to that effect, sealed with a marriage, might well work. And is not shameful.*

*No, no saith sir John, slamming his fist on the table, thou can not appease the Frensh appetite in that way. Thou dost not know them as well as I.*

*And what is thy way then* said the Abbot wearily – for he knew full well what was coming.

Sir John then lapsed into that old familiar speke, which a man could tell from their fayces they had all hearde. About fygting them in Fraunce and in Englissh Fraunce if they invade, fighting them in Anjew and Maine and Normandie and Guienne and the Pale of Calays, fighting them on the seas and in the field, fighting them at every siege, and, if necessary defending our island, whatever the coste might be.

*If they effect a landing, we should fight them on the beaches of Kent and Sussex, and South Folke and North Folk, we should fighte them in the fields and in the stretes of London and in Southwarke, and in the hills of York Shire if they ever reach that far. And we should fight them at Yarmouth and the Caisters.*



After Agincourt

He rose to his feet, turned to face Jherusalem, raised his glass and bawled

*And never surrender!*

And he smashed his fist on the table, scattering his gravy off the trencher.

But Scrope told me later that Fastolfe had sold all his Frensh possessions when he retired in thirty nine. For could see the wryting on the wall as well as any Belshazzar.

## 15 April

In the morning busy writing a bill for Sir John to Sir Willyam ap Thomas about the Duk of York his council.

MEMORANDUM Richard Duk of York was appointed Lieutenant of Normandie for the first time when the Duk of Bedford died, in 1,435, the yere we were betrayed by Burgundie and the Londoners rioted agaynest the Flemyngs. York took his time in making the voyage but proved a good man when he got there, with Sir John still there to advyse him. He sat on the Grand Counsaile, though he was thought much on the Duk's estate, for he was Bedford his executor.

At the last, my master and was dysplaced by new men, the principal of which was Lord Talbot. Sir John retired to his Place in Southwark and started to build his Castle here.

In 1,440 the Council appointed the Duk of York as Lieutenant in Fraunce a second time, with all the powers which Bedford hath enjoyed as Regent. Sir John did dream of going back to Fraunce now but he was never asked back, for which he hath remained sorry. But he supporteth York still, for he hath remained true while others hath turned their cotes from the Good Old Cause. And so he continued to advyse and een monies to York, though the man be wealthy enoughe.

Then talking to Scrope about Fraunce, where did he sell his red herrings, twenty yeres ago. He said in Honfleur he sold all kinds of fysh as well as herrings. And there are manie snails of the sea all along that shore of Normandie, which the Frensh doth love to eat. He conceyves it was the eating of them that destroyed so manie at Harfleur during the first siege. But dyd I know that the Frensh did eat the snails of the land as well as of the sea?

I thoughte he raised this to divert me from the crash of his busyness in Honfleur.

Scrope saith I should not take everythinge Sir John saith as Gospel. People who pretend that we can prevail in Fraunce doth enjoy befuddled wits. For Fraunce

is the gretest monarchie in the world and long hath bene. Look at their story, from the time of Clovis – a thousand yeres, agaynest what we can shew. It is not 400 yeres since Duk William his Conquest, and before that all was barbarity. And look at what the Frensh hath done for us! They rescued the Pope from the heretickes in the time of Pippin. They led all the Croiseries, though Richart Cuer de Lion did help and then they founded the monastic orders, rebuided all the cathedrals and abbey churches in a fine waie and founded the grete Universitie of Paris, long before Oxenford was thoughte of.

I said he went too far. The Frensh hath done much, but surely we had caught them and overtaken them, and surely God hadde shewed his mighty hand at Agincourt? Where he hath abandonned the Frensh.

He saith the word ‘abandonne’ had more than one meaning. As in ‘abandon forever more’ and ‘abandon in confident expectacion of return’, like as when the wheel comes off and the farmer leyves the wain by the gate, but comes back to get it when he intendeth to repayre.

In the afternoon after dinner, a story in the barracks in the guise of a Frenshman.

*Some time ago I was at Saint Omer with a number of noble companions, some from the neighbourhood and Boulogne, and some from elsewhere, and after a game of tennys, we went to sup at the inn of a tavernkeeper, who is a well-to-do man and a good fellowe, and who hath a very pretty and buxom wyff, by whom he hath a fine boy, of the age of six or seven yeres.*

*We were all seated at supper, the inn-keeper, his wyff and her son, who stood near her, being with us, and some beganne to talk, others to syng and make good chere, and our host did his best to make himself agreeable.*

*His wyff had bene that day to the warm baths, and her little son with her. So our host thought, to make the company laugh, to ask his son about the people who were at the baths with his mother, and saith*

*Come here, my son, and tell me truly which of all the women at the baths had the finest and the biggest queynt?*

*The child being questioned before his mother, whom he fered as children usually do, looked at her, and did not speak. The father, not expecting to find him so quiet, saith agayne;*

*Tell me, my son, who had the biggest queynt? Speak boldly.*

*I don’t know, father, replied the child, still glancing at his mother.*

*By God, thou lie, saith his father. Tell me! I want to know.*

*I dare not, saith the boy, for my mother would beat me.*

After Agincourt

*No, she will not, saith the fayther. Thou need not mind. I will see she doth not hurt thee.*

*Our hostess, the boy his mother, not conceyoeing that her son would tell, saith to him.*

*Answer boldly what thy father asks thee.*

*Thou will beat me, he saith.*

*No, I will not, she replied.*

*The father, now that the boy hadde permission to speak, agayne asked*

*Well, my son, on thy word, did thou look at the queynts of all the women who were at the baths?*

*By St John, yes, father.*

*Were there plenty of them? Speak, and don't lie.*

*I never saw so manie. It semeed a real warren of queynts.*

*Well then, tell us now who had the finest and the biggest.*

*Truly, replied the boy, mother had the finest and biggest—but HE had such a large nose.*

*Such a large nose? saith the father. Go along, go along! thou art a good boy.*

## **17 April**

I asked Catherine why she clept me you when I clept her thou and she agreed to start to call me thou in frendship. We talked of Oxenford and some thinges I hath learned there. But, when I spake to her at length she saith at the last

*Oh William don't keep preaching at me. Talk to me instede.*

## **21 April, the Feast of St Anselm Archbishop**

This Saint was Archbishopp of Canterbury, not long after the Conquest of Duk William of Normandie. And he was a theologian who wrote a treatyse Why God became Man (*Cur Deus Homo*). There are 52,080 townships in Domesday. And

45,011 parish churches in England.<sup>120</sup>

The Apothecarie announced that he hath at last finished his work on the best way to corn the gunne-powder and we had all to watch the demonstration. And so we did, climbing the battlements and towers for to gette the height.

And then the Pothecary and some men wheeled and dragged out two auld bombardes made with hoops and staves, called London and the King's Daughter, so that they lay on the seaward side of the castle and pointed out over the marshes. One they charged with ordinary gunne-powder, the other they filled with the corned varietie. Then the men charged both gunnes with best gunnestones and retreated to watch the show with the rest of us. The Apothecary then stepped forward and fired London, charged as she was with ordinary powder and after a little phizz and splutter and a pop the ball sped oute over the marsh at a grete distance and spattered into a willow, which it damaged considerably. But the Pothecary waved and gestured to us on the Tower, as if to say that we had sene nothinge of consequence yet.

He set the fire then to the King's Daughter this tyme there was a far more sudden and terrible exploding, and the gunnestone screamed out of the barrel and semed to head for the sea, far overreching the first, before landing in a reed cottage, which it destroyed completely. Everyone on the heights of the castle cheered and the Pothecary shouted muche. Thene he called the men back and loaded the second gunne agayne, and agayne with the corned powder, to show that the first firing was no accidental improvement. We waited with our breath all bated, for this time he put in a larger stone, as he hadde sayd he would if the first fying were a success.

The men retired once more and the Apothecary lit the gunne, which incontinent split apart, the hoops and staves flying off in all directions, quite clere of the smoke and the carnage. We all ducked like cowards, though we were well above the action. The Apothecary was flung in the air and landed with his back to a fence by the moat, quite dead. I do not think the stone ever left the chamber but when we found him, he was shot through with fragments of metal from that exploded gunne.

Sir John was most put out. A few trees and cottages he could well spayre but his Pothecary had clearly found the secret of the poudre, and now he would have to find another and start the experiments all over. For the Pothecary had never written down his mixture, nor his method of his corning.

## 23 April, St Georgeis Day

MEMORANDUM that Windsor is reputed the largest castle in England. Sir John saith you could fit the whole of West Caister into one its courts. The original castle

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<sup>120</sup> Worcester is completely wrong here. There were between 10,000 and 11,000 parishes in medieval England.

was built by William the Bastard. Since that time it hath bene used by all our kings. Sir John oft goes for the Feast of the Garter Knights but no longer, he hath turned agaynest them as he hath turned agaynest so manie.

I asked him why we held St George in such esteem. He saith he was a soudeour, who had fought for the Caesar in times of old and had bene made special to the Englisshe in the time of the Edward the Thirde of that name after the Conquest. The Dragon, important though he was for coat armour, was not important. What mattered was that St George fought on the side of the Englisshe. There was good evidence that he hath bene seen on various parts of the battlefield at Agincourt, helping our men at arms and even archers. There was no doubt about any of this and those who doubted it were traitors, who should be cut down like masty hounds who had turned on their Masters.

But I saith it semeth that the Saint hath abandoned us now?

But the word abandon hath more than one meaning. And methinks this George hideth in a cave somewhere, like Arthur in Avalon in Geoffrey of Monmouth, making redy to fight once more.

He laughed, as if he didn't verilie expect me to trow it. But you never can tell with Sir John. And when it comes to St George, he is not alone in beleying of miracles.

But Scrope sayth he hath no fayth in the Saints power to interveyne on the fields of battle. They might help individuals who hath a soul, but not nacions which hath none at all. The talk of St George at Agincourt was surelie based on a misunderstanding. And an insult to what our men did that day. Or else was a false reporte, whispered abroad and exaggerayted by its passage from mouth to ear. Or else it was a story deliberately told, on the orders of Harry the Grete.

And who might have done that?

I know nothings of it he saith. But he was looking in the direction of his father Fastolf, who was just then huffing and buffing across the Inner Court.

*By someone with more courage than judgement, sayth Scrope.*

I spayke to the Surgeon of St George, who saith the French have their saints too. St Denis is at their beck and call, if St George is at ours. I asked who that was. He saith Old Denis was Bishop of Paris. And the vulgar French say that, after his head was chopped offe, he picked it up and walked six miles, preaching the entire way. Ah yes, and he is one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers.

The French hold him in especial veneration. The Abbey of St Denis, to the North of Paris, is where their kings lie buried, as in West Minster with us, onlie they have more, for they have there in alle Clovis and Dagobert, Charles Martel and Pippin the Younger, Charles the Bald, Philip whom they clept Augustus, Philip the Fair, Philip VI, John the Good who died in London and was not so Good when it came to wimmin, and Charles V the Wise and Charles VI the Mad.

*And were all these kings of Fraunce crowned in the city of St Remigius?*

*Scrope sayth yes, he was Bishop of Reims and Apostle of the Franks, who baptised Clovis, a hundred yeres before our St Augustine ever saw England and Canterbury. When the king of Fraunce is crowned, he is still anoint with the same holy oil which was used to anoint Clovis in those days, brought from Heaven by the Holy Ghoste, clothed as a white dove.*

*And if you trow this horseskyte, saith the Surgeon, you will trow any thinge. But such is the power of the superstition that it was our failure to crown King Henry in the city of St Remigius which helped us to lose the Werre.*

I said it was the first time I had hearde anyone say that we had lost the Werre.

*Well it is well clere to most of the fighting men. Why do you conceyve they are contented enoughe to have this billet at Caister? They know the game is upp. And why do you conceyve that Jack Napes is anxious to get into bed with the Frensh and wants to get the king into bed with Frensh Meg, if not beause he knows the catte is out of the poke, and we had better save what we can, or lose the lot? But for God his sake don't repeat this to Sir John, it is more than my posicion is worth.*

I asked Jack if he had seen the pictures of Sanyt George they have in Norwic Cathedral. *That I hath he said. There is one which makyth the lady so beautiful and the dragon so hydeous and the Saints so much in their grene age it is a wonder to behold.*

Jack asketh me who was the ladie in the picture.

*I know not, but onlie that she hath a look of surprise, so it doth not appere she kneweth St George before this time. And it semeeth that her onlie intent was to keep the dragon as a pet and taketh it for a walk as a dogge. And here cometh the Saint betimes to destroy her darling, by the putting of with a spear through his eye and brain.*

And we laughed togyther.

## **24 April, St Mellitus, Bishop of London**

We hearde from the pulpitte that the king hath married Frensh Meg in Titchfield near Southampton, where Harry stayed before his voyage to Agincourt. The Bishoppe of Salisbury performed the sacrament. And afterwards Lord Talbot presented the Princess with a Grete Boke. And Jack Napes's wyff, Alice Chaucer, granddaughter of the poet of that name, who will be buried in Ewelme, hath become lady in waiting to our new Queen. The marriage took place one monthe after the

cow's fifteenth birthday, or so saith Jack.

Jack Napes had previously married her in Fraunce by proxy but manie said it was a peculier form of proxy for the groom to consummate the marriage as well as undergo the ceremonie, for that it what others say. And Jack Napes hath bene away in Fraunce a long time if all he was bounde to do was to collect the Princess, rather than tuppe her.

Sir John is furious. He saith the jack courtiers and Jack Napes the chief jack have bene rakeing it for yeres and now tis certayne we shalle alle loose our fleeces to the Frenshe courtiers too. Woe to the land where the child is king. But now the king is a man, and it hath made no difference. The Good Old Duk and the Cardinal of Beaufort hath kept the king under close tutelage but now Jack Napes governs his head and his heart. False traitor. He who was Orliens his jailer, and swore to carry out Grete Harrys wishes, first released Orliens then arranged this marriage to Frensh Meg and doth compass to yield Anjew to the Frenshe who doth claim itte. And no one will be paid in recompense but him, mark my words.

I asked Scrope what the Master meaneth. He saith

*The Cardinal and Jack Napes persuaded the king that the best way of pursuing peace with Fraunce was through a marriage with the niece of the Frensh queen. Henry agreed, especially when he hearde report of Margaret her beauty and virtue, and sent the Marquess to negotiate with the Frensh, who agreed to the marriage on condition that they would not have to provide the customary dowry. All this was agreed at Tours.*

But was that all? It is widely rumoured and fereed that more than this hath bene agreed. And the Frensh will gette the Englissh part of Anjew and even Maine, gateway to Normandie.

*So tis rumoured but nothings is certayne. The Marquess his diplomacy is kept hidden, for fere of his life.*

*But does thou conceyoe it true, Scroopie?*

*I can not conceyoe it can be true. This would be such a blow for the people of Yngland. It would admit that the Werre could not be won and it was time to retrayte. Al their sacrifices would be declared in vain. And what would they say to those good Ynglishmen who have gone to live there? For without the garrisons, the Ynglish there face an early doom.*

*Would those who have settled there leave of their own fre wil?*

*Not without some payment made. And even then, the best of our Englissh settlers are like the colonies of Rome the Grete her Republicke. They are centurions, fighters alle. They hath given muche for their countrie and they will fight to the last – and might even win, for there are worthy men there and stout, like Matthew Gough, aye and Mundeford might well return*

After Agincourt

*if not Basset, he hath his writing now. They might not all tarry for the Kingis word, to help their countriemen in hour of need. Yet I can understand why Jack Napes might contemplate this arrangement.*

*In God his Name, why? It soundeth like the road to Hell.*

*Well look at it this way, William, and keep this to thyself. The Werre hath bene going on for 100 yeres. Even Edward, thirde of that name after the Conquest, hath not managed to make himself king of Fraunce, for all his manie victories in the field. He hath settled for less, to wit an easy part of the kingdom, at Brétigny of Paris, in 1,360. It is in any case im possible to conquer the whole of Fraunce. She is too ample, grete, and mighty in multitude of walled towns, castles and fortresses, in rivers and strong counties. Even King Harry did become sadded of this Werre. And the settlers in Normandie are not willing to stay there in the face of increasing violence and resistance. In the last six or seven yeres, their numbers hath dropped. Where there were 100 there are now 10, abd where there were 50 there are 5.*

I was shocked, and sad. There hath bene no proclamations red nor sermons preached about any of this. How did he know it?

*It is as Fastolf tells it, if thou rede between the lines of his tracts in favour of eternal Werre. His writings giveth me the facts and I do butt give them a different meaning.*

And when I asketh Sir John if King Harry was ever sadded of the Were, he denied it and yet methinks it possible He may have bene, for the werre of Troy hath onlie lasted ten yeres.

## 26 April

I asked Scrope why Sir John is so bitter. Hath he not lived a long time, and done manie thinges, had in active live made himself wealthy, and allso lived the life of contemplacion? And yet he passeth his time in railing. Scrope asked if I had red the Tullys boke *On Old Age*.

*Well, no, I am not yet of an age where I considereth myself old.*

Scrope saith I should rede it anyways. For in this dialogue, we learn that the sufferings of old age do not affect everyone equally, but depend on character and the thinges that we did when we were younge. Old men of good character continue to enjoy life, though in different ways than in their grene age, while men of bad character have new miseries added to their prevyous ones. Nothings is more natural than to age and dye, and if we are to live in accordance with nature we should face death calmly. If one hath lived well, there are manie pleasant memories to enjoy, as



After Agincourt

well as prestige and the intellectual pleasures that are hiest of all. The fact that Fastolf is not contented sheweth therefor that he doth not have a good character, and hath not led a good life. I can tell you, he did not behave well to my mother, nor to me.

I saith he did not need to repeat this to me for he hathe tolde it tymes often.

*He did not behave at Patay as a garter knight should have done, for all his protestation.*

I saith agayne he did not need to press this on me, for I hath spent halfe my lifetime defending Sir John on this charge.

*And he was not a good lord in that grete barrel tower of his at Silly Gwillem in Fraunce, nor were the Englishe as a whole in Fraunce, which is why we suffereth such rebellion there.*

Well, that may be so, but it is of no moment in this countrie what cruelties we hath done to the Frenshe. Those thinges will never see the lighte of a day in a court of lawe.

## **27 April, the Feast of St Zita, Patron of Lost Keys**

NOTA BENE that Roger Bolingbroke was part of the household of the Good Duk being the personal clerk of Eleanor Cobham, the Duk his wyff. He was renowned in all the world for his learning. But then he and two other scholers produced a horoscope for the Duchesse which predicted the death of King Henry, which, if it were to have happened, would have meant the Duk would have become King and Eleanor his Queen. The Result - Bolingbroke was brought before Holy Church authorityes, and at St. Paul his Cross, London, made a public confession that his actions were not compatible with the Faith and foreswore his diabolic activities. But this did not save him. He was tryed and convicted for treasonable witchCraft. And dragged on a hurdle that same day to Tyburn, where he was hanged upp and then drawn on a hurdle and then his bodie was divyded into four quarter. His head was displayed on London Bridge and the partes were sent around the countrie, as for an exemplum to others.

## **28 April**

Sir John came into my Chamber without advertysment. My heart went cold, though I was allredy shivering. He saith he hath my best interests at heart. I am not his ward but he regards me as one. God help me, if Scrope be right. He saith he hath a frende, Squire Paston of Mautby, who hath a frende hymself, who hath a daughter, and he wisheth that I marrie this woman, for increase of lineage

I looked at him with the horror shewing quicke on my face. He puts forward a proposal. Yea, he saith, Thou art to marry Christine Kemp. And do not concern thyself on account of Xarismatics. She beareth no relacion to Margerie of that name. I played for the time, asking what my Master knew of this woman.

*She cometh with a goodly dowry but more important it would please me and I wolde give thee Hellesdon.*

*Is she comely, Sir?*

*I have no knowledge of that, but what of it? Of what import is that?*

*No matter. I conceyve I may have harde the name. Do I have to reply to you in the straight?*

*Take thy time. You may have a few days But please do not prevaricate beyond. If thou do not wish to marry, there is no power can force thee. And thou canst say so. But make no mistake, thy refusal would make thee obnoxious in mine eyes, aye and to Paston too and all the neighbourhode. For he is now like unto a son to me. And he pleaseth me more than Scrope, who was my wyffs childe onlie.*

I discussed this maryage proposal with Jack and he said he knew this Chrstine Kemp. She was verie bigge and resembleth a Dutch mare and I wolde do welle to remember me that there were plenty of fysshe in the Northe Sea. I discussed it with Scrope and he saith beware of any thinge that dothe emanate from John Paston his arse or mouth. The Pastons are allways working harde onlie for themselves. The whole brood hath jumped uppe out of beggary, for the grandsire Clement was a simple rustic bummekin.

## IX

### *May Day.*

ROBIN HOOD and Maid Marian were chosen as Lord and Queen of the May and then some of the men danced round a maypole with maids, even some of the tavern, though under the eyes of their elders and betters.

*In hi May time, when leaves grow green,  
And flowers are fresh and gay,  
Robin Hood and his merry men  
Were then disposed to play.*

I returned to enjoy the quiet of the Inner Court. The Sun was strong in the Heaven but I found a corner to rede my boke in solitary. *In angulo cum libro*, as the Sage doth say. This love of bokes I hath long enjoyed, though there are few to share it with. Langland sang

*If heaven be on this earth, and ease to my soul  
It is in cloister or in school, by manie skills I find.*

Later some of us went down the lane to look for house martins in the shrubs, whom I had seen there last October. But, when we examineth the shrubs and holes in the woods, we found none such. Then as we returneth, we saw one winging over our heads and flying into a nest under the castle eaves. Methinks now they do choose a far off place in a warmer county to spend the Winter. But it is impossible they go to Fraunce or Afrik, as some fools say.

May is the season of poachers. Sir John doth tell his baillies to be vigilant.

### 3 May

*As the spring produces flowers, flowers fruit and first savour,  
So study produces manners, manners sense, the senses honour.*

My piles giving me almost no trouble today, I rode out to Erpingham, though it is over 20 miles. But the nights are long and my horse is strong. I stopped at Worstead and Walsham. These are famous for woollen cloth, that of Worstead being the heavier. There is a wayside shrine to St. Thomas of Canterbury. In the parish church are some tombs of the Pastons.

Walsham suffered much in the Rifling Time. The rusticks were drubbed there and the site is marked by a wayside stone. There were some few good men, who protesteth against the poll tax of Richard of Bordeaux. But most were evil, bent on wanton destruction of charters, intent to kill anyone who engageth in conveyancing, as lawyers, scriveners and searchers. These men they strung up, battered with longhammers or disembowelled with knives, and all without trial, before they made a bonfire of charters they dubbed Vain. At least my father said so and he had it from his father.

The new building of St. Mary in Erpingham was begun by old Sir Thomas of that name, and finished by Lord Bardolph, who hath constructed a tomb for himself and his lady in Denningon in advance of their tyme, as the Good Old Duk hath done at the shrine of Alban. Twas Erpingham commanded the longbows at Agincourt and Bardolph was amongst King Harrys best knights there. So Norfolk and Suffolk united in the fight.

### 4 May

The Pope hath given the Archbishop of Milan faculties in aid of the Christian armada against the Grand Turk, and appointed him in the territory of the Duk of Milan and in divers parts of Almayn and England, with the full powers of a legate *a latere*.

In the morning, wrote a bill for Sir John to Thomas Howes, about the Lovel pedigree and some testaments.

Lynne is a three day ride and that is a full test for the arse, even one without piles, and even with a rest at Sir Johns Place at Blickling. Wherefore we took barge to Yarmouth and ship thence and they set us down on the Bishop Staith in Lynn. We found a tavern to put up in, near the warehouse of the Hanses, of which the rich Almayn Fuggers are proud. I spoke with one of them, an Almayn who told me they full intend to build a steelyard here in tyme. Lynne is owned by the bishop of

Norwich. The Jews were all put to death by the Crusaders long ago, so the Fuggers have all the trade and monielending now. Lucky Fuggers.

Lynne doth smell of fysh and the sea. There are two Guildhalls and two rivers, the Purfleet to the north and Mill Fleet to the south, and a maze of canals such as travaillers report in Venice, though the little cog I came in could hardly compare to the ships in the parts of Italy.

*The grete galleys of Venice and Florenz  
Be well laden with thynges of complaisance,  
All spicery and other grocers ware,  
With swete wines, all maner of chaffare.*

This town is home to Margery Kempe. This woman married a Norwich man and was for a time a faithful wyff. She had 14 children, few of whom did live but then she began to see thinges properly, or so she thought and began to preach and prate. For her pains, she was chained and kept on straw in a storeroom for six months, until, as she saith, Jesus sat down at her bedside. He asked her to follow him, which she took to mean renouncing the world, her husband yncluded. She confeseth to like the solaces of the marriage bed as much as any woman, but agreed with her husband that they should be as celibates from thence forth and so began her travails – to Rome the Grete in the partes of Italy, Jerusalem in the Centre of the Earth, Santiago in the parts of Spain, Norway in the Far North and severall parts of the Almayn Empire. She who wrote a boke, detailing her conversations with God and her journeys as pilgrim, to both Europe and Asia.

This Margery is honoured by some Catholics, though looked down upon by others, and by most of the good people of Lynne, as quite lunatic. But she was no Loller, though some suspected her as such.

I changed half a new noble for silver and paid a mark for 1 pound of white bred and a penny for some onions.

## 6 May

I met agayne with the Almayn. He saith he finds the Englysshe very odd. They can be so cold and yet wherever an Englyssheman goeth in the town he is recevyed with kisses.

*At your leaving zey see thee off with kisses. You coming back, kissing thee agayne. You meeting in the street with manie kisses, yes? England iz a whole world of kissing.*

He conceyves the Englysshe a violent and passionate people, prone to kill their kings, which is a thinge which could not happen in the parts of Almaynie, where thinges are well ordered, particularly for trade and commerce.

There are manie pretty maids in the taverns of Lynne. We visited one and for very little the Dame allowed me to watch whatever I wanted. There was a girl undressing for Jack next door, she sat very dishevelled and sported till two in the morning; and so I returned to my lodging, cloyed with this dalliance. But methinks this looking on is within the Ghoste of my vow. I paid for refreshments 8 pence.

I will allso relate some thinges about Lynne, which a man might scarcely trow except that he had it on good authority. There was a woman Alice Dymock who lived in their Little Gropec—t lane. Her husband kept a disorderly tavern and she was convicted of procuring. She and her lover John Robbins, who hath allmost murdered her husband, were presented for adultery. On another occasion, she was accused of being a common scold and of harbouring suspicious persons. On a third, of keeping a brothel, and selling ale without a licence. On a fourth, of being a common whore and provoker of quarrels. She was allso a trouble to the manor court, accused of cursing her neighbours, and milking their cows, the which sounds like petty witch craft to me. And, at the last, she was expelled from Lynne for being a leper.

## 8 May

I did confess me to a priest of Lynne and was feeling very strong in my arse so I rode home, while Jack took the boat back with our stuff.

I came through Ormesby and stopped to admire the church, dedicated to St Margaret the Virgin of Antioch. I was approaching the nave to measure it, when a grete oaf, built like one of those new brick skytehouses at Caister, who was standing in the gateway by his home, clept out to two of his fellows who were in the churchyard, bumpkins both. Then one of them shouted that I should not go in.

I told him to mind his own busyness for mine was with the Lord.

He drew his dagger and I drew mine, though I had worn it all my life for shew. But it semeed that none of was used to arms and they backed off when they saw my blade, despite their size.

My thoughts were no longer on the Virgin of Antioch. I thought I should withdraw while I could and was afraid to leave my horse for the taking. But they took my withdrawal for weakness. As I came back to the mare, the twain fellows started throwing stones, including several large. And clept me a thief and a rascal. And I hearde them shout to the oaf who had issued the orders. And they used his name. Which was Windham, or Wymondham, tis all the same.

And they jeered they would kill me and clept me a churl and a bloody turding sod and a swyving bastard.

At which I shouted I would match them man for man, as if I knew how to fight. But they must separate if they had any concept of the laws of war and courtesy.

Though they knew not the meaning of the words, they must have realised by my rich language, that I was a scholar, if not a gentleman, and hence might have a Master powerful. There be very few masterless men in Norfolk, since the Rifling Time.

And they drew off and went indoors.

And I on my way back to Castle Fastolf.

## 9 May

I took me back to Sir Johns bosom. He was very fumous and said we must raise hue and cry agaynest these villains but this would have to wait for another day.

We discussed the Englisshe hatred of strangers – as Jews, Lombards and Fuggers, but agreed there are greter villains at home.

We had the norpins of Baked Mete Ryalles and Eels in Bruet, which made me feel the better.

## 10 May

To the Swan at Repps and Mrs. Martin where I had the opportunity to touch a maid as I would, but contented myself looking once more on what Jack did.

Jack and I spoke of horses. He saith they have nayther soul nor brain. He hath spoken with manie farriers who hath cut up dead horses and found nothings in the head at all. I saith to the contrary horses display sagacity, providence and discipline. I do not see how they can do that without a brain. And so the farriers must be wrong.

I asketh him about the baiting of bears. I have never bene to the Garden, for I consider it a cruel sport, damnable not for the pain it giveth to the bear – for they are foul and brute, capable both of killing a child or ravishing a woman - but for the pleasure it giveth to the onlooker.

He saith both bear and bullbaiting are admirable disport. And he hath bene in several places where are Ordinances requiring all bulls to be baited before they be sent to the butcher, for it makyth the mete more tender. And it summons the blood to see a foul bear tied to a stake and set on by masty hounds, to tear and rend him. And the bear can defend himself with his claws, though they oft times file his teeth or muzzle him.

I saith he might have a point about the bulls, but it hath never bene the custom in England to eat the bear. And the rediness of one beast to attack another

was a sign of rebellion agaynest God and therefor the baiting of bear and bull, and all cockfighting should move us to mourn, not rejoice. For it is wrong to rejoice in the cruelty of beast towards beast, which resulteth from the First Sin of Eden, committed by Man.

## 13 May

I put it to Thomas Howes that Sir John hath bene a good lord to the men of Castle Combe, though they complain much about him.

He said Fastolf doth apply the law of Draco, and in matters that need not concern him overmuch. He hath made a new Ordinance anent the common pastures but allso about what a man might drink. He telleth us that taverns must close at 8 o'clock in winter and 9 o'clock in summer. And he hath installed *a clock* in the church to enforce this. And the inhabitants must refrain from the playing of dice and football.

I said the football Ordinance was very strictly enforced as Castle Fastolf. But I did not count that as the law of Draco, but the rewl of reason.

But, saith Thomas, he hath one time proposed that all dogs, as masty hounds, spaniels, shocks and turnspits, be listed and their owners made to pay a fine. But his proposal was abandoned as costeous and as making him obnoxious to the multitude. For the people love a dog above the lord of the manor though the clergie regard them as filthy scavengers, serving onlie to spred the pestilence. God, man, he will betimes make an Ordinance for what a man and woman should refrain from in their chamber. Does he conceyve he is both King, Pope and preest?

I asketh this Thomas how he liked the tasks he is given by our Master. He saith he liketh the ghostly tasks involved in being parson, but disliketh some of the erthely tasks, as the levying of distraint.<sup>121</sup> I saith I understand this. But he saith it is worse than I think for one time he hath bene told by Sir John to distrain a tenant for cattle and ploughs, but could never do it save in the tenants mothers house and this he durst not do, for that woman cursing.

## 14 May.

I was passing the Surgeon his room and he had stepped out once more. His *Pharmacopoeia* was open. I looked around me and went in

### *Chapter XVIII*

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<sup>121</sup> The process whereby a landlord was allowed to recover rent by levying execution on the tenant's goods.



After Agincourt

*Swelling of the scrote*

*Swelling of the cod and of the stones cometh eitherwhiles of humours that fallen down into the cod and into the stones....*

I was looking for the Remedy, when in comes the Surgeon, from whom I expected some small rebuke but he did mildly ask what I want to know and saith that I need not fere the breach of confidence because he was reding to refresh his mind onlie and was contented to discuss.

I saith I was surprised by the number of thinges that could go wrong with the yard of a man and was curious.

*Dost thou mean the scrote?*

*Well I am as curious to know about the scrote as the yard. They are all equally sensitive it semes and likely to give trouble.*

*Indeed saith he; but in the case of the swelling of the scrote the remedy is simpler. There is usually a plaster I can make for that, of barley meal, hen grease and oil of violet ysodden together or else of henbane and swine grease, or – if the problem is cold humours – of hot herbs and honey despumed, and garlic. But in that case a man verily doth have to work hard at plastering it onto the yard and stones. It is not everyone can do that with delicacy, mark you.*

I saith I admired his mysterie. We talked of the Philosopher and natural philosophy. I saith I hath at one time or another bene taught that swallows went to the moon in autumn. That some types of geese were hatched from shells on the bark of trees. That sweat might turn into bees. That mice hatched from dirty tunics. None of which semeth at all probable to me.

He saith Albert the Great hath proposed long ago that these were all fables, based on a false notion of spontaneous generation, and in due time the methods of Master Bacon would provide the proof. He prayed he lived to see that day. In his view, nothings could come from nothings. There allways had to be a Progenitor, unless of course the Progenitor of all thinges individually was God himself. And even hedge hogges hath bene observed to engage in the unclean act, despite all the difficulty they hath with spikes. They squeal like pigs when they do it.

## **15 May, Qwesontyde<sup>122</sup>**

We celebrated the coming of the Holy Ghoste. The Surgeon saith I have no patience

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<sup>122</sup> Whit Sunday

with those who say that excitement in the act of duplication is shameful and that venereal stimuli have their origin not in nature, but in sin. Nothing is so far from the truth. As if marriage, whose function cannot be fulfilled without these incitements, did not rise above blame. In other living creatures, where do these incitements come from? From nature or from sin? From nature, of course. It must borne in mind that in the appetites of the body there is very little difference between man and other living creatures.

I saith he spoke like a Saracen.

To Norwich agayne. And I visited Catherine. She hath found a set of chesse men, locked in her husband his trunk and she asked me to shew her the play. But we found no pleasure in the flirtation. Our mood was too sober.

She hath a young brother who was a priest but no longer. I asked how this came to pass.

*He lived with another priest and a woman who was their servant, clept Beatrice of the Brook, when the Visitor clept to enquire. The other priest was found to have bene bene living incontinently with this woman above three yeres. My brother was illfamed with the same woman.*

*Thou meanst it was a coven?*

*Either that or else he had failed to disclose the sin of the others.*

*And how were they punished?*

*The chief malefactor admitted his guilt but was allowed to purge himself with four compurgators. My brother denied it altogether, denies it still and was defrocked. Thou know some law, William, was that just? Should not the chief villain have bene made to bear the fault?*

I said I knew nothinge of the canon law, but doubtless the brother had bene dismissed from the clerical state for failure to accept the discipline of Holy Church.

She misunderstood me and thought I saith that the discipline of Holy Church was just. I tried to remedy that by saying that although celibacy, voluntarily maintained throughout life was a virtue, it was for a man, very difficult. I would not have judged him too harshly. But it was a matter for Holy Church. But they would find it difficult to control the privat thoughts of men.

She said I was too subtle. She had expected me to support her brother. She looked to me for sympathy not disputation. And he was innocent, of any charge. Could I not see that?

At that I snorted. What and they had lived under the same roof in a pore priests his house, and he saw nothinge, and hearde nothinge?

She flew into a rage, the like of which I had never seen before, buffeting me

but it was not long before it turned to kissing.

She asked me if I had ever bene in Fraunce.

I saith of course I had. She asked if it were true that their manners were better than ours. She meant in regard to the table.

I asked her what she meant exactly.

*Well I hope that in Fraunce you would never see men fall upon their mete with tooth like a famished dog, or men smacking their lips like a horse, as I observe here daily.*

I said my experience was that if men were truly hungry this would be observed in any countrie. And in my experience allso the manners varied not with the countrie but with the class of men. I said I doubted if you dined with the King, the manners there are very different from those you would observe if thou dined in a frendely manner with the Dolphin.

She saith *But, when I dine in any common place here, where men are not hungry I still observe them dipping their fingers halfway down the cup, wiping their hands on their garments and coing back agayne to handle the food, fyshing with bare finger for the pot herbs, dipping half gnawed crusts into the dish and leaving the contents of their teeth there for others to eat. And even scratching their arses and pushing their fingers up their noses, I know not to what end.*

## 18 May

Little Bernard of Siena, the gretest preacher, hath died. He preached the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They say he carried around a little image of the Heart and pointed to it dramatickally, at some moment of the sermon when he thought his congregation was about to sleep. The Surgeon thought this was a trick. He saith no doubt this thinge was popular in the parts of Italy but it were not fit for the Englishe who are full of Phlegm. As a young man Little Bernard preached every day for seven weeks in Siena. But the Surgeon saith he regarded all women as witches and clept for all sodomites to be expelled, which might deprive the kingdom of some of the best of its bishops.

Fastolf had the Surgeon arrested this afternoon and sent to Norwich. The public voice and fame is that the information was laid by Friar Brackley, who consorteth much with the Physician, but not for matters of Physick.

## 19 May

I rode out from Caister full furious, putting my piles in the pains of Purgatory. What was this cruel world I find myself in? Where my Master can have a man put in the Clink at Norwich without trial for mere words. Though, if it be true heresy,

After Agincourt

there is cause enoughe. And man who saith all bishops are sodomites asketh for trouble. Despite the pains, hard riding doth cure all ill of the soul.

I met the York Shireman in the court as I returned after my voyage. After the usual tedious talk about the weather he returned to the horse he liked to ride.

*Tha knowest, Master William, it is hard for us up North to maintain that loyalty which tha in the South take for granted.*

I reminded him that I was not from the South, but the West, but it is all the same to these fellows from the arse end of Trent.

*No, but sithee I mean King, ever since Norman Conquest of Duk William, hath onlie concerned himself with South of England. Except to burn and destroy YorkShire. We need to cast off Yoke fastened on us by Norman and return to Good Old Days of Saxon, when all men spoke Englisshe, hi and low.*

I said there never was such a day, for even in the days of Alfred, the learned spoke Latin. And in my view, England would have remained a very miserable place, and lacking all importance in the World, had it not bene for the Normans. If there was a Yoke, it yoked us firmly to Fraunce and Rome, countries of learning and courtesy. Else we should have become a heathen countrie, as the parts of Scandinavia remained for manie hundreds of yeres, and a wilderness, which they remaineth still. And on King William's tomb it was written that he hath constrained the swords of Maine, which we would do well to do, and subjected them to the laws of this Realme.

*Nota Bene that when King William died, Scorpio hath added seven to thrice five times one, and Phoebus the Sun was in the middle of Virgo.*

But he went on like a drone.

*Look at where King Henrys palaces are and look at where he stays – Windsor, Sheen, West Minster, Wynchester, Eltham, Canterbury, Dartford, Woodstock, Marlow, Kingston, Bridge of Cam, Royston, Cookham – need I go on?*

I said he wished he would desist. For a man who condemneth the South, he hath an exceeding knowledge of its parts.

*Then take these new Houses of Religion, founded by Harry. Where are they but at Syon and Sheen next Thames. So royal monastery is added to royal palace, and all in South, though founded by scions of Lancaster. And good Carthusians at Mount Grace in York Shire were made to surrender bokes for Charterhouse at Sheen.*

After Agincourt

I prayed he might make an end of his listings.

*When doth the King ever come to York or Beverley or Doncaster?*

I could not conceyve of a single reason why the King should come to Doncaster, but he took my silence for a pardon

## 20 May

I spoke with Sir John of the strategy of Agincourt. Tis pleasant to converse with a man intelligent, though habitually fierce. I asked, since Calais and the March had bene in Englisthe hands for nigh on 70 yeres, why did Harry not take the army there?

Sir John saith that is easily explained. Calais was not an option, because it was surrounded by the Duk of Burgundy his territory and Harry wanted to be his ally. Furthermore, it would not have bene possible for Harry to have hired all the vessels he needed for his voyage, in Holland and Zeeland, without consent of the Duk, since he owns most of the fiefs there too, as well as in Flanders and Artois.

*In that case, why not make for the safe harbour of Bordeaux, where our King had bene Duk over 300 yere?*

*Well that was seriously thought on until the very eve of embarking. Some indentures of war even required that the men be paid the rates of pay of Guienne and I was retained for Gascoigne myself. But then, when we were allmost under way we were told the ships were plotting course for Fraunce and Normandie.*

*But Normandie, at that point had not bene in Englisthe hands for 200 yeres! Was Harry not rolling the dice here?*

*Thou couldst rather saye he was playing chesse like no man hath played before. For there was method in this gambling. The Frensh were locked in civil war, and Burgundy might have bene expected to stay at home. We had 10,000 archers, and all habiliments of war. We had control of the game. Normandie would give him control of the Seine, the gateway to Paris. And Harfleur was and is the most important port in Normandie. And it was a nest of spies and pirates, inviting the attack. In short, Harrys strategy had risks, but was soundly based and the correctness of it was confirmed by God his verdict at Agincourt – which none of us had hearde speke of when we sailed!*

## 21 May

There are men who say to red Master Chaucer is a sin, since he writeth much of the unclean act and holdeth it up as comedy. *Per exemplum*, in the *Tale of the Goodwyff of Bath*, wherein is described manie foul acts of duplication.

And yet he is so accurate. A wherryman arrived from Yarmouth and Chaucer hath this passage to the life

*For craftsmanship, in reckoning the tides  
The currents and the jepardies on all sides,  
Knowing havens, the moon and navigation,  
There was no better man in any nacion.*

This man saith that when he were young the coastline of England was very vulnerable to attack. It was Harry who made the difference. The King built a fleet of ships, based in Hampton. After Agincourt the ports of northern Fraunce fell into our hands, and they remained under Englisshe control for manie yeres. The Dolphin was reduced to using La Rochelle on the Atlantic. Englisshemmen could travail back and forth from any part of England without risk of molestation or harrassment, by enemy ships or pirates.

We asked him to speak to us of the Agincourt voyage.

*The Englisshe army was conveyed in the largest flete man hath ever seen. They say there were 1,500 vessels and the Frensh hath no fleet at all to send agaynest it.*

*But when Grete Harry died, manie of the best master mariners were laid off, and manie of his best ships were sold. The Frensh recaptured both Dieppe and Harfleur, scene of our first triumph and, although we were able to take it back, this took five yeres this time in place of a five month, and we never did take Dieppe back. Piracy revived and the pirates, who ynclosed oft Englisshemmen from the West Countrie, were all able seamen, the best at their trade in the land.*

I saith Sir John hath argued all along that the sea should be kept mightily, as well for the Kingis worship and the Realme as for the salvation of the trayde and of the navy of England and Normandie. And that the navy should make war sharp and cruel and keep the course of trayde as much as they can or may from Sclose.

*Yes saith the shipman that is all well known but the advice was never heeded and our old old power at sea simply and withered away and shrank back down to its pre-tumescent state, through the cuts which the men in charge of the Kingis Budget hath made to the stablishing. and now we are even a prey to pirates once more, as in the days of Harry the Fourthe.*

I asked Sir John if thinges were as bad by sea as the wherryman of colourful

language hath saith. He owned several ships and knew the routes between Norfolk and London well.

He saith the shipman had not told us the half of it. In the absence of a Navy, which they themselves hath shredded like wheat, the government of the King found it necessary to commission privateers.

*And I was fool enoughe to invest in this privat venture. Five yere ago I lent £100 to Thomas Daniel, ordered by the Kingis ministers to go with his posse on the sea for the safekeeping thereof, with full power to lead, rewl and govern all masters and mariners and others of his company, and to punish the same, and to fight the Kingis enemies. This Daniel enlisted the services of Robert Winnington of Dartmouth, recommended by the king as a useful man for cleansing the seas and rebuking robbers and pirates.*

*Well, last yere Winnington reported that he had seen action in the Channel. He hath bene told to make sure that all foreign ships there should strike their colours in the presence of an Englisshe ship. So, when he cometh upon a Fugging salt-convoy off Dover, he told them to strike, in the Kingis name of England. They told him to go take a skyte and fuck himself in the Kingis name of England. And I lost all my monie.*

## 22 May, Trinity Sunday

I asked Basset what he thought of the King, for most men do blame his ministers and none doth blame Henry. He said the King was not verily a King of this world. He protested that he was offended when he saw dancing girls with bare bosoms – a not uncommon sight in London. Yet they say that he spies on his courtiers through secret windows, pretending to wish to prevent what he deems immoral but verily for the sight of it.

He said he had no doubt the king was a good man, though not the man his father was, but he was at the mercy of courtiers like Jack Napes.

*The courtiers have made the King so pore  
That now he beggeth from door to door<sup>123</sup>*

This man doth shew good sense and I asked him to unfold to me why we had won at Agincourt, though outnumbered, and now were scarce able to defeat small forces of miserable rebels in Normandie and Maine.

*Thou must understand that Agincourt was a pitched battle. Once the Frensh caught up with the Englisshe, the twain parties agreed to fight and the battle lines were drawn up in an orderly way. It was not an accidental encounter, and there was no ambush nor surprise attack. The Frensh fought too fairly for their own good. We had a large army, compared to*

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<sup>123</sup> The lines appear in *Mum and the Soothsayer*, an anonymous fifteenth century poem.

*those we are able to muster now, not so large as the French but plenty large enough.*

*Agayne it was a victory for the infantry, men at arms and knights. Harry lost xxv horses during the battle, of which vj were palfreys and xix trotters, but our cavalry played no part in the fight. Thousands of these animals were transported across the Channel but when it came to the battle, we all dismounted to fight. After all, our archers are not trained from birth to ride and shoot from the saddle, like those fierce horsemen of Scythia described by John Mandeville.*

*The French had manie advantages but they threw them all away. The drawing up of their army in a confined space, between the woods was a gross error and caused them much inconvenience and slaughter. This meant too that they were unable to outflank us. They were so confined that their three battles had to be drawn up one behind the other*

*We made better use of the ground.*

## 23 May

I asked John Payn about the rumour that Harry did kill all the prisoners he took at Agincourt. For tis expressly agaynest the Faith of Christ and the Laws of War to kill prisoners, or enslave them as the Romans did, or torture them as the French do.

*That would be most strange so there were thousands taken to Calais eftsoons and sold cheap, and a goodly number of nobles taken to England thereafter.*

I saith the chroniclers were all agreed that our archers did grete execution on the French; and Lydgate saith

*Their arrows went fast, without any let,  
And manie shot they throughout;  
Through habergeon, breastplate, and bassinet.*

*But saith Payn I do know that our archers, seeing the brekeing up of the French vanguard, came out from behind their stakes all together and threw down their bows and arrows, took up any weapons they had to hand as axes and hammers and smote wherever they saw brekes in the line. Perhaps that is what the rumour translates from.*

I do not conceyve so, saith I. But this latest story of his doth puzzle me, as a plain man. I thought the archers were to fire their bows, not fight as men at arms and knights are accustomed to do.

*Yes yes, but no, not then. For the archers, despite their cute firing, had not bene able to stop the enemy from reaching the English line and the knights and men at arms were hard pressed and allmost overthwarted. So the bowmen performed a most miraculous feat of arms that day by fighting as a second army, though they were lightly armed. And a good*



After Agincourt

*Englisshe longhammer is as good for smiting a Frenshy as a porker. Your hammer, with a single blow, is quite capable of killing a man, or at any rate knocking the sense out of him.*

I saith I knew that the result was that manie Frensh were killed but manie were taken prisoner. How had those escaped the long hammers then?

*Well there is monie in this prisoner busyness. We could have killed them all, but decided for to trade. Which is another reason why I trow not that Grete Harry killed any prisoners in cold blood. That must be a Frensh rumour.*

I decided to raise a very awkward subject.

*We know there were Welshmen who fought on the Frensh side at Agincourt but I once hearde there was an Englisshe man allso. I find it impossible to trow. Had he ever hearde of it?*

And Basset said there was one such man, and one onlie for shame.

*At Southampton, Harry found a gentleman named Olandyne, in whose company were twenty men, well apparelled for the Werre. This Olandyne of time past had yeven all his substance and goods to pore people for Christ his sake, and in grete devotion entered a strict monastery of the Carthusians, and was professed in the same. His wyff was allso a professed in a house of religious women, and there continued devoutly during her life.*

*Now this Olandyne, at the instigation of Satan, who appereed to him in the shape of a little wyvern, after a little time repented his profession and made great suit and labour that he obtained from the Lord Pope a dispensation to leave his religion and to reprise his former temporal estate. And hence, in the estate of a temporal man, he offered to do the King service in his war.*

*But when the King was informed of his life and conversation as the child of God, he refused the company of this gentleman, as an inconstant man, and a contemner of the religion of Christ. At whose refuse this Olandyne, having indignacion as a man replete with pride, departed from the King and went to the aid of his adversaries in Fraunce. And so he was slain at Agincourt, right sore fighting agaynest his own cuntryemen. So perish all such bastards, for this Olandyne was a traitor to God and then to the King.*

But I asked if he trowd all that he hearde. How likely, do you conceyve, is it that the King would have refused a veteran in that way, on the ground stated, when he had need of all he could summons, including men in Holy Orders? And the story doth shew a most enthusiastickal regard for religion.

*Thou kneweth not Harry, saith Basset.*

## 24 May

I had to reprimand Jack for drawing a picture of a maid in a tavern, with her most costeous wares lasciviously displayed. I told him the thinge was an abominacion, and ripped it ip, telling him if he repeateth such a thinge I will have Sir John to instantly cashier him.

Sir John had fought in Ireland and wanted the men to hear about it this day, by way of Froissart his description. The Chronicler hath a passage where he claims that he met Richard of Bordeaux and presented him with a copy of his boke. And then he doth proceed.

*There was an Englisshe squire, clept Henry Castide, and this man had bene in Ireland. Ireland is one of the worst countries to make war in, or to conquer; for there are such impenetrable and extensive forests, lakes, and bogs, there is no knowing how to pass them, and carry on war advantageously. It is so thinly inhabited, that, whenever the Irish please, they desert the towns, and take refuge in these forests, and live in huts made of boughs, like wild beasts. And whenever they perceive any parties advancing with hostile dispositions, and about to enter their countrie, they fly to such narrow passes, it is impossible to follow them.*

*When they find a favourable opportunity to attack their enemies to advantage, which frequently happens, from their knowledge of the countrie, they fail not to seize it. And no man at arms, be he ever so well mounted, can overtake them, so light are they of foot. Sometimes they leap from the ground behind a horseman, and embrace the rider, for they are very strong in their arms, so tightly, that he can no way get rid of them.*

*The Irish have pointed knives; with broad blades, sharp on both sides like a dart-head, with which they kill their enemies; but they never consider them as dead until they have cut their throats like sheep, opened their bellies and taken out their hearts, which they carry off with them, and some say, who are well acquainted with their manners, that they devour them as delicious morsels.*

*Cristede claimed he hath bene taken prisoner by the wild Irish and lived amongst them for manie yeres even learning their language. He became an expert on their customs, very different from ours. Here saith they hath a custom I knew to be common in the countrie, which was the not wearing of breeches. And this is because they go barefooted and barelegged, which is because there are so manie bogs, and it is not convenient to walk through the bogs in breeches and shoes. Fortunately they do not go bare-arsed.*

He got a cheap laugh from this effrontery. But I remark here there are manie men in England who hate and despiseth the mere Irish and manie in Ireland who grudgeth and despiseth all Englisshe. But I say there are good and evil men in both these Islands.

## 25 May

In the morning, busy writing a bill for Sir John to John Lynford, esquire of Stalham<sup>124</sup> about the plea agaynest the Prior of Hickling and about the Place in Sislond.

I hearde this tale in Fraunce, saith one of the barrack room boys

*Lord Talbot, whom may God pardon, has bene, as every one knows, so victorious and long may that continue. And he hath allso bene wise, and gave a judgment which was worthy of being related.*

*During this cursed and pestilent Werre that doth yet continue, it happened, as was oft the case, that a Frensh soudeour was taken prisoner by an Englissheman and, a ransom having bene fixed, he was sent under a safe-conduct, signed by Lord Talbot, to his captain, that he might procure his ransom. As he was on his road, he was met by another Englissheman, who, seeing he was a Frenshman, asked him whence he came and whither he was going?*

*Where is thy safe-conduct? asked the Englissheman.*

*It is not far off, replied the Frenshman. With that he took the safe-conduct, which was in a little box hung at his belt, and handed it to the Englissheman, who red it from one end to the other. And, as is customary, there was written on the safe-conduct*

FORBIDDEN TO CARRY ANY IMPLEMENTS OF WERRE

*The Englissheman noted this, and saw that there were buckle straps on the Frenshman his doublet. He imagined that these straps were real implements of war, so he saith,*

*I make thee my prisoner, because thou hast broken thy safe-conduct.*

*By God's Wounds, I have not, replied the Frenshman, saving thy grace. Thou seest in what condition I am.*

*No! no! saith the Englissheman. By the Holy Face of Lucca thou hast broken thy safe-conduct. Surrender, or I will kill thee!*

*The pore Frenshman, who had onlie his page with him, and was quite unprovided with weapons, whilst the other was accompanied by three or four archers, did the best thinge he could, and surrendered. The Englissheman led him to a place near there, and put him in a Clink like prison. The Frenshman, finding himself thus ill-treated, sent in grete haste to his captain, who - when he hearde this man his case - was gretely and marvellously astonished.*

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<sup>124</sup> One of Fastolf's friends.

After Agincourt

*Thereupon he wrote a bill to Lord Talbot, and sent it by a herald, to ask how it was that one of his men had bene arrested whilst under safe-conduct.*

*Thereupon, when the herald reached Lord T, he flew into a grete rage, for he was hot-tempered and irritable, and brooked not to be disobeyed, especially in matters of werre.*

*To shorten the story, he caused to be brought before him both the Frenshman and the Englissheman, and told the Frenshman to tell his tale.*

*The Frenshman told how he had bene taken prisoner by one of Lord Talbot his people, and put to ransom. Lord Talbot was not well content, but nevertheless turned to the Englissheman and asked*

*What hast thou to reply to this?*

*My lord, saith he, it is quite true, as he hath saith, that I met him and would see his safe-conduct, which when I had red from end to end, I betimes perceived that he had broken and violated; otherwise I should never have arrested him.*

*How had he broken it? Asked Lord Talbot. Tell me hastily!*

*My Lord, because in his safe-conduct he is forbidden all implements of war, and he had, and hath still, real implements of war, that is to say he hath on his doublet, buckle-straps, which are real implements of werre, for without them a man cannot be armed.*

*Ah! saith Lord Talbot, and so buckle-straps are implements of werre are they? Dost thou knowst of any other way in which he had broken his safe-conduct?*

*Truly, my lord, I do not, replied the Englissheman.*

*What, thou villain! saith Lord Talbot. Hast thou stopped a gentleman under my safe-conduct for his buckle-straps? By St. George, I will shew thou whether they are implements of were!*

*Then, hot with anger and indignacion, he went up to the Frenshman, and tore from his doublet the twain straps, and gave them to the Englissheman; then he put a sword in the Frenshman his hand, and drawing his own good sword out of the sheath, saith to the Englissheman,*

*Defend thyself with that implement of war, as thou call it, if thou knowest how!*

*Then he saith to the Frenshman, Now Strike that villain who arrested thee without cause or reason, and we shall see how he can defend himself with this implement of werre. If thou spare him, by St. George I will strike thee down.*

*Thus the Frenshman, whether he would or not, was obliged to strike at the Englissheman with the sword, and the pore Englissheman protected himself as best he could, and ran about the room, with Talbot after him, who made the Frenshman keep striking the other.*

The Surgeon hath not returned from Norwich. I asked Sir John why. He hath sent him up to the Bishop on suspicion of heresy, and expects that he shall meet his fiery end in the Pit.

## 26 May, the Feast of Corpus Christi

Celebrating the miracle of the Mass, whereby the body and blood of Christ is present in the Host. And men doth hold processions, with banners as when the host doth march to werre.

The York Shireman saith that at York in Agincourt yere the Coopers Company presented an Adam and Eve with the tree between them, the serpent tempting Eve with an apple, and an angel with a sword expelling them from Paradise. He spake too of the wicked White Monks in York Shire. The arrival of those of Citeaux was worse than the effects of war: The monks of Byland Abbey coveted some land on the estate of a certayne knight. The knight could not be persuaded to give it to them, and so one night they entered his house, muffled up and armed with swords and spears, and murdered him and his family. When a kinsman of the knight arrived three days later, after hearing news of his death, he found that all the buildings and enclosures had disappered and in their place was a well ploughed field.

This man doth make me tired, with his constant prateing about the virtues of York Shire and the iniquities of the Southrons and the White Monks and his speche like a grete oaf.

Sir John saith that the York Shireman hath a good heart but he ignores much and is very much behind the Time. *Imprimis* Byland Abbey was not a Cistercian foundation. It was a foundation of the Savignacs, which later affiliated to the Order of Citeaux. *Item* he curses the White Monks for their rapacity but that was in the Age of Austerity, when the monks were first acquiring ther estates. *Item* there hath bene no new houses of White Monks in York Shire or elsewhere these 300 yeres and they no longer have those lay brethren who used to swell up their ranks and wax overmuch with appetites for land and shepe.

## 28 May

Sir John hath asked me to go to Southwark. I look not forward to this since this South Wark is the foulest place next Thame Isis, more foul than West Minster or

London, for there are fewer regulations there and those that be are lightly enforced by the Cardinal. A place that is as populous needs abundant pissing holes and privy skyteing places, but there are so few in South Wark that a man must take his easement where finds it. And so a grete stink doth pervade the holle place.

But Sir John saith there hath bene trouble at Fastolf Place with the King his Sergeant Wanklin, known to alle as Sergeant Wank, who hath attempted to buy horses for the king under abuse of purveyance. He hath claimed authoritie to take any palfrey, courser, cart horse, chariot horse or hackney that he hath a fancy for, for the purpose.

While I am there I must gather intelligence on the entry of Frensh Meg into the City. Do the Londoners still hate foreigners as they hath bene wont to do, or were they won over by her charms, as as pore Henry was when he saw her portrait? Is Jack Napes more or less popular by the ceremony?

I went to Yarmouth and found one of Sir John his captains who shewed me the Fastolf Flete, twain plate-ships, a cog, a farecost and twain ballingers, all in the harbour, some bound for Lynne, some for Boston and some for far Newcastle. But I took ship in the *Bonaventure*. She was still engaged in the building work, and bound for Southwark wharf with ballast upon the return voyage. For she hadde brought us timber, stones and lead for the building.

On the way we saw pirates afar but God sent us the wind and weather and the good ship *Bonaventure* scorned and oversailed them. Jack thought the conceyte of encountering pirates a grete adventure but I assured him it could be no laughing matter, but sadde.

We came up the Thames and spied London Bridge ahead. This bridge is 26 feet wide and 900 feet long, supported by 19 arches, founded on starlings in the river-bed. It hath a drawbridge for the tall ships and a gatehouse either end. It hath over 100 shops and 200 houses. It hath skytehouses with manie seats overhanging the parapet. Some of the buildings are seven stories hi. And on the right the Tower, where King James of Scotland and the Duk of Orliens were held so long and where Harry stored his habiliments before Agincourt. We sone enow reached Fastolf Place on the South Bank.

When I arrived, the place was alyve with rumour. There hath bene strife in the Guild Hall over the choosing of the Mayor, by the craft of the tailors. There had bene a grete thunder and tempest, and St Paul his steeple on the South west side had bene marvellously set on fire, with manie burnt and slain. There had bene a fight in the lists of Smithfield between an armourer of Fleet Street and his servant, for words agaynest the King and the servant slew the master. And the master was effbetimes despoiled out of his armour and lay still in the field all that day and the night next following, and was all but eaten by crows, save that boys do love to stone them so. And then, by the King his commandment, the master was drawn, hanged, and beheaded – though dead and half eaten - and his head set on London Bridge.

And one John Gardiner was taken at St Mary at the Axe in London, for he was an hereticke. For when he should have taken the body of God in his mouth, he

wiped his mouth with a foul cloth and laid the host therein, and so he was taken and burnt in Smithfield. This burning strikes me as cruel and unusual punishment, productive of nothings but ashes, but Jack would promote boiling in oil. And a ship named *Grace de Dieu*, which was charged of goods from Prussia, was lost within Thames. And men and women cavorting together drove about the City of London in stryped pettycotes and stryped hoods. And Harry Frowyk was mayor.

From Fastolf Place to the Cross 240 steps. From the Cross to the house of the Crown, 420 steps. From the Crown to the beginning of the Bridge, 180 steps. From there to the corner of St Magnus 460 steps.

We stayed up half the night, talking by candlelight and at last I found a fether bed to comfort me after the rolling sea.

## 29 May

In the morning I find that the matter of the purveyance of horses by Sergeant Wank hath proved the scent of the red herring. Wank hath chosen a different plaice to pursue his egregious demand.

We found Sir John his livery, made in Castle Combe of the finest stuff but stored in a trunk. The jackets were worn but they would do, especially when badges of Fastolf and Scrope were sewn on the sleeve. The city hath ordained that the number of retainers be low, so Sir John could onlie have ten of us dressed that way, though the Ordinance hath prescribed fifty for an Erle. Jack looked fine in the livery but as a scrivener I was deemed too grand.

It can take an hour to cross London Bridge even when a man is in haste but I took my time for the view. I looked at the Tower, where Charles of Orlieun penned his verses, and all down the river where the manie vessels lie anchored in the Pool. And to the South side the Cardinal his Palace and the bearbaiting garden. And on the London side agayne, the mighty palace built by the Good Old Duk after the fire and still known as Baynard Castle. This Castle is but a town House, yet mightier far than Castle Fastolf.

A man who has not bene to London, or not in a whyle, must needs be struck by the range of food stuff that is here for sale, as breds, metes of all kinds, fysshes, cheses, ales, cakes, and spices. Yet there are manie pore in London and though I seldom give alms I gave pennies to some afflicted by the Church of St Paul. This Church, measured in my steps, is 180 paces and the width of the transepts from south to north 160.

Southwark smelt of ordure but London smelt of rose petals, strewn for Princess Meg. There were men selling broadsheets and chapbokes, hastily prepared by the scriveners of the City to explain what was to happen.

She arrived at the Black Heath, where she was greeted by the mayor of London and his Aldermen, and divers folk in costeous array. Behind her cart rode chariot after chariot of ladies, Englishhe and Frensh. She progressed to the Tower,

where our simple King receyved her with a kiss, though I doubt he was much inclined to plant it, for we all know he conceyvethe all women to be unclean. And though it was a fysh day, they banqueted in the City, eating the beaver, which men count as fysh in these parts. This made the common people smile to conceyve of our King eating of the beaver.

This pageant was like none the Cockneys hadde ever sene since Harry the Grete entered London after Agincourt. On her way to the Tower, Meg was worshipped with twain pageants, one at the Southwark end of London Bridge, the second upon the Bridge itself, though there was scarce room for all her attendants to cross on the nonce. The figures of Peace and Plenty were on hand to grete her and she was enjoined to be fruitful and multiply, pore girl. The second pageant compared the Princess to Noah his dove of peace. And we all pray their children may be of the line of Japhet, not of Ham.

And she lodged in the Tower that night, for it is armory and prison and palace alyke. And on the morrow, her mighty cart rode to West Minster draped in a white cloth of gold and drawn by twain sweaty stonehorses, with their accoutrements swinging. And Meg was clad in white damask, powdered with gold and the cart had bene smothered in vinegar to ward off the pestilence. Her hair was combed down around her shoulders. Upon her head she wore a gold crown with rich perles and precious stones. And she was very fair and very young and the people their hearts were touched, although every man doth grudge the Frensh. Those who had come to mock cheered her, and I know not how to tell Sir John of her popularitie.

The city conduits ran with wine, both white and red, and manie drank overmuch. There were lyverymen of every sort on all sides and manie contesting how much they could drink. There were men of the grete lords and men of the Companies of the City, as Mercers and Grocers, Drapers and Coopers and Goldsmiths. And there was much vomit of every kind, spred all around the gutters. And Good Lord the prices here. 16d for meals and provender of horses where it would be 8 elsewhere.

There were 50 of Lord Talbot his men, for he had lately bene created Erle - wearing his dogge badge, and shewing off and singing bawdy songs, and they were telling dirty tales when one of them spies Jack in his livery and calls out

*Fuck Fastolf!*

And they give chase.

We run, with them calling after us as if we were cowards and caitiffs who knew not how to fight. But then, to my own great astonishment, I stop and turn to face them, though Jack hath allredy sped round a corner.

Sometime the life of the contemplative man doth appere, of a sudden, not sufficient. For, if a coward survives, he then has to battle with himself, all the livelong day and possibly eternally. So I stand still and draw my dagger. God help



me, I can do no other, having defended my master agaynest the charge of flying the field too long. Tis time to make a stand for Almighty God, John Fastolf and St George.

And I make them a little speke, to explicate unto them the error of their ways. For they doth clerely take the vulgar view that Sir John hath played the coward at Patay. Whereas I know for certayne that he hath played the part of the manly man, and twas John Talbot who played the part of the fool and hardy man.

But they shoue no wish to engage in the disputation.

They set upon me like masty hounds upon a bull. My feeble blows are not equal to my courage. They beat upon my pore groin mightily and near put out my good eye, truss me and carry me to the riverside to throw me therein.

I think I must allredy be in Purgatory, what with the pains of both body and soul.

And then I am rescued by some others wearing lions heads on their jerkins. They be liverymen of Jack Napes, Marquess of Suffolk. There must be an hundred of them, to mine enemy's 50. And Talbot his men are scattered and these new fellows take me to a palace and make me at home, advising me not to go abroad, for Sir John is not popular with the manie, on accompt of the affair of Patay, and I may finde myself with no eyes at all if I am not care full.

## 30 May

In the evening Jack Napes himself arrived to hear the tale and he was kind to me, agaynest all expectation. We talked far into the night. He said his men hath rescued me because I had bene pointed out to them by the Bishop of Norwich, with whom he had shared a stand.

He explained to me that, though men thought the worse of him, and said all thinges defamatory, his onlie aim, in treating with the Frensh, was to strengthen the dynasty of our Lord the King, which was weak and running to ruin. His Majesty his Uncle of Clarence had bene killed. His Uncle of Bedford had died. His Uncle of Gloucester still lived but had a wyff who dabbled in witchcraft. And none of them had legitimate issue. Onlie bastards, and nobody would want a bastard for a monarch, for that would put all inheritance in jeopardy and the lords would be ground down in a new Rifling Time. There was a desperate need for new blood of Lancaster, for York would have manie sons. But twas time for King Harry to leave off praying awhile and use his loins. And where was a royal wyff to be obtained except from Fraunce? If he allied hymselfe with an Englisshewoman, faction would stalk the land.

And he asketh me if I did not agree that werre was the evil supreme above all others, for that in werre be manie infinite damages and extortions done, as murder, slaughter, bloodshedding, depopulacion of countries, castles, cities and towns brennyng, and manie other such. Wherefore it should seme that meinteyning of

werre is a cursed deed. And I saith but the first cause of this Werre were to sustain right and justice, the second is to withstand all those who would harm England and the third is to recover lands, lordships and goods which hath bene ravished, taken away by main force and usurped, which should appertain to our Lord the King.

He could see that I was not for moveing my position and so he told me a tale of a land called No Place.

*On the strength of some ancient marriage, the King of No Place thought he had a hereditary title to another kingdom, so his people hath supported a werre to go it back for him. Eventually they won, onlie to find that the kingdom in question were quite as much trouble to kepe as it hath bene to acquire. There were constant threats of internal rebellion. They were allways having to fight their Kingis new subjects. And if they had ever won completely, they would without fail had to fight with their new subjects ancient enemies. They never got a chance to go home and in the menetye they were being ruined by the cost of that longe Werre, which lasted nigh on fifty yere. Indeed they een called it their Fifty Yeres Werre, which were a long werre in deed.*

*All their monie was goinge out of No Place and men continued to lose their lyves for what now semeth to them like their kingis petty ambition. Conditions at home in No Place were no safer than they had bene before the Werre, which had lowered moral standards, by teching people to kill and steal and breke all the other Commandments to boot. There was no respect left for the law, because their first King had died and their new King knew not how to govern and was interested onlie in leading the life contemplative. So, seeing how this hopeless situation could not continue, the new King his chief Minister decided to put an end to the Werre, by applying the judgment of Solomon.*

I asked where this country of No Place was, verily. He saith he did not know. It was NOT England, mark you. But I wondered myselfe if it was a bit like Home. I asked him what would be the result, if we applied this judgment of Solomon to our own situacion with the Frensh. He saith

*Well I told you most emphatickallie, William, No Place is not our England. But if a man were to apply the judgment of Solomon to our problem with the Frensh, why is it no plain that we should give them Maine and what we hold of Anjew and they should let us retain Normandie and Gascoigne? That would give us peace, with the advantage that before Agincourt, we had not held a yarde of land in Normandie since the time of King John, 200 yere before.*

Then he asked me why I had put my life at risk for Sir John upon a trifle and I tried my best to explain why I had made my stand but he said there was no need to explain and he saith

*Above all earthly thinge, be true liegeman in heart, in will, in thought and indeed, liefer to*

*die than to be the contrary, or to know anythinge agaynest the welfare or prosperity of thy master, but as far as thy body and life may stretch, ye live and die to defend him.*

And this be the man they call a Jack A Napes.

As we were talking, a young boy came in and the Marquess stroked his hair and kissed him and told him to go back to bed and dream of the angels and all would be well. And that was his little son. And then he bade me goodnight.

## 31 May

And in the morning his men escorted me as far as London Bridge. They were going to get me a barge for me, but the Bridge was open and I said I would walk, and they vouched for me at the Northern gatehouse.

Crossing London Bridge the conceyte of a woman came into my mind and I could not free myself of it. I conceyve I was overwrought by my ordeal of the yesterday and felt so glad to be alive my passions were much stirred, even to thinges unclean.

I disputeth with myself. Could this conceyte have somethinge of nobility or was it but sensuality? An Ancient sage once saith there cannot be higher felicity on earth enjoyed by man than the participation of amorous affection with an amiable woman but he was no Christian man. How manie know this participation, liefer than the unclean thinge to be had in Southwark for a few pennies. What if the unclean thinge is all there is? And I have bene taught from boyhood, by all those I respect, that carnal duplication is a thinge sinful and to be avoided at all costs, except in marriage and for the procreation of children, and even then, all bestiality must be avoided.

Yet I knew I was within minutes of a place where I could satisfy this lust I felt. But even then, in that PIT OF SIN, I still had some care for my body though my ghost was wallowing in filth. I thought me to obtain some means of preserving me from the Mercurial attentions of the Physician. But there was no-one selling sheepgut armour in the public latrine at that hour, and I had no opportunity or time to cover my yard in tar or soak it in onion juice, as some recommend. So I pressed on in my recklessness and turned right over London Bridge for the Cardinal his Arms and the Stews.

I will not relate the humiliation that awaited me. Suffice to say there was no one available for me at that hour, and I was disappointed in myself and in my body. Limply I faced about and returned to Fastolf Place in bad humour.

And I will report to Sir John and tell him the mob hateth the Frensh as much as ever, which cheered him. And nothinge that I hath seen would have endereed the crowd to the Frensh or Jack Napes, and they all booed, like folk demented. And that Jack Napes looked on like he was the tyrant Nero, with the very mugg of a bastard. And I shall saye nothinge to him about my visit to Jack Napes his Palace nor about

the rescue.

But much hath changed within me. I no longer feel in my bowels that the tyranny of Tuddenham and Heydon is true tyranny, like unto that used by the Visconti of Milan. And I have determined verily that from now on I will live the life of strict chastity I vowed myself to at Oxenford in my grene age, unless perchance I lawfully marry.

They dragged Jack his pore body from Thames next day. He had bene found floating in that River, all bashed up and slitted like a Frenshman at Agincourt.

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# X

## 1 June

**JACK WAS BURIED** as I arranged it. There is a Priory of Austin Canons, near London Bridge and the ferry, known as St Mary Over the Bank. I conversed with the Canons, who are not confined to the Cloister. They are superintended by a Prior, Henry Werkworth, who provideth a Hospital here, dedicted to St Thomas a Becket and careth for all kinds of waifs and strays.

As I walked in the Precinct afterwards, I fond such a peace there, a man might have thought that at last he had found God, amongst the hurly-burly of the Borough, the foul language of the boatmen, the stink of the Stews and the mess left by the River. And I thought much upon pore Jack and how I would miss his banter.

Southwark church hath manie fine crockets and a chesse board spred around the tower, like that in Norwich Guildhall, but paid for by the Cardinal, doubtless from the profit of the Stews.

The Priory was founded in the Age of Austerity but hath a most sumptuous tomb of John Gower. He was a frende of Master Chaucer and they both liketh Southwark. He served three Kings, his head rests on his three bokes and his effigy is looked over by three ladies - Faith, Hope and Charity, most beauteously depicted in vivid colour. This man was Poet Laureate and devoted his whole life to learning. Yet he married when he was aged sixty and eight to Alice Groundolf, though he lived allredy within the Cloister. And she was very young. This would seme to shew what Dame Eglantine thought, of Master Chaucer fame

*Amor Vincit Omnia  
Love Conquers All.*

As I sat in the Nave and prayed for the souls of Jack and of John Gower, the one a plain man who lived in the world, the other who lived in the world of letters, I reflected on God and his Saints, and all the holy men who hath yeven this place the odour of sanctity, making it a very Paradise, though grimly overlooked by the heads

of the traitors on London Bridge, gawping down like living gargoyles. And I thought how foolish they are who condemn the Image, which remindeth us of who we are and the World that is to come. Men saith that Death is the Leveller but how different Gower his grave from that which pore Jack shall lie in! But I paid for a yereday, to be sung for his soul.

And all at once as I was conceyveing on these matters, and all that had happened to me, and on Jack, I knew what I must do in regard to the matter of a wyff.

## 2 June

I said farewell and returneth now to Caister a new man. I am resolved to be more charitable to the Marquess. His motives are worshipfull even if the policy is mistaken. But that will scarcely be acceptable to Sir John.

Hay time and I took a bill to the Cardinal his man about Sir Johnis payment for a tract.

I hearde them singing near the village

*Sumer is icumen in,  
Sing cuckoo, cuckoo.*

We hearde that Princess Margaret hathd bene crowned Queen now at West Minster Abbey. The Marquess carried a sceptre of ivory, with a golden dove on its head, at this coronacion. A grete feast was held, followed by three days of jousting. I will not set out the names of those who took part. One list is much like another.

The Queen was crowned by Archbishop Stafford, he that is Lord Chancellor and presides in Parliament and the courts of Equity. They say that Stafford is the bastard son of a Wiltshire squire by a common whore.

Our new Quene is not yet fifteen but she is said to be a woman. But MANIE harbour secret doubt about the King his capacity to father a childe.

John Lydgate hath produced some verse, mucche disgusting to me

*Most Christian Princess by influence of grace  
Daughter of Jherusalem, our pleasance  
And joy, Welcome as ever Princess was  
With heart entire and whole affiance.  
Welcome, welcome, welcome.*

The King, who could ill afford the expense, made certayne that Queen Meg had all she wanted. He hath ordered, before the wedding, that the Queen most necessarily have for the solemnity of her coronacion manie fine jewels. And she was attended by five minstrels of her father and by twain of the Duk of Milan. The King

had yeven a safe-conduct for eighteen Scotsmen to come to see the coronacion, provided, allways, that they conduct themselves well and honestly. And they dylie made beasts of themselves. One een made the two-backed beast with one of the lady maids.

We hearde from the pulpitt that part of the bell tower at Kingston was destroyed by fire and that one man died of fright when he saw an evil Ghoste, which hadde fled from the flames. And they look to us for alms, Christe save us alle.

### 3 June

The Surgeon hath bene discharged in Norwich. He will not be burnt but he is to be cashiered by Sir John, for bringing Castle Fastolf into disrepute.

Sir William hath bene in the Parliament, now prorogued on accompt of the plague in London and its suburbs, and the need to get the harvest in, and the rumours of riots in the Realme. The Lords are taken up with the affair of Henry of Beauchamp, the King his Playmate in boyhood. The King hath made him King of the Isle of Wight and now makyth him Duk of Warwick. This precedence was disputed by the Duk of Buckingham, whom it displaced. Yet Warwick is sick and set to die, and the title to lapse.

*MEMORANDUM Richard Erle of Warwick did build the south side of Warwick Castle with a fine new tower and offices. He hath a stable of grete size built there of plaster of Paris, at a cost of 500 marks. He hath the fortress of Hanley, 7 miles south from Worcester, new built. He likewise new built and repaired Drayton Basset in the county of Stafford Shire. He had Elmsley Castle new built and restored in Worcester Shire. He hath new built the manor house of Caversham, one mile from Reding. He hath new built the castle of Hanslope barony, 7 mile from Northampton. At Guy Cliff he new founded twain chantries, with priests clept hermits and had a fine lodging built for them. He hath the College and the Chapel where he doth lie, of St Mary, enlarged with a dean, 6 canons and 2 priests. His tomb there hath a hearse and a Wyvern and a Bear. The Wyvern standeth in for the hability of the Christian knight to overcome Satan. The Bear standeth for a Grete Captain, since bear cubs are born unformed and must be licked into shape.*

Sir William saith the Commons are more sad. The festivities for the Queen have done little to raise their Ghostes, though they cause the Cockneys to drink too much, which provideth fuel for the Grete Miasma. *Did not the Roman poet write of bred and circuses*, asks Sir John. For that is what these festivities doth amount to, if anyone is listening to mine own opinion.

*He did. Panem et circenses*, Sir John, saith I.

*Thankee William*, saith Sir William, *but it is not easy to control the Kingis Purse. We made*

*that villain Jack Napes come to the House and explain himself, though. We asked him what he hath done in Fraunce this last yere, for the good, and whether he means peace, and if so, is it peace with honour? For he keepeth everythinge dark and hidden and for all we know, this lovefeast he conducts with the Dolphin is but a cloak for abject surrender, starting with Maine and then, Christ and Mary save us from itt, Normandie. And then Hampton will be stuffed with settlers, scuttling out of the ports of the Duchy.*

*And what doth he say?* asks Sir John.

*Why, he saith he must appease the Frensh, for the King wanteth peace above all thinges. But he protests too vehemently, as might a lady when approached by a gentleman, that he hath no promise made to the Dolphin in the matter of Maine, and that his government stands redy to fight should Charles invade, whether Maine, Normandie or Guienne.*

*Guienne! Do thou conceyve it possible the bastards would invade that too? The Gascons are loyal, thou knows. Sir John could scarcely contain himself, either bodily or in his ghost.*

*The Cockneys cry that Jack Napes hath bought a Queen not worth ten marks a yere, at the price of an entire province. And there are manie in the Commons of like view, though treason may not be spoken in the House. Meanwhile such few reports from Fraunce as we are allowed to see tell us onlie of the Dolphin Charles his preparation for war. We all suspect a pact hath bene made, behind and above the marriage treaty. Yet Jack Napes denies it hotly. And so we keep back the subsidy.*

Sir John said as long as York is in Normandie, all will be well, but he cannot say the same of Maine. And he is like the common soudeours in their distrust of Jack Napes. He conceyves the cat was out of the poke when Jack rode the Dolphin in his captivity and clept him frende.

## 4 June

Venison, worts and almond pudding

In the morning busy writing a bill for Sir John to Thomas Howes to look sharp and see that the ships come to no jepardie.

And after we had finished he saith I can tell by thy silence that thou dislike the Paston proposal. So I have decided because I like thee, and because I know thou wants to please me, thou should marry Margaret Howes, daughter of Thomas.

*Of course he hath little monie but he be a reasonably learned man for a parson and hath not spent his whole life in rural idiocy. Whether he went to the University I know not. Twas not so common in his day as ours. And they say his daughter is a wench, with good childbearing*



After Agincourt

*hips, so there should be increase of lineage in it for thee, as well as for him. And I will make up for the lack of a dowry by giving thee the Hellesdon manor, which should be of value if thou hast ensearched the title properly.*

I missed Jack at this moment, for he had a sharp eye for women. I must make up my mind for myself though. But my Master could tell by my glum what I thought.

*By God his body, boy, do not for the love of Mary, Joseph and Jesus tell me agayne that thou liketh not this proposal. A man should marry, if he be not in Holy Orders, to keep him from unclean thoughts and deeds. What on this Earth can be thy objection this time? For I tell thee she would make thee a good wyff.*

*But can I love her?saith I.*

*He spat. Love? What hath love got to do with it? Thou art man and she is woman. Thou should enjoy what little pleasure there is in it, for a time, and then thou become frendes, if thou be lucky, and it lasts. Indeed it will last, even if thou dost not become frendes, and that is an end on it. Those tales of romance in Frensh bokes are for Frenshemen onlie, and then onlie for their lordings.*

*But I am sure my mother and father knew love.*

*Well they must have had Dame Fortune on their side in deed. Most find those passions fade, thou wilt lern to accept that, sooner as later. Besides, strong love can turn to hate more hastily than steady frendship. Thou hast bene taught to red at the University, more than me, but even I recall what the Roman saith of marriage. That when two people are under the influence of the most violent, most insane, most delusive, and most transient of passions, they are required to swear that they will remain in that excited, abnormal, and exhausting, condition continuously until death do them part.*

I said I didn't know the quotation. It did not sound like any Latin author I knew

*Well here is somethinge from the Frensh poets then. They said Love cannot exert its powers between twain people who are married to each other, for lovers give each other everythinge freely, under no compulsion or necessity but married people are in duty bound to give in to each other his desires and deny themselves to each other in nothingse.*

I said I knew not this French poet nayther. But he went on without regarding me.

*Paston saith if any member of his family were to marry for love, he shouldst arrange for him or her to be visited by the Bishop of Norwich. And if he or she still be unwilling to listen to reason, he would cut them off entirely. But lately, there was one of his sisters who fell enamoured of a bailiff and he forbade it completely. He saith he would not have his sister sell*

*candles and mustard in Framlingham market. But yet she hath persisted in her mad infatuation, despite being beaten once or twice in the week for it, sometimes twice in one day and her head broken in twain or three places.*

But I remember that Sir Andrew Ogard, grete frende unto Sir John, hath married for love and was content. And trewlie, as Master Clanvowe sang

*The God of love, benedicite!  
How mighty and how grete a lord is he!  
For he can make low hertes hi,  
And of hi low, and like for to die.*

## 5 June

We hath bene invited back to St Benet Abbey. The journey on the Bure with the wind behind us is about 15 miles beyond Repps. The distance by roads about the same but it would take longer. Water everywhere. Holes dug for peat filling up on every hand. There were several barges in the train, of which but few kept in the barge house.

*MEMORANDUM The island of St Benet is 760 of my paces from east to west and its width on the north side 300 paces. The length of the Abbey church of Hulme from the east window to the west door, with the choir reckoned in, is 148 of my steps, and the width of the choir and presbytery is 17 steps, and the width of the choir and presbytery is 17 steps. The south aisle built by Sir John is 11 steps wide and 58 steps long from east to west. The Abbey hath a guesthouse and fyshponds. There is no dolegate here, as the monks hath in St Albans and St Edmund Bury, but then those houses do dwarf the towns they bestride. For this place is remote from the habitations of men and small and there are no local men, nayther women, who require the dole. Sir John hath £4,640 11s 8d gold and silver coins and plate, of which over £2,000 is here at St Benet. It is Sir John his wish to be laid to rest alongside his wyff in a chapel which he hath paid handsomely for. He will be put under the new south aisle of the chancel in a place to be known as the Fastolf Chapel. His tomb shall be of marble, inlaid with brasses, and placed before the altar of St Edmund, whose head was restored.*

And I have oft thought it strange that men look on St George as an Englysshe Saint, along with Edmund and Edward. For he was a Roman martyred at Lydda, which is Lod in the Holy Land, though some ignorant conceyve it be Lydd, the town in Kent.

## 6 June

In the barrack they damn this place to buggery. One saith the monastery is set down in a desolate swamp, where it is damp, treeless and lonely. Another saith the very house and Cloister are likely to be flooded for months together and in winter the floods doth freeze and then the place becomes like the wilder ness of Ultima Thule. A third saith vast flocks of crows flock round the gatehouse like harpies.

I find this talk the skyte of the bull. St Benet is a place of grete beauty and tranquillity, ably supported by a family of monks endowed with applicaton if not enthusiastick.

St Benet hath several manors, well run. 500 shepe and 23 cows. The monks can feed off the fysh in the river and the fowl, without eating flesh of cow, sheepmete or swineflesh, if they choose to. There are 25 monks here including the Abbot, not counting servants. The Abbot lives apart from his brethren in a fine house. He is a mitred abbot and so doth attend the Parliament, though rarely.

The diet of these monks is not strict. The Rewl provideth that no animal flesh be eaten. One meal a day, and a light supper before sundown. No brekefast! But there are manie relaxations. The main meals now are much as we laymen hath, except on fyshdays and in Lenten days, and the collations hath become spiced toasts, candied and dried fruits, dripping with honey. But the Abbot sees no harm in this, for the bees are necessary to make the wax for candles.

And what of talking? The Abbot saith *I don't forbid it altogether, though some communities do. In other places it is permitted in Latin onlie. But I see no harm in speke as such, provided it is sober and moderate terms. And if they speke at all, why not in our Englisshe tongue?*

And what of wandering abroad? The Abbot saith the brethren are allowed to visit the infirmary for regular bleeding by the leech monk.

## 8 June

We talked of the monasteries. The Abbot looked at me askance and said he understood I hatte bene in Oxenford at the Schools.

There had long bene a public voice and fame in Oxenford, that there are manie monasteries worse than brothels. But I saith the monasteries were gretely admired by the Gown, as fortresses of God where countless monks offered up an unceasing round of prayer for the benefit of the lost souls in Purgatory.

He looked at me in disbelief.

*And do they say that of all the religious, or onlie of the White Monks?*

*I find that men there do not discriminate between the Black and the White, nor between Grey Friars and Black. It is known that some men will allways stray from the Rewl but as a whole the Orders work for the benefit of All Souls.*

*Amen to that. All the abbeys, of whatever Order, are sanctuaries of prayer, of discipline, of untiring and constant labour for those on Earth and in Purgatory. Those in Hell are beyond our remit. But it has to be said that we Christians in England hath an evil reputation nonetheless, when it comes to the stranger from utter shores.*

*How so, my Lord?*

*I mean, we are held responsible in all other countries for the spread of the heresy of the wretch Wycliffe, Master of your Balliol. Pope Martin hath even written to the Englissh Congregation about the matter, urging it to contribute vigorously to the Holy Expedition agaynest the Hussites and Utraquists in Bohemia. He thought this abominable heresy hath its roots here in England. Planted by Wycliffe, the weed still hath not a few offshoots which will continue to grow if not cut down and burnt. Men continue to write bokes in Englissh, hold schools and spread the vile opinions of him they regard as Master, long after he his bones hath bene dug up and his soul condemned to eternal Hell Fire. And it must be admitted that there are still followers of this Wycliffe, if not in Oxenford, then hiding in the countryside, disguising themselves as bumpkins, and even travailling abroad to Bohemia so as to continue to spread the gospel of the Evil One.*

Sir William pointed out that Parliament hath provided a remedy for all this, and he and Sir John and all in lawful office were continually on the lookout for these villains, and would deal with them when they could, especially here in Norfolk, if they attempted to pass through the ports.

The Abbot looked shocked. Remember it is a matter of Faith, Yelverton, apprehend them at the ports if thou will, but it is for the Diocesan to condemn. Once that is done, ye may burn them as ye will, in accordance with the Statute.

## 10 June

I asked the Abbot about the Visitation and he said it hath not gone badly. The Bishop has not come in person but sent his Commissaries and they hath not hearkened to the petty complaints, such as lack of hay in latrines. Thanks to Sir John for that.

*We certis did well in comparison with the Priory of Norwich. There, they found that the gates of the close were not allways shut at night time, that laymen were not allways shut out of the Refectory, where they sometimes made beasts of themselves, and did I not know that gluttony was the first sign of concupiscence? And the monastery tailor and barber had their wives and families within the close, which was in direct contravention of the Rewl. Things were even worse at Walsingham, a place fit onlie for idle travaillers and sinners.*

After Agincourt

*But, I asked, did the Visitors find nothings at all to complain of here?*

*Well they will allways find somethinge, because they interview every monk in turn, and he can say what he listeth. One saith the Almoner doth not dispense the alms so liberally as he used to do. Another that the yeredays for former abbots are not kept up. A third, that the servants are too familiar. A fourth, that there is no schoolmaster to teche the novices grammar, so the use of Latin declineth. A fifth, that the studious brethren sometimes lack enoughe light to rede and write by in the Scriptorium. And the sacristan hath failed to provide a clock, to regulate the offices.*

*At least there is no football played here?*

*None at all, of any kind, your may rest easie on that.*

I asked the Abbot if he had ever travailled in Fraunce. He said not but he had travailled once in the parts of Almayni. What did he conceyve of the Almayn peoples?

*I find them much as men everywhere; but they despise us all as slovens. For they claim they keep their houses more cleanly. I met one of them, a trader though not one of your Fuggers, who said it was beyond his ken the way we dealt with rushes.*

*Rushes? Do they not have them on the floors of Almaynie?*

*They do but the point of difference is that we change them once a month. Now that would not do for an Almayn. They conceyve that by renewing them so carelessly, the foundation thereof doth remain for yeres, harbouring spittle and vomit, urine of dog and man, beer that hath bene cast forth and remnants of fyshes and sundry filth unmentionable. Why, this Almayn I spoke with claimed that, with the frequent changes of weather he noticed, the rushes made our whole countrie far from wholesome for the human body.<sup>125</sup>*

## 11 June

Sir William told us how King Harry Fifte builded a moated manor house at Kenilworth to celebrate his victory, known as *The Plaisance*, where the court held manie banquets and pageants, and had dalliance, until the time came for the King to go abroad agayne. Despite old Harrys reputation for austeritie, a plaisance is a place made for flirtation with ladies and women, fair and foul.

*But grete news of Agincourt had bene broadcast, by means of bills and proclamations, red out loud by the Shire Reeve in the county courts and marketplaces of each county.*

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<sup>125</sup> Compare the report of Erasmus of Rotterdam on this subject, half a century later.

*Chroniclers, poets, storytellers and songwriters lent a hand. There were those wild celebrations in London of which the Abbot hath told, but allso in manie towns. We were told that the Kingis cause was just, that the Frensh were to blame for the Werre because they had refused to agree to the royal demands, and that God was on our side and all the sacrifice worthwhile.*

*In Parliament the victory was used by ministers of the Crown to raise the revenue for further expeditions. When a session of Parliament was convened, onlie twain weeks after the battle, John Duk of Bedford presided, and the Cardinal, then Chancellor, lavished the most extravagant prayse on the King. Here, I have studied the Parliament Roll*

*God in his grete mercy gave Henry the victory and the Adversary was killed and undone, and it was clerely demonstrated that, by this gracious beginning, his just pursuit of his rights was and is approved by God Almighty*

*The Cardinal pointed out that the King had onlie just begun his work and that the Frensh were still recalcitrant. Parliament must accelerate the collection of the monie granted in 1,414, grant a tenth and a fifteenth and grant the King the tunnage and poundage at generous rates for the rest of his life, though it was careful to say that this was not to be taken as precedent. This was a remarkable step. I can tell you there was no such generosity shewn to Henry the Fourthe.*

*The following yere, in March 1,416, the King attended Parliament in person and the Cardinal pointed out that God hath now delivered his verdict on three occasions, by awarding us the victory on the seas at Scluse in M<sup>1</sup>.ccc.xl. and on the land at Peyters in M<sup>1</sup>.iiij.lviij,<sup>126</sup> when the Black Prince took King John the Good of Fraunce prisoner, and lastly at Agincourt itself in M<sup>1</sup>.iiij.xv. As a result of these three victories, the Englishe have achieved three important objects. Firstly, they hath deprived the Frensh of their chief ports, Calais and Harfeur. Secondly, they hath bene badly infected with fere by the terrible and irreparable disasters befalling them when their men were butchered in those encounters. And thirdly, their puissance hath bene much reduced as a result of their losing their nobles and brave men in all these battles, and especially in that last dred sentence of God at Agincourt.*

The Abbot took up the tale. They all liked to talk of the glory days.

*Holy Church played its part in this spreading of the good news. On 29 October, the Cardinal announced the news of Agincourt in St Paul his Cathedral, the bishops in every diocese and city offered up prayers for the safety and success of the King and his military endeavours and the priests were ordered to do the same in every parish. And the same was done in every monastic house and by both orders of Friars.*

I said I hearde that false rumours had likewise bene spred, I know not by whom.

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~~<sup>126</sup> Worcester got the date wrong here, by a year. The Battle of Poitiers was fought in 1356, not 1357.~~

*Tis true there was was a foreign monastery of Frensh Celestines in Isleworth Manor, where the monks refused to pray for King Harry following the Battle, and which was dissolved by the King on this accompt. But that was the onlie instance of ghostly treachery I have ever hearde of. It verily did seme as if fortune and God smiled on King Harry, as long as he lived; but then of course he died.*

*And hast thou visited his tomb?*

*Of course. The tomb in West Minster Abbey was planned by the Cardinal and is very fine in deed and thou must go there, though thou mayest find thy way barred by foreigners, who make the tour during any trews. There is a sumptuous effigy, tombchest and canopy, and a chantry resembling a miniature building within the main body of the Abbey church. The inscription reads*

KING HARRY, SCOURGE OF THE FRENCH, LIES HERE. HENRY WAS PUT IN THE URN, 1,422. VIRTUE CONQUERS ALL. THE FAIR CATHERINE FINALLY JOINED HIM IN THE YERE OF THE INCARNACION, 1,437.

Yes, for all her adulterous union with that Welshman Tudor.

But Sir William and the Abbot were agreed upon one thing, that the news of Agincourt, so glorious for a time, hath waned after a few yeres onlie. And by the time of Grete Harry's sad demise, to try to build much upon it was like trying to build a castle in the sand. The edifice might look imposing for a while, but it is soon washed away altogether. And Scrope saith that even in the eyes of military men, the victory is sometime seen as like unto Grete Hannibal his victory at the Lake of Trasimene in the parts of Italy. Where it is thought that Hannibale hath killed some fifteen thousand of the Romans, and yet he could not win the Werre in which he was engaged.

## 12 June

Sir John was indisposed in the stomach and spent the day in the Abbey infirmary.

I talked to Scrope of Arithmetic. He hath hearde a different understanding of the duplication of the chessboard. He saith the first point of it is 1 grain of wheat, the 15<sup>th</sup> point is a quarter or 17 gallons. The 20<sup>th</sup> point is a bushel. The 23<sup>rd</sup> is a quarter. The 33<sup>rd</sup> is 1024, a perch. 35 is a hundred. 39 is a barony and 42 a county, and some say the most important point of all. But 47 is a kingdom and 64 is 131072 262143. And so the grand duplication, which is 18,446,744,073,709,551,615 is a Full House of All the Kingdoms. And that is the same numer as the monk of Norwich Priory hath given me.

But what a mish mash of units of measurement, of food and ale, of fiefs and

titles and lordship, which hath nothing to do with the Arithmetic. Some time I know not whereof old Scrope doth speke, or what butt he aimeth at.

We talked of Agincourt. Scrope said King Harry was a grete soudeour but had little conceyte what he was taking up, and remained ignorant thereof even after Agincourt. It was allmost heresy to question King Harrys decisions and judgements, but Scrope was emboldened by the absence of Fastolf, and proposed that Harry was wrong to conceyve we could beat them so easily, and in just a few yeres. God might have shewn his favour at Scluse, Cressy, Peyters and now this Agincourt but the power of the Adversary remained grete, even in the aftermath. The French kingdom could not be beaten by one battle, no matter how grete the victory, as we have learned to our cost.

*Agincourt served to commit us all to a ruinous war, which can onlie end in sorrow. Even now, as our blood and treasure sap away, there are those who continue to conceyve, as Harry did, that the Werre can be won and the mountain climbed by power of the will. A man like Fastolf hath trowd it all his life, and trows it still. The truth is, we should pull our men out from there to morne,<sup>127</sup> or as betimes as may be.*

I asked the Abbot to tell us of the processions in London after Agincourt. It was a favourite theme of his.

*I am pleased thou ask. Yes I was there aand shall never forget it. The citizens of London were used to staging processions – the Mayor and Aldermen paraded through the city several times a yere - but the festivities on this occasion were unusually elaborate. The City fathers spared no expense. When the tower at the entrance to London Bridge was reached, there was seen placed hi on top of it, and representing as it were the entrance into the city jursidiction, an image of a giant of astonishing size who, looking down upon the Kingis face, held, like a champion, a grete axe in his right hand and, like a warder, the keys of the city hanging from a baton in his left. At his right side stood a figure of a woman, not much smaller in size, wearing a scarlet mantle and adornments appropriate to her sex. And they were like a man and wyff who, in their richest attire, were bent upon seeing the eagerly awaited face of their lord and welcoming him with abundant prayse. When the procession reached the cross in Cheapside, there was a mock- castle, a mock bridge and a gatehouse, with: a choir of most beautiful thoung maidens, very chastely adorned in pure white raiment and virgin attire, singing together with timbrel and dance, as if to another David coming from the slaying of Goliath, a song of congratulation. And there I saw on hi*

*A giant that was full grim of sight,  
To teche the Frenshmen courtesy.*

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<sup>127</sup> Tomorrow.



## 15 June

I have to report these monks live with some degree of luxury. Whoever heard of a rustick who was served with 2 lbs of mete and a gallon of ale every day? On feast days, I am told they have 2 to 3 pints of wine. And these monks are paid! A wage for clothes and spices, and fees for chantry duties, yeredays, and funerals, handsomely when Lady Fastolf died. And the so-clept rewl of silence when the monks are in the Refectory. I could hardly hear myself thinke.

The Abbot is oblivious. He conceyves that if the monks do not climb the wall and if women are kept strictly from the Precinct, and if there are no complaints about the fabric, all is well. He doth not count solitary vice as a breach of discipline.

I suppose, as with all priests, one must allways remember the difference between man and office. Just as the Priest doth provide us with the body of our Lord, so doth the Monk sing his Office continually, for the benefit of the pore souls in Purgatory. And one does not cut down a tree because in one yere it doth not produce much fruite.

We hath a redeing from John Mandeville, Knight. The Abbot knows little of the world save St Benet and Almaynie but loves to hear of the far flung places.

*Beside the land of Chaldea is the land of Amazonia, that is the land of Feminye. And in that Rewlme is all women and no man. Not, as some men say, that men may not live there, but for because that the women will not suffer no men amongst them to be their sovereigns.*

*For long time before there was a King in that countrie. And men married, as in other countries. And so befell that the King had war with the nomads of Scythia, whose horse archers slew all the men of the Amazons. And when the Queen and all the other noble ladies saw that they were all widows, and that all the royal blood was lost, they armed themselves and, as creatures out of wit, they slew all the men of the countrie that were left, for they would that all the women were widows as the Queen and they were.*

*And from that time hitherwards they never would suffer man to dwell amongst them longer than seven days and seven nights. Nor that any man child should dwell amongst them longer than he were nourished, and then they sent him to his father.*

*This land of Amazonia is an isle, all environed with the sea save in twain places, where be twain entries. And beyond that water dwell the men that be their paramours and their loves, where they go to solace them when they will.*

And can one trow this tale? Fair Catherine conceyves that men, and women, must be much the same the world over. Yet these travaillers tales incline men to conceyve the opposite, that they are different. And sad to say they allso shew that men the world over are in a perpetual state of war and that manie peoples take for themselves the title of men and refer to the enemy tribe as monkeys onlie.

## 16 June

Sir John saith Dame Fortune smiled not on the Marshal Boucicaut, captured by the Grand Turk at Nicopolis and by us a second time at Agincourt.

MEMORANDUM. This man was son of another marshal of the same name. He was a page at the court of Charles the Mad, and knighted at the age of sixteen, when he fought the Flemings at Roosebeke. He made the voyage to Prussia, around the time the Lithuanians became Christian. He fought the Moor in the Southern parts of Spain. He travailed in the Balkans and the Holy Land. He defeated the most famous Englissh soudeours at the joustings of St Ingelevert, as Master Jack Froissart tells us. And then was captured by the Grand Turk, Bayezid, but, unlike manie of his companions, escaped decapitation and was ransomed. He founded an Order of Knighthood, dedicated to the crafty pursuit of women, and was sent once more with six ships agaynest the Turks of Ottoman. He was governor of Genoa, and fought the King of Cyprus at Famagusta. He was Grand Constable of Fraunce, of the Emperor and of the Empire of Constantinople. And yet he was captured at Agincourt by a common York Shireman.

I asketh what became of this Boucicaut.

*He died six yeres later in York Shire.*

*Did he never try to escape?*

No, he was a man of honour.

*Were there any escapes of those prisoners of Agincourt?*

*Too few to mention since most prisoners could be trusted. They recognised the debt of honour. But an escape makyth for a good story. So it was said that Jacques de Crecky was captured twice, and escaped twice. The first time it was after he was captured by the Percys, in command of a Frensh armie in Scotland. The second time it was after he was captured by Thomas Beaufort in Aquitaine and imprisoned in Wisbech. He re appered as one of the heralds who approached King Harry for a parlay before Agincourt. God damn the man to Purgatory for his cheke.*

I asked about Charles Orliens, cousin to the Dolphin and head of the Arminakes before they were such clept.

*Aye, well, tis true we held that one for twenty-five yere, longer than any of them.*

After Agincourt

*Twenty five yeres! Surely that was contrary to all laws of war? To hold a noble man so long must surely be out of proportion.*

Sir John explained that they all thought that, but there were express orders from King Harry to hold him until the French came to heel, and they never did, either in the field or in the council chamber. And orders must be obeyed, even after the death of him who gives them, if they be a king, with none but a babe to succeed him. Of course, they agreed at Troyes but that was only a faction and did not comprise the Arminakes.

That must have been very hard on Orliens though. I'm surprised he did not learn to howl with the moon.

*Well in my opinion, the French prisoners got what they deserved. And they would have done the same to us, if the shoe had been on the other foot. Before the battle they had a gilded cart in which they planned to take Harry to Paris, and chains for the rest. Remember, they expected to win easily. As Lydgate saith before the battle*

*The Duk of ORLIENS said in haste  
The King of England shall abide.  
Who gave him leave this way to pass?  
I trust that I shall him beguile  
Full long ere he come to Calais.*

*But still, 25 yeres?*

*Orliens did take it hard for some time, tis true, but he found solace in letters. He became a poet and wrote much about sadness and the women he might have had, though I cannot say I care for his verses. For my part, I took all his complaints with salt. Much of them were exaggerated for the benefit of his family in France, to get them to press for his early release. And his dolours did not hold him back with the English ladies.*

*But I have heard the French have constantly complained that he was kept in wild places and was close confined among the barbarians of York Shire.*

*What they meant by that was, he spent a little time in Pontefract. But most of the time he was in the South and had many servants to attend to his needs and could hunt and disport himself as he wished. He had all the respect due to a prince of the blood, trust me. The French do lie when they say he was kept on straw or in dungeons. I remember witnessing an order once for beds, carpets for to cover his bed, curtains, blankets, coverlets, mattresses, and other necessaries fit for a Duk.*

*Why was he ever in Pontefract at all?*

After Agincourt

*He was staying there for the hunting, but his host allowed him to wander abroad once too oft, and there were complaints and a public voice and fame that he might escape.*

*And what happened then?*

*The King ordered that he be kept more strictly for it were better that the Duk lack his desport than we were deceived.*

*That was Harry.*

*But was the Frensh Duk ever kept in the Tower? Methinks I have seen a picture of him there, waving from a window?*

*That is a most deceiving picture. But even the Tower hath apartments as well as dungeons and there is room for exercise there. The man was treated like the Duk he was, at all times.*

## 19 June

We spoke agayne of the Werre. Sir John saith Harry achieved more, after five yeres of fighting, than his grete- randfather Edward had achieved in twenty-five. The Battle at Agincourt thinned the ranks of the Frensh nobility, particularly in the North, and sapped their will to fight at all levels. It enabled us to conquer Normandie twain yeres later. Harry hath all the talents and excelled on every front. Instead of the Greater Gascoigne won by his grandsire, he won the reversion of the entire French kingdom. Such a thinge hath never bene imagined, except by Harry. We occupied a large swathe of Northern Fraunce and even had garrisons in Paris, courtesy of Burgundy. *I know this, because I was military governour of Paris for a time.*

Sir William saith this was all overblown. We killed a lot of men at Agincourt but Harry sent the army home, with onlie Harfleur to call his own. The Frensh were unwilling to bend the knee and they still fought back. Bernard Count of Arminake was now their Constable. He refused to accept the verdict of God, though it was plainly delivered that day. He hated Burgundy, more than he hated us and determined to strike a blow for his faction. He laid siege to Harfleur once more that winter....

*Sir John said thou hast no need to tell me this. I can still remember the cold of that winter siege, even in my bed at Caister. I still say that Agincourt was a smashing victory, if not a knockout blow. Do not forget William, I was there. And when Harry landed in Normandie agayne, we swept through it like the incoming tide at Yarmouth. No port or city or castle held out agaynest us long, and no Frensh captain dared take the field.*

After Agincourt

Sir William saith *John, John, that Conquest of which you bragg took two yeres.*

Sir John saith *it was a war of sieges, William. They take time, even when there is little resistance. And thou must admit that after Agincourt Harry stood at the pinnacle of his career. He hadde shattered the Frensh power before all Europe. Next in line to the Emperour, he was the leader of Christendom.*<sup>128</sup>

Yelverton asked where the evidence was for this? He said it was idle to parade the usual clap and then Sir John then made a list.

*Imprimis, Harry persuaded the Queen of Naples to adopt his brother Bedford as her heir. Item the King of Castile and heir of Portugal were descended. Item his brother of Gloucester married Jacqueline of Hainault. Item he himself married the daughter of the King of Fraunce and Lastlie, the pedigrees of southern and western Europe met in the house of Lancaster, the head of which was thereby common head of all.*

But Sir William closed by saying

*I hath hearde this all before John, and thou knowest it will not wash. A few dynastic ties do not amount to the mastery of Europe.*

Sir John huffed and puffed.

As a trusted servant I thought it right to change the subject. It seemed to me they might come to blows at any drop.

## 23 June, Midsummer

Men will set fires this night.

In the morning busy writing bills for Sir John to William Cole,<sup>129</sup> to hasten the accompts for the manors. I walked with Scrope to his room. When we entered the chamber he seemed agitated. He fixed me with glittering eye and announced

*I have bene working on my tables – looking at the stars as well as the history bokes. I now conceyve that 500 yeres is too long for my political forecasting. 50 would be more apt.*

*And what dost thou then forecast?*

*50 yeres from now there will be a time of peace on earth and plenty. Chinese printing will be*

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<sup>128</sup> Very similar to the judgement of Sir Winston Churchill on Henry V in his *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*.

<sup>129</sup> One of Fastolf's auditors.

*available in the West. Bokes will be printed in Englisshe. And the Portugals will discvoer a New World beyond Atlantis, beyond Cape Bojador and we shall have a new dynasty. And the House of Lancaster is doomed.*

*What, are thou mad, Stephen? It is treason to say this. Keep thy propheices to thyself, or else in the distant future. There was a woman pressed to death for less, not long since.*

*But Scrope saith No William, I have decided thou canst not predict thinges so far ahead. 50 yeres is better then 500. But thinges are moving faster as we speak. What took 500 yeres in the past will now take 50. 500 yeres ago in Fraunce the race of Charles the Grete gave way to the dynasty of Hugh Capet. So it must be here. King Henry is but the shadow of a king, and he is incapable of engendering children, so he will have to be replaced...*

I thought it best to humour him. This was madness liefer than hi treason. He was clerely disturbed, and his talk was very troubling to me.

*Well who is there to replace him Stephen?*

*Why Jack Napes of course. He is the real power in the land. Everyone blames him for our present ills. He is hated as the evil counsellor. But, mark my words, my prophesy is that he will become King in Henry his place. Or if not him, some other strong man who hath commanded in Fraunce as he did. This countrie will not support a Saint as a King. We need a soudeour.*

I am gretely troubled by this wild talk. I had begun to look upon old Scrope as a frende.

## 25 June

To Norwich to the sign of the George, where we treated the maids with prawns and lobsters. And, when it was beginning to grow dark they left me alone with Black Nan, which troubled me. She wanted to shew me her dugs but I contradicted her, though I have seen them shew them before to another, and they are very fine. But in order to be back with my writing, I left before midnight. And next day to Catherine.

I was not expecting the quarrel. We had bene talking of Robin Hood. Catherine asked me where he hath lived, in Nottinghamshire or York Shire.

I said no one was sure. It was all a long time ago. Myself, I favoured York Shire, as did our York Shireman. But the Scots poets sing of him too and there are some he came from Sussex, or Berkshire, or Exeter.

*And when did he live?*

I said no manne knoweth for sure. Some placed him in the reign of William the First and some in the time of Richard Cuer de Lion and some of his brother John. Others agayne in the reign of Edward, second of that name after the Conquest, who travailed into York Shire. The truth of it was that we do not know who Robin Hood verily was, and probably we never shall, though we know he was allways loyal to the King and did the pore men much good, if we trow the minstrels.

Then we spoke of the Vulgate in Englishshe. I firmly trow that she hath hearde a predication agaynest it. She said the first pit of slime is default of faith. And if a man could red the Scripture for himself he would have less faith in what Holy Church tells him. For the Vulgate is a long boke, and manie passages obscure.

But I saith *When thou trow Holy Church, why dost thou trow Holy Church? Dost thou not trow it because it speaks the truth? And how dost thou know that Holy Church speaks the truth, except by the Scripture?*

But she said *what if no Scripture had ever bene written, would there never have bene any Church or congregation of faithful and right believing people? Were there no folk between Adam and Noah that had the true faith?*

I saith there were some but they were very few, for there were few but animals saved in the Arke.

She saith it is more than likely that there were manie people that trowd the truth and had a faith, but followed the flesh and drowned for their sin. *Twas not the Scriptures, that taught man to trow that the faith, which they had recevyed from good men before them, had bene handed down by God. It was the Holy Ghoste, which makyth Holy Church all of one mind, that taught Holy Church this. It is not the Scriptures that make us trow the word of God written in the Scriptures, but it is the Holy Ghoste that guides the members of Holy Church.*

She saith allso of the present time *Thou needst the priest to interpret.*

I saith *The priest hath his place but some laymen are equally able to interpret.*

*That I will never admit – that way error lies – Holy Church and Holy Church, St Peter and St Peter his representatives are the best guide. A man cannot find his way through the thickets alone, nor should we let him.*

*Well have it thy own way* I said – but I was displeased by her too redie acceptance of everything she hath bene told. This was not the way of Reason. God put us on Earth, cleric and layman alike, to enquire for ourselves after the Trewth. Why should our enquiry be limited to means available to our ancestors, when there was now so much more to be known about the World. A travailer in the mind is as adventurous as a travailer to Rome or Jherusalem or Canterbury; and who knows but he can go further, to the Canaries and Holy Land and Ind? And one man his mind and soul is surely as good as that of any other.

*No, no, she said this doctrine that we are all alike will breed an universal destruction, for we are all different. Men should mind their own busyness.*

She said she disliked Master Chaucer his work, or what she had harde of it, for she had never red it or harde it red, because he was allways criticising Holy Church and makyth appere monks and friars and nuns lived like lay people and were corrupt. Why, he did not even distinguish between monks and friars.

I saith twas trew that the Friars hath at one time supplied all the preachers of England, so that they hath become known by some as *pulpit-bawlers*. But still I disliked her putting downe of Master Chaucer, who was the gretest Scrivener and held a mirror up to Life.

*But William thou cannot agree with what he saith. One would conceyve, to red him, that all husbands were unfaithful and all wioes the same, and surely thou cannot agree with that?*

But we had tired of the argument. It left a bitter taste in our souls so that we could not even kiss when we parted. For kissing is the communion of sowles.

## **29 June, the Feasts of Saints Peter and Paul**

Next day she scarce looked at me.

*William tell me thou art no Loller. Nor in thrall to Master Wycliffe, who stirred up the Riflers in the Rifling Time and set men agaynest one another.*

*Of course not. I despise all heretickes but I am curious and see no harm in disputation. I still conceyve nothings wrong in wanting to rede the Bible in Englisshe. For every man in England who can, should steer after the Privy Ghoste of God.*

*And is every man in England able to plot a course? William, Holy Church saith it is wrong and the Parliament saith it is wrong, even to possess bokes in Englisshe. Why is that not enoughe for thee? And we need Holy Church to interpret the Vulgate, which otherwise may be a Mass of contradictions, even for those who can red.*

She was hard, but then she softened.

*And thou art running such terrible risks, my dere.*

I could see she was making a move toward me but I kept on with my damned logic, I know not why.



*Men of learning can be relied on to interpret contradicions. And not all men of learning are nowadays priests. There is manie a man who learns University reding who entereth not the priesthood.*

And agayne we parted badly.

On returning home to Caister, I took comfort in the tavern. No wenches there this evening, not even the meretricious kind as would have entertained pore Jack. I paid Randolf his wyff 2d. But later on the Surgeon arrived. To my surprise he is not bitter agaynest me. He tells us how he got the better of his interrogator, as he conceyveth.

*Being in the prison I was brought before the Bishop of Norwich, who asketh me to conceyve, in the bowels of Christ, that I might be mistaken. He saith to me to swear that I would forsake all the opinions which the sect of Lollers holdeth, and that I must reveal to him the names of all those men and women who hath declared these false doctrines to me.*

*And I saith, Sir, if I consented to do thus as you have rehearsed to me, I should disclose the names of full manie persons indeed. But I saith that in his time Master Wycliffe was holden of full manie men the most learned man in the University of Oxenford and he was known by manie as a passing ruly man and an innocent in all his living.*

*And he asked me if I had said openly that the sacrament of the altar after the consecration was material bred onlie and that images should in no wise be worshipped, and and that men should not go on pilgrimages and that priests had no title to tithes. And the bishop saith to me, Is this wholesome law to each among rude soldiers?*

*And I saith to him, Sir, I am ashamed on behalf of those that hath told thou these thinges for I never preached nor taught these matters nayther privily nor openly. But then his clerk produced a roll on which it was written that someone very close to him in Castle Fastolf had said all these thinges were true. And then I knew it was the Physician who had denounced me and vowed he would pay for his crimes in heaven.*

*And when he asked me about the Mass I said Sir St Paul was a grete doctor of Holy Church, and he clept it bred that was broken. And I said Sir as I understand it, there is no difference between this Transubstantiation as the Church techeeh it and that Consubstantiation that Master Wycliffe had argued for. And if there is a difference it passeth my understanding and is a matter for the Schoolmen of Oxenford and somethinge I have never busied myself to know.*

*And he said, the difference is that with the former, there is a miracle, performed by the Priest, and with the latter, there is no miracle, but a ceremony onlie and the Priest is no longer necessary. And if the Priest is no longer necessary then nayther is Holy Church.*

And I said

*Thou said all these thinges and thou art still here, with thy flesh still on thy bones?*

*Well the bishop cannot burn a man except for clere heresy. And I conceyve I did convince him that what he calleth Lollery is in my eyes merely a yearning for a purer church, which manie of the Churchmen doth yeren for.*

*How didst thou this acheyoe?*

*He asketh me what I hoped for and I said Re Formation of manners. I said the world is full of them that will waste the goods that God hath sent them in pride of the world and lusts of the flesh. And goen to the tavern and to the brothel and playen at the dice, walking long anights and swearing fast and drinking and chattering too much, scorning, backbiting, japing, flattering, avaunting, lying, fighting and being bawds for their fellows and living all in sin and in vanity. And all these be held good fellows!*

*At this the Bishop agreed and said the whole world was a foul stinking muckheap and every man his body was a sack full of filth, deriven from an unclean act of his parents. And true nobility was not in heraldry and descent of the body but in learning of mind and Ghoste. And for himself he would choose a cadaver tomb like Archbishop Chichele, when his time came, to prove his opinion. But I was deeply mistaken about ways and means to achieve what I aimed for.*

*And so he let me go with a reprimand, which I agreed to.*

*Then in fine thou hast agreed to recant!*

*Well, yes, for when it comes to it, I am no more anxious to roast like an ox than the next man. But I mean to settle with the Physician, for what he did...*

*I know not whether, or how, to warn the Physician.*

## **30 June**

*The gatekeeper brought a bill from Catherine.*

*Unto William Worcester be this bill delivered.*

*William, I recommend me unto thou full heartedly, desiring to hear of thy welfare, which I beseech Almighty God long for to preserve unto his pleasure and thy hearts desire. I am fully sorry for our quarrel. And whatever I said is onlie out of love for thee. And if it pleaseth thee to hear of my welfare, I am not in good health of body nor of heart, nor shall I be till I hear from thee. For no creature knows what pain I endure.*

*But if thou love me, as I trust verily that thou dost, thou will not leave me. And if thou command me to keep me true wherever I go, indeed I will do all my might thee to love and never anyone else. And if my frendes say that I do amiss, they shall not stop me from*

*doing so. My heart me bids evermore to love thee truly over all earthly thinges. And as for our quarrel, forget it, thou art entirely foryeven and have nothinge to apologise for. How could I suspect thee, sweet William, of evil heresy?*

*Wherefore, if that thou couldst be content with my por persone, I offer it to thee and would be the merryest widow on ground. And remember too William, that I hath bene married before and know whereof men speke when they talk of those ertly delites which Holy Church rejects as unclean sinful, even when performed between man and wyff. And so I know, better than thee, that love hath not yet run its course between us. Let our thirst for one another one day be quenched.*

*But if thou think yourself not so satisfied or that thou might have much more good than my pore person, take no more labour upon thyself but let it pass and never more be spoken of though I shall allways love thee, my swete William.*

*No more to thee at this time, but the Holy Trinity have thee in keeping. And I beseech thee that this bill be not seen by any earthly creature save onlie thyself. And this bill was written with full heavy heart, in case ye should even now reject me.*

*Thy trew lover and bedewoman,<sup>130</sup> Catherine.*

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<sup>130</sup> A bedeman or woman is one who prays for another.

# XI

## 1 July

IN THE MORNING, busy writing a bill for Sir John to Thomas Howes about the manor of Titchwell and to speed the answer of his bills. This morning pore Scrope was found wandering and raving in the Outer Court, naked as on the day he was born. He was shouting about how somebody was going to steal his Epistle, though some thought he talked of his Pisser. He was taken to the infirmary, chained up in a corner filled with straw and yeven some bred and water.

Sir John hath asked the Physician and the Chaplayne to examine him and report.

## 2 July

We hear that the Frensh ambassadors have rejected entirely any conceyte of the Dolphin their King recognising Englishe rewl in Normandie ever, on any terms, or any cession of territory there. They are adamant on this point, and obstinate and insulting in their demeanour, as if they know they are the masters now. Sir John saith, with this, all foolish appeasing hopes of peace are at an end. Though some will counsel craven surrender. For him, it onlie remains to renew the Werre. But can we now afford this, having pawned the kingdom to obtain the wretched marriage with Frensh Meg?

And can I finish this wretched boke Sir John doth want? In deed I was not sure I could. I told him I had scarce begun. He was not very content. He said I had agreed. All would be well with us just as it would be in Fraunce. We would be going back there before long, he felt sure, whatever the cost and then all would be well.

He saith it is all still possible if onlie we are serious about Werre, like the Italians. Look at the monie the Lombards spend in their adventures, and the Venetians. And look at the Grand Turk. His soudeours are threatening the City of Constantine. These countries doth thrive on Were, and so hath England in the past.

So shall we so agayne, mehopes. Onlie that way can we restore good worship and dignity.

But all this talk and emotion of Werre is not for me. I have seen a man who was a warrior but hath turned to the way of Peace and I like what I now see of the Marquess and his designs. And my own brief encounters with violence have left me exhausted in Ghoste as well as wounded in body

But it is all self defence with Sir John, defence of himself and his conduct, defence of countrie and home. He trows the Dolphin King Charles will not rest till he hath taketh Normandie and Guienne and, after that, the Englishe Isles of Normandie and Calais, and after that gentle England, mother to us all.

I found it difficult to speak in the face of such a torrent. I said I was not sure I agreed with him, either about Fraunce or about the boke or the causes of our present discontents.

He conceyves the days of chevalrie and cavalry are at an end and now we face the age of infantry, when the commoners shall rewl and the Rifling Time return. I ask myself, if that is so, why Duk Philip of Burgundy hath founded his Order of the Golden Fleece and why king Rene doth found his Order of the Crescent? These men do not expect a decline in courtesy. And if we had strong leaders, nor we need fere the same in England.

Silvio had it aright. Each age doth both bemoan the decline of grene age and yet hanker for the golden times when they were young. If a man were to look deep into his bokes, all were plain. In Geoffrey of Monmouth, in the romances of Charles the Great, nay even in the Erliest poems of the Saxons, men weep for the golden time of yore.

### **3 July, the Feast of St Nun**

The Physician reports that sometimes Scrope apperes to be in a very low melancolie desponding way and other times he is hi and flighty. He is no natural born idiot nor is he touched with the moon. His humours must be out of balance and he must be bled.

Sir John saith he was not interested in the theory and was not sure that bleeding would help the fellowe. The Physician saith he would then commend insane powders – green and grey – to open the bowels and bring forth the vomit. Music might help. For raving madness he hath hearde that a man should keep a cup filled with snow on his head for twain or three weke. But Summer hath come in, and there is no snow. If we were in some parts of York Shire, we could set the patient with his head under a grete waterfall, so long as his strength would bear, but there are no waterfalls in Norfolk. Why not try eating apples for a month?

Which was as much as to say, if it were not bleeding, then he hath no clere notion of what to do.

The Chaplayne saith madness was oft a punishment for sin. He would

recommend fasting and prayer for all of us, or else whipping or exorcism for Scrope. Sir John found this also not to his taste.

Then I was asked what I thought as having bene much in Scrope his company. I asked for clemency, since the man was quite rational, and even cute, not long before. I did not conceyve it was a case for corporeal punishment or exorcism.

Sir John saith he was not so sure. He thought Scrope would have benefitted from more beating when he was young, and perhaps that way lay the remedy even now. He had allways bene wayward and now he was flighty. He asked me of what Scrope did talk lately

*He talked of how in 50 yeres there will be a time of peace on earth. Of how Chinese printing will be available in the West, but bokes will be printed in Englisshe. And the Portugals will discover a New World, larger than Atlantis. And of how the Grand Turk will lord it in the City of Constantine.*

Therefor, saith Sir John, *he hath clerely taken leave of his senses. I recommend whipping but not yet. For now, let him lie on straw and have those vomiting and purging drafts of yours, Master Physician. But change the straw oft, else the whole castle will reek overmuch of skyte and bile.*

## 4 July

After Mass I spoke with the Chaplayne as to the nature of the miracle he had just performed. He semed bemused.

*It is a miracle he saith but one performed every day, in thousands of parishes throughout all England, sometimes several times a day, and required by some faithful in their testaments to be performed a thousand times, as betimes as possible after their deaths. I am surprised thou art surprised by it.*

But what was the nature of the transformation he did wreak?

*William, verily, thou shouldst have more sense than to question that. Does thou not know there is a Loller or two burnt every month for just this kind of curiosity?*

I saith I knew that they are burned, but I thought it was more for their possession of Englisshe bokes. He saith no, it was oft because some of them doth appere to trow – incredible as it may seme - that the bred doth not become the body of Christ and the wine doth not become his blood, but all is symbol onlie, as in an ale-pole outside a tavern.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> A pole was commonly placed outside public houses and taverns to indicate that they sold ale.

*What hath this to do with ale-poles?*

*Why some of the Lollers doth say in their ravings that, as the ale-pole signifieth that there is ale to sell and yet we know there is no ale in the pole, so is the sacrament of the altar. There I have said it now, I had better go to confess for shame and thou hadst better do the same. And twere better that nayther of us spoke of this agayne.*

I spoke with John Paston. I bowed when we met but he shook my hand, which I liketh not. I conceyve I shall allways remember his words. He saith

*The age of Master Froissart is gone, William, for all thy fondness for his tales. There is no chronicler now living who at all compares with him. Besides we live in an age of monie. Thou mayest well accept this. But I know the times. Stick by me, my Master, and thou might become a rich man. My father hath made more monie from the law and I from the cloth of Worstead than ever Sir John made from his Warre and his prisoners taken in Fraunce. This fine Worstead cloth is like silk, and men all over Flanders and Italy buy it for the glory of Norfolk.*

I conceyve he means to have Castle Fastolf for himself. He cares not for Fastolf Place in Southwark. That can be gyven to Holy Church for all he minds. He gives good counsel but it comes at a price.

The scrote asks me to be more careful of Sir John. He saith he is the best of men, in the estimation of all Norfolk gentlemen save Jack Napes and those of his affinity. But he hath grown old. He questions and disputes with his frendes, and is never answered nor satisfied but according to his wilfulness, for it suffices not our simple wits to assoile his soul. And therefor I ask thee to be patient with him and hang at his girdle daily.

I saith I hath bene hanging at his girdle for the best part of my life.

## 5 July

Basset spake of the secrets of women. He said the greter pleasure in duplication and appetite belongs to them because Matter doth desire to take on form. A woman, being but an imperfect human being, desireth to come together with a man who is more perfect for the imperfect desireth to be perfected. Allso orgasm was an indication of the emission of the female seed during duplication. Double pleasure was better than single. In men pleasure comes from the emission of the seed but the woman gets pleasure from both the emission and the reception. Hence of course any woman who conceyves must have taken pleasure. Therefor there be no rape if she becomes pregnant thereby. Allso the female seed accumulates and is onlie expelled

once a month, hence the pleasure increases as it accumulates. The pleasure of Man might be more intense, but with Womans it is the more extensive.

*I do not know whether to beleve any of this stuffe.*

## 6 July

Talke with Sir John as to Caister. He told me he hath thought long and hard for manie yeres what to do with the Castle and had much disputation with John Paston as to ways and means. It is his wish that it be gifted to Holy Church for a chantry college, but that doth need a licence in mortmain and Paston is the local expert in such matters.

I asked why he wishe so much to have a chantry college, rayther than give all away to St Benet or some stricter Order, or endow a college at Oxenford or Bridge of Cam. He saith he had three reasons for his choice.

*Firstly, he wanted 2 schools of the Latin grammar, for Norfolk boys. He regretted the fact that he had so little himself in the way of formal learning. He therefor wanted to endow a techeer of grammar, the prerequisite for the priesthood, but allso for all forms of hier education. He wanted to give some few other Norfolk boys the opportunity of having the same start in life as I had receyved but not he.*

*And then he shared the concerns as to how chantry priests in Norfolk spent their time when they were not singing Masses. It was all too easy for them to give themselves up to ease and idleness. He attributed this to the fact that the priests in question lived in the world, eating and passing the night in different places. In these days a scandal oft arises from clerks and women dwelling together, and from the too grete frequency of them at and in houses gretely suspected. He doth conceyve that it would be much easier to reform the morals of chantry priests, to take away this disgrace or scandal as far as in us lies, if they were safely lodged within the shelter of a Colledge.*

*And lastly, there was another reason. The Colledge should become, not merelie a home for chantry priests, but itself a kind of enormous chantry, for the benefit of its founder. He wanted 500 Masses said as hastily as possible after his death, so that his soul might be more mildly dealt with in Purgatory. And of course there might be some prayers to be said for Dame Millicent and Scroopy.*

## 7 July

I have noticed the peat quarries filling up, to the North of the Caisters. They say tis because of rising sea levels and the declining market for peat after the Pestilence.

I came across a cadaver floating in that section of the moat nearest the Lane. It was the Physician bloated as an old masty hound that hath been spoiled by his



Maister. We thought he might have slipped and fallen, hitting his head and being impotent to rescue hymself from the water. But when we pulled him from the water for burial, he had bene cut in various places as with a scalpel. Yet we buried him anyway without calling on the Crowner. And Sir John must now find both new Surgeon and new Physician. And the men must rely on the horse leech for the while. Which be a grete Pity.

Sir John doth not like to dwell on calamity. He prefers to talk still of the Werre, despite our present discontents.

He saith I must consider the arguments in favour of Peace. I saith I was not sure what these arguments were. He explaineth them as follows

*FIRST Fraunce is the ancient home of chevalrie and the gretest nacion in Europe. It hath repeatedly and stoutly defended Christinity in all continents. Our king onlie started to touch for the Kingis Evil after he saw that St Louis of Fraunce did so, but the Frensh kings had done that thing for centuries, showing their holy power derived from Christe his ministry. The Holy Wars were almost entirely a Frensh endeavour and our contribution was negligible. The grete Frensh monarchy will recover the quicker than us from any adversity, since it is the heir to the Empire of Rome the Grete and Charles the Grete.*

*SECOND King Edward, third of that name after the Conquest, first made claim to the Frensh throne but the claim is absurd and not somethinge his countriemen would want him to pursue if they had any say in the matter. Moreover even his claim to the Duchies without liege homage doth not stand up in any court of chevalrie. All other duchies do homage to a king and his ancestor Henry the Second heir to the founder of Anjew was happy to do so, as did Henry the Thirde. All this is well known amongst all learned Englisshe men; but they cannot speak their mind.*

*THIRD Fraunce is mighty. Englisshe men cannot comprehend this but one Frensh province is as big as England and there are manie provinces. And all the chevalrie of England was derived from that of Fraunce at one time or another. But the Englisshe have a serious shortage of knights at the present and have had for manie a yere. That is the onlie reason they resort to the use of common archers, whose day must end when the gunnes be improved.*

I was quite shocked by alle this. Did he take any of these old arguing points seriously? If he did, why hath he fought the Frensh in manner enthusiastickal all his life? If he did not, why put them to me with such vim?

After Agincourt

He laughs. *Of course it is all nonsense. To take one point alonel, as for the width and bredth of the Frensh kingdom, it is much exaggerate. Their monarchy has allways bene in the North, round Paris, since the time of Hugh Capet. He who holds Paris holdeth the rest. And hold it we did, for nigh on sixteen yere.*

But lost it agayne.

*We onlie lost it through Burgundian treachery.*

But I thought we onlie gained it in the first instance with Burgundy his help.

*Details, details, boy, for dullards to dwell on. I can refute every point of the argument for Peace, but I still want you to do the boke, because I know thee for a better writer. But thou must need the argument contrariwise.....*

Then without warning, he hit me.

*By the way, didst thou say thy Boke was nearly finished?*

## 12 July

By courtesy of Dame Fortue, I met Silvio agayne in Norwich when I was not attending. And he on his way to Walsingham. This man places trust in me. He brought out from his chest a most curious map, bought from a Friar. This sheweth a land marked as Wineland, far to the West in the Ocean beyond Iceland, with an inscription that this region was visited by the Heathen Danes long ago. I saith this land was not mentioned nayther by John Mandeville nor by Brother Ranulf Higden. And Silvio saith, nay, nor is it mentioned by Ptolomaeus or any of the Arab writers. And yet he conceyve it no forgery.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> In 1965 the British Museum and Yale University presented the so-called 'Vinland Map' to the world, claiming it was a manuscript dating from around 1440. More recently scholars have conclusively, that the map is a fake. The reference here to a map showing the position of Wineland or Vinland therefore presents a fresh puzzle. Could this be the discredited Vinland Map, or a different, but genuine medieval map, showing the same geographical feature? Or another forgery?

We talked of Harry and Agincourt. I saith in England he is regarded as the most famous soudeour in Christendom, or was.

He saith they hath scarcely hearde of Harry Fiftte in the parts of Italy, where all men can conceyve of now is the Werre between Milan and Venice in the grete plain of Lombardy, or the Werre between Aragon and Anjew in Naples and Sicily and the threat posed by the Turk in the East. This quarrel of ours over a claim to some Duchies in Fraunce is of little import to them. And Queen Margaret her father is well known there, but onlie as the pretended King of Naples, not as a Duke bidding to recover an obscure province on the Loire from Englishe Rewl.

But I said our Kings were anointed by God, and were not usurpers like the tyrants of Milan and our King claimed allso to be the Rewler of all Fraunce.

He saith the Kings of Fraunce had bene anointed by God since the time of Clovis the Frank. And had allways bene in the forefront of Holy Christendom and the Crusade.

I saith our Harry had vowed to crush the Turk if onlie he could bring Peace to Fraunce.

*And when ever did bring Peace to Fraunce?*

*He would have done so whenever the Frensh had fully recognised his just claims.*

*So he proposed to bring Peace through War?*

I saw the problem. The man was no simpleton and I wished for Sir John by my side. He knew the case so well, and put it so forcefully.

He asked if we suffered from brigandage, which was a great problem throughout all the parts of Italy.

I said it was a problem too in Englishe Normandie.

He asked if the brigands there were Frensh or Englishe, or of both kindes.

*Why there may be some few Englishe brigands in the garrisons but mainly it is a problem among the Frensh. They fight unfairly and attack us by stealth. My lord of Bedford hath hanged a good manie, as did Warwick and now the Duk of York who is Lieutenant.*

He asked if I was familiar with the story of Alexander the Macedonian, who captured a pirate, after his conquests in Persia. I said not

After Agincourt

*Alexander saith to the pirate How durst thou molest the seas?*

*A just question saith I.*

*And the pirate saith to Alexander How darest thou molest the whole World?*

Agayne I wished for Sir John to reply. Then he moved the ground, to my relief.

He asked if I thought it harmless for men to translate the Vulgate into Englishhe, without authority of Holy Church, when there had bene so manie burnings amongst the vulgar. I said I knew not but I respected the power of the Word.

He saith the Word is important but it is not everything, for there is Ghoste also, which moveth the translator. And this is known by manie of the best Church men in England, as Pecocke of St Asaph. Allso much might be lost in the translation. Per exemplum, *In the beginning was the Word*. Now Latin *verbum* is Englishhe *word*. But the Greke for the same word word is *logos*, or *λογος*. He drew it. And that meant word but allso reason, order, and logic. And he saith that the four ancient Councils of the Church, at Nicaea, the City of Constantine, Ephesus and Chalcedon were not less to be honoured and revered than the four holy gospels. For in them, as on a corner stone, the structure of the Church is raised, and in them the rule of the good life and manners consists. And Jerome saith that whoever understands or expounds the Scripture otherwise than the meaning of the Holy Ghoste requires is an undoubted hereticke, to be cut off from the body of the Universal Church as rotten flesh.

I asketh him if he knew the Greke language. He said not but there be manie scholars of Constantinopolis now in the parts of Italy who teche it. And if the Turk should take the great City, there may be a great manie more.

We talked of old men and of young.

He saith most commonlie it happeneth, that young men be wrapped in a sensual love, which is a very rebel agaynest reason, and therefor they make themselves unworthy to enjoy the favours and benefits which love bestoweth upon his true subjects, nayther in love feel they any other pleasure, then what beasts without reason do, but with much more grievous affliction. But after men grow old, if they reserve in their cold heart the fire of appetites, and bring stout reason in subjection to feeble sense, it can not be said how much they are to be blamed. For like men without sense they deserve with an everlasting shame to be put in the

number of unreasonable living creatures, because the thoughts and ways of sensual love be far unfitting for ripe age.

For that matter, as my master could no doubt tell me, voluptuous delights led by sensuality were clene contrary to the exercise and bearing of arms at any age, though with young men we have to allow for the fire in their bellies and stones.

I sighed for his wisdom but I saith these opinions would not be well recevyed in the barrack. There every man trowth that the possessing of this beauty, which the Philosopher prayseth so much, without the possessing of the body, is but a fucking dream. I confessed too that I had bene taught in grene age that all duplication with women was unclean and to be avoided and duplication with men was without more Eternal Damnacion.

He saith this doth shew the unwisdom of treating everythinge in the Testaments as if it were literal truth and the importance of the Ghoste in translation, as well as the Word. For if every man took the whole Testaments as literal truth then the human race would never reproduce itself. And much of the Philosophy of the Grekes would be but prayse of Sodomy. And perhaps I do begin to see what he means about the higher Art of translation, that the Church could well impart but will not. And the case for kepeing the Testaments in Latin until that be done.

This man semeed so good and so wise, that I opened up my heart to him. I said I was caught on the horns. To marry Margaret Howes as my master listeth and proposeth, or woo the widow Gladman, whom I love. I cannot conceyve of a third way in my life unless it is that found in the *Ancren Rewl*.<sup>133</sup>

*Do you love this widow Gladman?*

*She is all womandhood to me now and I cannot find it in my heart to love another. Like the pagan goddesses she demandeth submission.*

He smiled at me with the light of knowledge in his eyes.

*Let us not talk of pagan Gods and Goddesses. What doth your confessor say?*

*To marry Margaret.*

*And what doth Sir John thy master say?*

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<sup>133</sup> *Ancrene Rewl* is an anonymous guide for anchorites or hermits, written in English in the early 13th century. Worcester meant that he might simply withdraw from the world altogether.

After Agincourt

*The same, of course*

*And what doth thy heart say?*

*It sings to me of Catherine, night and day. And the same said my man Jack, before his murder.*

*Didst thou value his opinion?*

*In this matter, yes*

And then he said a thinge most surprising. He said if he were of my age agayne, he would listen to the singing of the heart.

*Even if the song were the Siren song of Ulysses?*

*Even if it were that old Siren Song. For, unlike Ulysses, we cannot be sure, if we ignore the call, that we will come home safe to a better harbour.*

*Do you counsel me to follow that course?*

I do.

*But no priest, nor no layman in England would tell me to do this!*

*Dost thou then take me for an Englissheman? .*

And he smiled that knowing smile of the Italian sunshine.

*You understand but little in England. That is one of the reasons why I oppose the translation of the Testaments into your Englisshe tongue, at least without the blessing of Holy Church. The present Pope will never allow it, by the way. Nor would I, if I were Pope.<sup>134</sup>*

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<sup>134</sup>Enea Silvio Bartolomeo Piccolomini (1405 – 1464) was elected Pope in 1458. He is the only Pope who is known to have kept a diary. He came from Corsignano near Siena, since re-named Pienza in his honour.

## 13 July, Relic Sunday

Silvio doth concede that England though small is a well governed countrie, and there are writers - even in the parts of Italy - who aver it is the best governed land in the world. He hath clerely red widely on the topic.

*England hath bene one kingdom near 600 yeres and no one hath ever sought to dismember it. Here you have an unchallenged dynasty and the lands of the grete ones are spred around the countrie. You have few overmighty subjects, and no one doth try to breke away but each wants the rule the whole. You have a Parliament for the whole kingdom in which Lords and Commons both take a part. So rebellion on that account is unnecessary.*

*Tis true you are given much trouble by the Irish, Scots and Welsh, who will forever resent your occupation of the best of their land. But you have an ancient Church with strong links to Rome and have bene free of heresey until recent times. Een then you have done your best to suppress this wretched Lollardy. But the madness hath now infected Bohemia.*

*You have had manie saints. St Boniface, who converted the Old Saxons; St Edmund, who was so cruelly butchered by the Heathen Dane; St Dunstan, who repaired the damage they did; St Stephen Harding who hath founded the White Monks, though the Frensh do pretend it was St Bernard of Clairvaux. And St Thomas a Becket, whose pilgrimage ranks second onlie to that of Rome. But you have not had manie Saints amongst you in recent yeres.*

*I said My Lord, I hesitate to correct you in point of religion, but we have had a goodly number, despite the Frensh capture of the Papacy in Avignon. There hath bene Edmund of Canterbury, and Richard of Chichester and Thomas of Hereford. And there are others who would have bene Saints, if the Frensh Popes had not blocked their suits, as Grosseteste of Lincoln, Cantelupe of Worcester, Winchelsey of Canterbury and Dalderby of Lincoln.*

*He was on the rear foot now. Art thou sure these candidates for sainthood were all blocked by the Frensh? Grosseteste lived and died an hundred yere before the Babylonian captivity at Avignon.*

Well, I was not going to dispute the Saints with a man such as he, even when they were Englisshe. But tis trew the Frensh had allways done their best to thwart us in this, as in every other sphere.

## 15 July, St Swithun his Day

Swithun was an Anglo-Saxon bishop of Wynchester and subsequently patron saint of Wynchester Cathedral.

*St Swithun his day if thou dost rain  
For forty days it will remain*

And the cathedral at Wynchester was before the time of the consecration cleft the temple of Dagon in the era of the pagan people.

Master Ralph Hoby has writ to offer a booke, which is the *Art of Love* of Naso.<sup>135</sup> He asketh in return for a copy of Tully on *Old Age*. But Naso is full of animadversion upon the unclean act and how to improve the sensuality thereof. Whereas Tully is pure philosophy, so I counsel to keep it. And Sir John doth accept.

## 18 July

We hearde that a grete Frensh embassy, announced by the Marquess, arrived at Calais on 2 July, a Friday and were met by Garter King of Arms. They crossed over to Dover on 3 July. On the Sunday 4 July they proceded to Canterbury where the Archbishop, the bastard Stafford, asked them to officiate on the morrow at the festival of the translation of St Thomas a Becket, to which he consented.

The following Friday 9 July, which was a fysh day, they proceeded to Rochester but could not be lodged in the city, which was unhealthy and where the water was bad, so they lodged in some village nearby.

The Marquess arranged an audience with the King and the Frensh entered London on 14 July. On the Bridge were the mayor and 60 citizens, in scarlet furred with martin. The companies, in their liveries, were in the streets as they passed. Lord, what this policy of appeasing the Frensh doth cost us

This embassy was headed by the Archbishop of Rheims and the Count of Vendome. This Count was captured at Agincourt, by Sir John Cornwall, later Lord Fanhope, and held captive some yeres. The story is told in Fraunce that he escaped from the Tower of London and that, when he hath returned home, he founded a procession to commemorate his deliverance.

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<sup>135</sup> Publius Ovidius Naso (43 BC – 17 AD), better known to us as Ovid.



But I trow none of this. For one, the Tower is impregnable. For a second, Sir John saith his ransom was fixed at 46,665 gold crowns. But the Count then became entitled himself to the ransom of an Englishe nobleman, captured at Bogey,<sup>136</sup> where Prince Thomas was killed and Somerset and Huntingdon were captured. And a deal was done. This semes a mickle more likely to me.

## 20 July

I recevyed a bill from Catherine, as from her manor of Ormesby, delivered at the gatehouse as usual. She said that Moleyns had evicted manie of her tenants there and replaced them with men of his own; and she hath taken up residence in a mansion within that place and fortified it.

She said that the Moleyns bailly, Windham, was like to try to reclaim possession of the mansion from her so she hath made grete defences within the house. She hath made bars to bar the door crosswise and loopholes at every corner of the house out of which to shoot, both with bows and handgunnes; and the holes that hath bene made for the handgunnes are barely knee hi from the floor but five such holes have bene made. No one could shoot out of them with longbowes.

She asketh me to prevail upon my master for crossbows and windlasses to wind them and crossbow bolts, for she thought such habiliments of Warre must be in plenty at Caister, gyven Sir John his Fame as Master of Bedford his household. And said she would if possible like to get twain or three short pole-axes to keep indoors, and as manie leather jackets as I could arrange. And she sendeth her love.

I was astonished by her boldness; but one could not help but admire it. I was sure in that momet that she was the best general for me and I determined to help her.

Sir John was willing to oblige on one condition, which he would apprise me of. He got the men to prepare a cart, stuffed it with habiliments and gave orders for it to be sent with Basset, his best man, as he clept him, forthwith. And they set forth.

Then, having made his dispositions, he returned.

*So here are my terms. Thou must stop prevaricating and marry Margaret Howes.*

I was left without the power to speke. It was not right that he should press me thus, but what could I do? Leave pore Catherine to fend for herself?

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<sup>136</sup> Baugé.

## 22 July, St Mary Magdalen her Day

When he knew he was dying, Harry sent for his confessor and his Chaplayne – not the snivelling author, I conceyve - and ordered them to chant the seven penitential Psalms. And when they came to *Benigne fac, Domine*, where mention is made of the walls of Jherusalem, he stopped them, and saith aloud, that he hath fully intended, after he hath wholly subdued the Rewlme of Fraunce to his obedience, and restored it to peace, to have conquered the kingdom of Jherusalem, as the Lion Heart hath nearley done, if it had pleased the Creator to have granted him longer life.

Sir William said this was mere words, a deathbed promise, easily said! Yet men say Harry is a Worthy to rank with Godfrey de Bouillon.

Sir John saith dreams of a vaster enterprise filled the soul of grete Harry all his life. He loved to rede of Godfrey and cherished the hope of a croisade which should beat back the Turk and agayne rescue the Holy Land from foul hands. Nor was the enterprise merely an idle dream in the hands of a practical warrior and rewler like Harry.

Sir William said truth is, Harry his record as a Crusader contrasts very poorly with that of Richard Lion Heart, and for that matter with the Almayn Emperor Sigismund, who fought both Turk and hereticke all his life. Even so, we are in mortal jepardie. First there was the humiliation of Nicopolis, where our Western Christian army was crushed, then there was Varna where the Eastern Christians were shattered. Now the City of Constantine is threatened and the Turk threatens to take all Europe, to add to his dominions in Asia.

Sir John saith

*Now that is where thou art wrong. Constantinopl is impregnable. It hath a series of walls the like of which no man hath ever seen. They say they they are 35 miles long, 20 feet hi and 15 foot thick.*

*What, all the way round? Saith I.*

And Sir William pointed out that the Venetians had stormed and sacked Constantinopolis in 1204, though admittedly by a trick, liefer than a fair escalade.

*Do not lecture me on the taking of towns! Besides, the Turk hath tried before to take all Europe and was beaten back. He allmost took the Kingdoms of Spain at one time but now he is thrown therefrom, save for his hole in Granada, and the Portuguese hath now taken Ceuta in Africa.*

*Africa! When did they do that?*

*In the same yere as Agincourt.*

*And why did we not hear of this in England?*

*Methinks that is clere. It would cast too long a shadow over King Harry and his victory.*

## 24 July

We hearde that the King met with the Frensh embassy agayne. But he said nothinge to them, and simply smiled. It was the Marquess who did the talking. And all that resulted was a prolongation of the trews. Sir William saith that the sticking point is what it hath allways bene since the Grete Peace. The Frensh will talk of territory ceded but never of souverainty. We must forever do homage. But our ambassadors doth insist that whatever we keep of Fraunce, we must have without homage or right of resort. And Sir John saith it can never be right for a king of England to do homage to a King of Fraunce.

## 25 July, the Feast of St Christopher, Patron Saint of All Travailleurs

Peter Basset knoweth well alle the parts of Normandie. He spake of the golden days before King Harry died.

*War without fire, Harry saith, was useless, like sausages without mustard. Guerre sans feu ne valait rien, non plus que andouilles sans moustarde. He set a good example. There was a fellow in charge down in Caen clept Harrington. He apprehended a woman clept Catherine the Bold in Falaise. She was suspected of giving counsel and shelter to the local brigands. He had her buried alive.*

I asked if our men were allways so well behaved in Normandie. Basset admitteth there was had bene sometime breaches of discipline.

*But efforts were made to mitigate the excesses which some troops were guilty of. Guy du Melle, priest of Champhaut near Argentan, fell under suspicion of having dealings with the enemy and was harassed and robbed by Englisshe soudeours. They threatened to strangle or drown him and lay in wait for him several times. The priest fled to Sir John, then Governor of Alençon and he issued him with a safe conduct.*

Basset saith that if all had gone according to plan, there should have bene several thousand Englisshe settlers in Normandie by now who, together with the loyal Frensh, would have manned the walls of the towns and fortresses. But all did

not go according to plan. It hath proved nigh impossible to attract enoughe settlers. The system of watch and ward produced little, being starved of men and monie. As time went by, security got worse, not better. Those few Captains who stuck rigidly to their duty had to rely more and more on the purely Englishshe element in the garrisons. And the Englishshe Exchequer and Parliament had to be resorted to for subsidies more often, not less, as tyme went bye.

## 26 July

Yesterday, we had the most destructive hailstorm that anyone could ever remember. Stones fell which were bigger than a man his stones. They shattered some of the roofs in the castle, and broke through the glass in the chapel window. They allmost blocked the road to West Caister. Sir John saith that the artillery of the clouds hath discharged the biggest bombards he hath ever hearde, louder even than Harrys grete gunnes at Harfleur. I learn that in Norwich part of the town was marooned in a sea of ice and rainwater.

I asked Basset about the brigandage of which Silvio hath enquired. He saith that, despite all the vigour with which we hath pursued the brigands of Normandie, they still fought back desperately, as if they were very patriots.

*Despite the ease with which King Harry swept through Normandie, there was active resistance to Our Rewl from the Erliest days of the conquest. The towns, save Cherbourg and Falaise, were captured after short sieges but in the countrie the brigands took to the woods and started to fight like Devils, led by a man clept Mixtoudin, who led an attack on Pont de L'Arche near Rouen. Resistance grew throughout the Duk of Bedford his Rewl. In April of the year 1,424, the Duk his Council decided that it was necessary to send many powerful knights into certayne bailliages of the Duchy, to ride in arms through those bailliages in order to expell and extirpate the brigands and pillagers therein, and to maintain the King his subjects in peace and tranquillity.*

*None of it made much different. The resistance in Normandie grew stronger not weaker, as time went by.*

## 27 July

Basset said we took harsh reprisals when there was open rebellion but there were still divers plots. There was one in Rouen - to capture and kill King Harry no less - as early as four yeres after Agincourt. Ten yeres later there was a compassing to release French prisoners kept in the castle at Vernelle, where there hath bene what we liked to call a second Agincourt. The conspirators did not know what they were doing. One of them did not know how to whistle, though this was the method agreed on for the signal. The man thought to blow a trumpet to summon his

fellows and in so doing, gave it all away. Sir John was captain of Vernelle at that time, and he oft laughs at the memory.

## 28 July

Basset his narrative had me enthralled. It was if the scales had fallen from mine eye. I had bene told from my grene age that our conquest of Normandie had bene a matter of ease and comfort, after Agincourt, and that we onlie needed a few thousand men in the garrisons to continue to grip it forever. The Frensh rebellions were but lightlie taken and even the loss of Paris put down to Burgundian treachery, which might be remedied by a cunning embassy. But Basset hath not finished his story. There was much worse to come.

*Then, ten yere ago, there was outright rebellion in the pays de Caux, juxta Harfleur, where we had started the Conquest and where Sir John now owned manie manors. We were like to be ejected from that countrie, for it was not the Frensh king who rose agaynest us, but the local people as in the Rifling Time, and yet we had burnt their witch four yere beforetime. These villeins and soudeours took back Fecamp, Valmont, Tancarville, Lillebonne, Montvilliers, and even Harfleur of noble memory, and then that traitor Richmond, whose family in Bretayne hath allways bene loyal, arrived with an entire Frensh army. By the beginning of 1,436 there were around 3,000 Frensh soldiers in the pays de Caux and onlie Caudebec remained in our hands. Sir John contrived to rescue Caen almost by himself, but we had so few to send agaynest them, for most of our men had long since departed for England and we had our troops spred thin in the garrisons. Our commanders in Rouen were skyte scared I can tell thee. Sir John will tell thee that we had to deploy masty hounds on the gates of Rouen to keep watch by night. We were that close to losing the capital of the Duchy.*

*Well, what of it? We survived that year and Richmond went home with his men. And we duly punished those left behind who hath caused us so much trouble. But that Norman rebellion reduced the value of Sir Johnis manors in pays de Caux from £200 to £8. He gave his bayllys orders to make haste and sell upp, tayking what price they could get. Though even now he doth retain ten castles, fifteen manors and an inn in Rouen, and he is still Baron of Silly Gwillem.<sup>137</sup>*

A man might not sleep easy in his bed in Englishe Normandie, if all that Peter Basset saith be true. And a man in England who devoted much thought to it might fret that the tale shall not end well. We may have crushed these rebels, but we cannot crush them as the Romans hath crushed Carthage. They are too manie and we are too few. And yet, unless we crush them in that Roman manner, they will fight back eternally.

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<sup>137</sup> Sillé-le-Guillaume.

## 29 July

In the morning busy writing a bill for Sir John to William Barker<sup>138</sup> to obtain the lampreys more speedily.

I asketh Sir John how we hath come to be in Paris and how we came to lose it. He said we were in Paris because at that time we had an alliance with the Bourguignons and Paris had bene Bourguignon territory for a little while and they let us in. But we determined for to win the hearts and souls of the people of Paris, once we were the masters of their forts, and Sir John was Captain of that new castle called *Bastille*, first built by Charles the Mad, on the East side of that Grete City.

*We laid on dinners, processions, mysterie plays, jousts and other forms of amusement in Paris. Per exemplum, in August of 1,425 a kind of blindman his buff was staged in an Hôtel there, where the blind were yeven large sticks and invited to hunt down a boar, but gave each other a good thrashing instead. And we allways gave a good dinner when there was a mass hanging of their brigands. A dinner for 8,000 people was thrown in July 1,428. And another in April 1,431 after we hath hanged a large number of robbers and murderers.*

I asked if the Frensh of Paris were duly impressed with these entertainments.

*Strangely not, at least not all of them. Some of them seme unable to distinguish between the common criminal and what they deme their compatriots, and they seme – though tis difficult to trow I know – to think that any fellow who raises a hand agayneste the Englisshe is a goodfellow to be cheered, even when he is gurgling his life out from the gallows.*

I said I hath hearde that the coronacion of our boy King in Paris hath not bene as well recevyed as we had hoped.

*That is certis true. The occasion was supposed to be a time of grete rejoicing and spectacle. But the Frensh sniffed at the fact that our cooks served mete on the Sunday night which had bene pre-cooked the previous Thursday. Not even the sick in the public hospitals, who were used to eating leftovers, thought that this was acceptable. And it was perhaps a mistake to lay on such mean games and sports on the day after the coronacion, and to insist that everyone speke Englisshe. The truth is, sweet William, they conceyve they are superior to us. They seem blind to the benefits of our Englisshe Rewl.*

I asked him how it was that Paris fell.

*There was no Battle of Paris but the city did fall to Charles Dolphin the Bloody Seventh in*

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<sup>138</sup> Another of Fastolf's servants.

*April 1, 1436, despite the best efforts of Lord Talbot, Scales and Willoughby to save it. The English garrisons took refuge in the Bastille but were greatly outnumbered and surrendered without making a last stand, though the fortress was well provided with stores and ammunition, as I had always recommended. All those of us who had second homes in Paris were forced to abandon them. The Regent lost the Hôtel des Tournelles and other palaces he had once occupied in splendour. As for those French who had collaborated with us, woe to them.*

And all of this doth seem to me to be true. But there is a deeper understanding in mine own mind, from the histories of Rome the Grete. For the Romans, in their time of greteness, did not make alliances with any other power. All that they hath achieved, they hath achieved by their own effort. But we hath gained Paris by courtesy of the Bourguignons, and by discourtesy of the Bourguignons we hath lost it.

## 31 July

There is a feast day in Worstead that half of Norfolk goes to, to see the spinners and the weavers disport. But Sir John hath forbade any man to go and I have not the appetite to defy him in this. It is a hard days ride in the wrong direction. And my posterior doth trouble me despite the application of the remedy.

In the morning busy writing bills for Sir John to John Green<sup>139</sup> to obtain more sad men as tenants and to tell Thomas Howes that if any dare resist him, that fellow shall be required by Whitebeard or by Blackbeard, which is as much as to say by God or the Devil, one day.

And then at last the interrogation descendeth upon me.

*And what, by Our Lady and St George, do you mean by your flirtation with Catherine Gladman, conducted at my expense and in my time? You must know it be lunacy to conceive of marrying her. For she is way above you, and a marriageable widow to boot.*

His anger subsided but he continued to reason with me as with a friend.

*Unless there be an arranged marriage, he saith, how can there be security on either side? For it is very necessary to have the mediation of friends and an agreement upon goods and setting forth of the child portions for quietness of matrimony. Yet you turned down the Paston proposal and have now spurned mine own of Margaret Howes.*

And then he ruminated a while, as a brute beast chewing the cud

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<sup>139</sup> Another of Fastolf's servants.

After Agincourt

*My god William thou hast surely not spoken any words of matrimony to her?*

I said of course not.

Then he grew furious agayne.

*What mayst thou conceive thyself good enough for her, thou miserable, one eyed, bloody-arsed wretch?*

I was bruised by every insult... and wondered how he came to know about the condition of my arse.

*I ask thee agayne. Wilt thou have Margaret Howes to be thy lawful wedded wyff?*

I thought it were time I gave him the truth.

*I have never had woman. But if any there be with whom I can conceive of it, it is Catherine that I want.*



## XII

### 1 August, Lammas, the Feast of St Peter in Chains

MY MOTHER ALWAYS SAID I was as a child content of myself, and the same is as a whole trew now. I take great pleasure in travails completed and I can say I have so travailed both by the sea coasts and middle parts of this countrie, sparing nayther labour nor costs, that there is allmost nayther cape, nor bay, haven or creke, river or confluence of rivers, lakes, meres, fenny waters, montains, valleys, moors, heaths, forests, woods, cities, towns, castles, principal manor houses, monasteries and colleges, but I have sene them. And noted in so doing a whole worlde of thinges very memorable.

But this contentment doth stand in jeopardy, for all dependeth on my Master his favour.

*MEMORANDUM Sir John hath welth and lordship. But he hath not the status he aimed for, and this makyth him pore. This flying the field at Patay hath bene the ruin of him, for all my efforts to clere his name. His wyff hath died, he has no children and he hath not contentment in his own mind. His stepson grudgeth him, secretly. The best he can expect is a decent burial and the remembrance of frendes to ease his time in Purgatory. Unless the Lollers be right and there is none.*

### 2 August

Basset saith the black monks conceyve they are better than the white, the white better than the black, and all the Orders of Friars conceyve they are better than the monks. It is with monks as it is with England as a whole, but in little. And tis true that the alien priories of Frensh foundation were nests of spies, which Harry did right to condemn and root out of the body politic.

The Chaplayne saith his picture of monks and friars was not as black as that

painted by Master Chaucer. There are manie holy men in the monasteries and onlie a few bad apples amongst them. The Church ought to have banned Master Chaucer for suggesting otherwise. But he had powerful connections at court and was thought to be amusing.

### 3 August

In the morning busy writing for Sir John, about a bill in the Parliament agaynest purveyance.

I asked the men what they thought of our master. They sayen he was a fighter and hath done good service and they were content to be led by him still, even unto death. But others maintain he is ruthless, violent and quarrelsome. He feedeth off the carcasses of his enemies, like some bird of Afrik. He hath done too well out of Frensh prisoners and booty to have clean hands. He delighteth in litigation and to ruin his debtors, frendes and enemies alike. He hath sued a manservant clept Winter, even on his deathbed, and een sued pore Scrope as could scarcely defend himself in a contest of any description.

But I took my master his part. As for his services to the Crown I saith that Sir John hath bene made Knight of the Garter, and defended that honour agaynest all Grete Talbot his calumnies. He hath bene Bedford his Master of the Household and even a Baron of Fraunce. He retaineth the title of Governor of Normandie. Did they conceyve he hath not done good service in Fraunce? The Duk of York hath granted him a pension *pro notabili et laudabili servicio et bono concilio*. They disliketh my Latin but agree the sentiment quite fairlie.

In privat life I saith Sir John was probably as driven by litigation as the next man of property. But he was a strong man, as imparted all his strength to every endeavour he embarked upon. But he was not different from any other manne in his position. I hadde encountered his like in every county I hath visited. To acquire a secure title, manie laborious searches were necessary and even then the matter was very uncertayne. It was necessary to go to court very often even if onlie to put a fine to the matter in hand.

And yet I must perforce confesse Sir John cannot have bene an easy client. I have bene present in his meeting with his lawyers. Methinks he hath allways hectorred them, telling them to be quicke, look further into the matter, argue more forcefully and make sure that no piece of evidence was left out. At the same time he sometimes wanted to correct their draughting and shorten the length of their submissions. He saith that, in constructing a legal argument, less is more, which be a paradoxical sayeing but trew. I have seen him tell a most eminent Sergeant to correct a pleading.

Sir William saith a man would be a fool if he were not to labour the Shire Reeve for the return of juries sympathetic and entertain and inform the jury too, if he were able. For if he do not do so, his opponents will so do.

Sir John tells me it is necessary to make a judge a little present sometymes. This doth not look right but, I have myself hath bene privie, being sent to present a judge with a velvet gown, when Sir Johnis case was clept to be hearde.

## 4 August

Sir John asketh me to present my conclusions as to the theme of the boke he hadde wysshed me to wryte.

I said the Warre woud appere to be lost. Things fall apart in Englysshe Fraunce. The centre cannot hold. We were driven back from the Loire. Paris was lost. Normandie is in rebellion. There are fighters to resist us on every hand. The garrisons have bene minished.<sup>140</sup> There is nayther the monie nor the men to stuff a field army. Englysshemen have lost heart. I was sorry to be the bearer of tideings so blunt and melancolic.

To my absolute astoundment, he said, well thou mayest well be right and there is at this moment what the players of chesse calleth a stale mate. But that is not an utter dead loss, unless we chooseth to regard it as such. If we were to attack agayne, in a way we have not tried for long time, we should, I am sure, prevail. But desperate measures are therefor clept. And this I have advised tymes severall. If these be not taken at last, then I agree the Werre is lost. Now the Frensh have designs on Englysshe Anjew and then it will be Normandie and after that, who knows, even Guienne. Then he turned to me as if we both saw the world in a new way and all difference of station and degree was falling away in this light of reason.

*But, William, why hath it come to this pretty state with our England?*

*I said there were so manie theorems. Sir William lays grete stress on the lack of trew consultation with the Parliament, since Ralph Cromwell his resignacion as Treasurer and the reliance of his Majesty upon a favourite. He conceyves Jack Napes hath poisoned the relationship between the court and the countrie. Methinks onlie a Parliament man can know these thinges but I am not sure if he be right. The Frensh seme to have solved the problem of monie without resort to a Parliament. They have taxation independent of the Parliament and it hath provided them with a fine new fighting force.*

*The Shipman puts our losses down to Harrys being unique in realising the importance of ships. Since Harry died the Navy hath bene allowed to rot.*

*Basset and Mundeford blame the Maid for having bewitched the Frensh soudeoury. By virtue of her spell, they now conceyve they are invincible. Amd Basset hath penned a ballad*

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<sup>140</sup> Diminished.

Now is England all in fight  
Much people of conscience light  
Manie knights and little of might  
Manie laws and little right

*Scrope while sane conceyved we have allways underestimated the Frensh, and we onlie did well at Agincourt since they were in the throes of full civil war. They have allways bene stronger but twas hidden from us by their division. Now they have stood up and they will not lie down for a generation or twain, while the Wheel turns.*

*The York Shireman saith for once the Scots are not to blame for our ills but the Englissh. The esquires and the gentlemen are no longer willing to fight for their king. Why, his father told him that when the King clept for knights in the yere 1,420, there were very few who came forward, even in York Shire. And it was at that time that the chroniclers complained of the burden of the taxes, when they should have bene recalling the glory of Agincourt. The problem therefor is not the want of monie. For truth is we grow weak as we grow rich.*

*Everyone agrees that the kingdom is not well governed but no one blames the King, who is the very Governour. It doth sometime seme to me that we are now as the Frensh were 30 yeres ago. We have a King who is well loved but far too saintly to lead a warlike nacion. Pore man he was probably half mad from the day he was born, for his grandsire on the Frensh side was certainlie a right full lunatic. Every one doth talk of evil counsellors but the King would not need counsellors if he was half the man his father Harry was. Yet to say so is Hi Treason, no Petty matter.*

*I durst not say that I was now privy to Jack Napes his way of thinking and his solution to our difficulties. I did not want my master to fall dead by apoplexy.*

And now, as I hath predicted, Sir John, notwithstanding his earlier frankness, started roaring on once more in his old fashion, about how the Werre could still be won.

*We should never have left off the strategy of Oostays. We should never have gone for piece conquest of Normandie and Maine. The sieges were too manie for our small army and, even when we take a town we cannot garrison them all. Our present woes are due to a general decline. We are not what our fathers and grandfathers were. Those who should be knights are not willing to take up the burden of the office. They prefer to stay on their estates and pursue nice questions of lineage and heraldry liefer than war, which is to mistake the badge for the office. And others pursue trade and usury, while others study the practique of law and the custom of land, or of civil matter, in London and other dens. The knights of yesteryere are fading from view and all we see now is a gentry overtaken by covetise. The common people are prone to get above themselves, as in the Rifling Time. But all this if would change if onlie we had a strong leader agayne.*

I said there were so manie different conclusions, I felt as if I were in a boat upon the Almayn Ocean, with a gale blowing it this way and that. But Sir John his strategy of oostys doth seme to me the old policy of Cato unto Carthage – destroy and double destroy<sup>141</sup> – which doth not seme conformable with either the Faith of Christ or the Law of Arms and Chevalrie. And I was beginning to doubt if I could ever write the boke he wanted.

He mused

*Well thou must still try he said. We owe it to our King and our countrie and the memory of those who fell at Agincourt.*

## 7 August

I doubted in my bowels but I told Sir John I was making good progress, when I had scarce begun. I did not conceyve that we could ever go back to Fraunce in force, or hold on to what we held. And I was no longer sure that God was on our side. But, as they say, *he who pays the piper* and I will finish this boke. I even have a title for it.

But I have concluded the reasons for this triumph at Agincourt were very different from what most men doth have in England. There was no grete difference between us and the Frensh and we were not allways bound to win through righteousness. We were just as guilty of the seven sins as they were. Twas all the luck of the draw. One king was succeeded by another, a bad by a good, a good by a defective. Dame Fortune smiles and turns her grete Wheel. One minute tis we on top and the next minute the Frensh. Doubtless it will turn agayne, but not in my day and not by the will of God. Some men like to fight, others not. That Harry was warlike, this Henry is not. That Charles was Wise, the next one was Mad, the present one Victorious.

But this is all as heresy to Sir John. He saith the Frensh started the Werre but we must finish it. God is on our side and the Werre is still for the winning.

But he is not comparing like with like. The situation is not now what it was in the yere I was born. The King then was a young and vigorous man, a warrior, who regarded his honour as being at stake, carried the countrie with him and won a magnificent victory. Our present King is in no wise like his father, he is as much in favour of peace as any Lollard, though no one dare say so, nor that he be totally unable to lead an army himself, so no one will follow him. Allso, the task in hand is now impossible, for it is not now a Frensh meyny we must defeat but the whole Frensh nacion roused to arms. Sir John be manie yeres behind the times.

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<sup>141</sup> During the Punic Wars between Carthage and Rome, the Roman Senator Cato the Elder (234-149 BC) regularly made speeches urging that *Carthago delenda est* – ‘Carthage must be destroyed’. This is one of many pieces of evidence that Worcester had read Livy.

## 8 August

Osbert spake to me about Maine. He saith we first invaded the valley of the Sarthe in 1,417. In 1,420, the Earl of Salisbury led a second invasion, laying siege to Fresnay and capturing the Scottish paychest. Sir John was too busy in Paris and Meulan to be present but he was appointed Captain of Fresnay when we invaded a third time, when he also became Governor of Maine as a whole.

We acquired manors there, as well as booty and ransoms. Sir John had already acquired Frileuse near Harfleur and four seniories in the *pays de Caux*. Now he became the baron of Silly Gwillem and La Suze, and later Conday-sur-Noireau in southern Normandie. His estates in Fraunce were mostly entails in tail male, though some were enlarged to fee simple at a later date.

His mistake was to conceyve that he could rely on local defence, manned and paid for by Frensemen. As if any grete number of them, even in Normandie, could be brought to accept that treaty signed at Troyes, when the better and most loyal part was agaynest it. For their Faith told them to support the Prophetess Joan, who preacheth grudge of the Englysshe, as vile oath makers and blasphemers. And so they grind us down, day by day. And they betray and killeth us, even while they pretend to guard us. And for them all is hatred, sacrifice and yearning until Charles Dolphin cometh into his own.

## 9 August

Basset saith garrison duty could also be full of hazard. There was one time when the comptroller of Sir John was murdered on the rosd back from Paris. They pulled him off his horse, as if they were wild Irish and he an Englysshe knight, and stuck a thwittle in his heart.

In the barracks the view is the fuckers do not fight fair, but perchance their resistance can be understood when our knights and esquires were stealing their manors and baronies.

## 13 August, St Radegonde, Queen

They told a tale of Fraunce in the barrack.

*In the frontiers of Fraunce, there lived, amongst other nobles, a knight who was rich and noble, not onlie by illustrious descent, but by his own virtuous and worshipful deeds, who had, by the wyff he had married, an onlie daughter, a very beautiful virgin, well-educated as her condition required, and aged fifteen or sixteen yeres, or thereabouts.*

*This good and noble knight, seeing that his daughter was of a fit and proper age for the holy sacrament of wedlock, much wished to give her in marriage to a knight, his neighbour, who was powerful, not so much by noble birth as by grete possessions and riches, and was allso from 60 to 80 yeres old, or thereabouts. This wish so filled the head of the father, that he would not rest until formal promises were made between him and the aforesaith old knight, touching his marriage to the girl.*

*Not far from the castle of the knight, the father of this damsel, there lived another knight, a young man, valiant and brave, and moderately rich, but not so rich as the old man of whom I spoke, and this grene age was gretely in love with the fair damsel. She allso was much attached to him and they oft spoke to each other, though with much trouble and difficulty, for her father, who suspected their love, tried by all ways to prevent their seeing each other.*

*The time approached when the damsel was to be gyven to the old knight, and her father told her of the contract he had made, and named the day on which she was to be married; at which she was gretely saddened. She sent a message to her lover, the young knight, to tell him to come to her secretly as betimes as he could, and when he came she told him how she was betrothed to the old knight, and asked her lover his advice as to how this marriage was to be broken off.*

*The knight replied, My dereest lady, I will tell thou what we will do. We will appoint a day for me to come to this town accompanied by manie of my frendes, and at a gyven hour thou wilt repair to a certayne place, both of which we will arrange now that I am alone with thee. Thou wilt mount on my horse, and I will conduct thee to my castle.*

*The appointed day arrived and the young knight appereed at the place mentioned, and there he found the lady, who mounted on his horse, and they rode fast until they were far from there. The good knight, fereing that he should fatigue his dearly beloved mistress, slackened his speed, and spred his retainers on every road to see that they were not followed, and he rode across the fields, without keeping to any path or road. They rode until they came to this village, where the local feast was being held, which had brought together all sorts of people. They entered the best tavern in the place, and at once demanded food and drink, for it was late after dinner and the damsel was much fatigued. A good fire was made, and food prepared for the servants of the knight, who had not yet arrived.*

*Hardly had the knight and the lady entered the tavern than there came four big scrotes, waggoners or drovers, or perhaps worse, who noisily entered the tavern, and demanded where was the bona roba<sup>142</sup> that some ruffian had brought there, riding behind him on his horse, for they would drink and amuse themselves with her.*

*The host told them gently that the girl was not what they imagined.*

*Morbleu!<sup>143</sup> they cried. If thou dost not bring her at once, we will batter down the door.*

*When the host heard this, he named the knight, who was renowned through all that district. He told them allso that the damsel was a young virgin, a relative of the knight, and*

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<sup>142</sup> Woman of easy virtue.

<sup>143</sup> A French expletive.

of noble parentage.

*You can, messieurs, he saith, without jepardie to youselves or others, quench your lust with manie of the women who have come to the village on the occasion of the feast expressly for you and your kind, and for God his sake leave in peace this noble damsel.*

*Drop thy preaching, shouted the villains, inflamed with carnal lust, and bring her to us quietly. Or if not we will cause a scandal, for we will bring her down openly, and each of us four will do as he likes with her.*

*Then the good host clept the knight apart and told him this news, which when he had hearde, without being troubled in the least, he went down wearing his sword, to talk to the four swaggerers, and asked them politely what they wanted.*

*And they, being foul-mouthed and abusive blackguards, replied that they wanted the bona roba that he kept in his chamber and that, if he did not give her up quietly, they would take her from him by force.*

*Fair sirs, saith the knight, if thou knew me well thou would be aware that I should not talk about women of that sort. I have never done such a folly, thank God. And even if I ever did—which God forbid—I should never do it in this district, where I and all my people are well known. This damsel is a thoung virgin, related allso to a noble house, and we are travailling for our pleasure, accompanied by my servants. And do not flatter thourselves that I should be such a coward as to let her be insulted; but I would protect and defend her as long as my strength endured.*

*Before the knight had finished speaking, the villains interrupted him, and denied that he was the person he saith, because he was alone, and that knight never travailled without a grete number of servants. They recommended him, if he were wise, to bring the girl down, otherwise they would take her by force. When this brave and valiant knight found that fair words were of no use, and that force was the onlie remedy, he summoned up all his courage, and resolved that the villains should not have the damsel, and that he was redy to die in her defence.*

*At last one of the four advanced to knock with his bludgeon at the door of the chamber, and the others followed him, and were bravely beaten back by the knight. Then began a fight which lasted long, and although the two parties were so unequally matched, the good knight vanquished and repulsed the four villains, but as he pursued them to drive them away, one of them, who had a sword, turned suddenly and plunged it in the body of the knight, and pierced him through, so that he fell dead at once, at which they were very glad. Then they compelled the host to quietly bury the body in the garden of the inn.*

*When the good knight was dead, the villains came and knocked at the door of the chamber where the damsel was impatiently awaiting the return of her lover, and they pushed open the door. As betimes as she saw the brigands enter, she guessed that the knight was dead, and saith Alas, where is my protector? Where is my sole refuge? What hath become of him? The scoundrels told her the knight had gone to another house, and had commanded them to go to her and protect her; but she would not trow them. She began to lament, and to cry more bitterly than ever.*

*What is this? They saith. Why all these tricks and manners? Dost thou conceyve we do not know the truth? If thou dost imagine thy bully is still alive, thou art mistaken, for we*



*have rid both the countrie and this world of him. Therefor make thy mind up to this, that we are all four going to enjoy thee.*

*When the pore damsel saw herself thus forced, and that she could not soften their hearts, she saith Alas! Messieurs, since you will force me, and my humble prayers cannot soften you, at least have this decency. That if I abandon myself to you it shall be privately, that is to say each separately without the presence of the others.*

*They agreed to this, though with a bad grace, and then they made her choose which of the four should first have her company. She chose the one that she fancied was the mildest and best-tempered, but he was in deed the worst of all.*

*The door was closed, and then the pore damsel threw herself at the scoundrel his feet and, with manie piteous appeals, begged that he would have pity on her. But he was obstinate and declared that he would have his will of her. When she saw that he was so cruel, and that her prayers could not melt him, she saith. Well then, since so it must be, I am content; but I beg of thou to close the windows that we may be more secret. He willingly consented and, whilst he was closing them, she drew a little thwittle that she wore at her girdle, hard as Sheffield steel, and uttering one long, piteous cry, she cut her throat, and gave up the ghost.*

They all conceyved this was the finest tale of all, though like all tales of Fraunce, it hath but a sadde ending.

## 15 August, the Assumption of Our Lady

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven.

We hearde from London that the Portugals hath set up a trading post in Afrik, on the island of Arguin and that Dinis Dias hath discovered a new Geen Cape of the far coast of that Continent. I asketh Sir John if he saw any thinge of meritt in these projects of Henry the Navigator.

He saith, none at all. For although Pliny saith there is allways somethinge new out of Afrik, *ex Africa semper aliquid novi*,<sup>144</sup> it is the least civilised of the three Continents. All the goodness was extracted out of it long ago and now nothinge awaits a man there but death by sickness, or thralledom of the Moor.

But I saith there was talk of them reaching out that way to Ind and China, as Marco the Million hath done, but by the sea, and thereby avoiding the ravages of Tamburlaine.

Ravages of Tamburlaine? No, no, that is not the problem. Tamburlaine died over thirty yere ago and, though he clipped the claws of the Turk, the Turk hath re-grown them full longe and sharpe. Tis verily the Turk now who stands in the way of commerce with China. But the answer is not to sail round Afrik. For that be impossibly far. He said I should stop subjecting myself to Ridicule in matters suche

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<sup>144</sup> A phrase variously attributed to Aristotle, Pliny and Erasmus. Worcester's use of it points to Pliny.

as this. I might as well place credence in these rumours of lands to the West or to the North, where nothinge had ever bene found there but ice and snow, mermaids and sea-unicorns.

In the hall we had a reding of Mandeville on the riches of China.

*NOW shall I tell thou the governance of the court of the Grete Khan, when he makyth solemnn feasts. At every of these feasts he hath grete multitude of people, well ordained and well arrayed, by thousands, by hundreds, and by tens. And every man knoweth well what service he shall do. And of physicians Christian he hath 200, and of leeches that be Christian he hath 210, and of leeches and physicians that be Sarrasynes twenty, but he trusteth more in Christian leeches than in Saracen.*

*This Emperor may dispend as much as he will without estimation for he not dispendeth nor makyth no monie but of leather imprinted, or of paper. And of that monie is some of greter price and some of less price, after the diversity of his statutes. And when that monie hath run long that it beginneth to waste, then men bear it to the Emperor his Treasury and then they take new monie for the old.*

*Under the firmament is not so grete a lord, nayther so mighty, nayther so rich as is the Grete Khan. Not Prester John, that is emperor of Hi Ind, nor the Grete Turk, nor the Soldan of Babylon, nor the Emperor of Persia. All these be not in comparison to the Grete Khan, nayther of might, nor of noblesse, nor of royalty, nor of riches. For in all these he passeth all earthly princes. Wherefore it is grete harm that he troweth not faithfully in God. And yet he will gladly hear speke of our God.*

*In that countrie some men hath an hundred wives, some sixty, some more, some less. And they take the next of their kin to their wives, save onlie their mothers, their daughters, and the sisters of the mother on her side. But the sisters on the fathers side they may well take, and their brethrens wives allso after their brethrens death, and their stepmothers allso in the same wise.*

*And the men of the Grete Khan hath had for manie hundreds of yeres a system of writing their language on paper, with blocks, whereby manie copies of their bokes may be produced without much labour, though it be impossible for a stranger to rede them.*

## **17 August, Feast of St Roch, Patron Saint of Celibates**

We hearde of the death of Sir John Cressy of Northamptonshire, a member of the Sir Johnis old company, who was captain of Lisieux and died in Lorraine. God rest his soul in Purgatory.

We hear that old John Throckmorton of Coughton in Warwick Shire, who fought with Harry at Agincourt, hath died this very week. He lies nearby in Fladbury, where the family will pay for a tomb and a brass, in good Englishhe style, for him to be remembered by. But they can not afford a chantry.

Sir John is bitter. Here be a man who fought with Harry upon the day of

Saintes Crispin and John of Beverley, or so he doth claim, and played a notable role in the Werres even if he did not. And he got but little reward, though he saith others hath made their fortunes. And no one hath taken his counsel since he returned from Fraunce. Methinks neglect doth kill a man as well as cruelty or grudging.

## 20 August

Sir John doth spend his time a worreting about Englisshe Fraunce. But he hath no concerns about the future of Christendom. But there be reason to worret. There are some that saith that we shall all be wearing turbans betimes. And that our men shall all be forcibly circumcised, if the Grand Turk shall take the City of Constantine, as like he may.

Some say, to comfort themselves in the night, that Islamic Scripture and Law doth forbid the forced conversion and that their Prophet never did trow or practique it. That Muhammad his victories were so convincing and crushing because the old religions had failed and so men flocked to the new creed in droves and there was no need for forced conversion.

But I remember yet what Silvio told me. He said that in the Empire of the Turk, the Christians are looked on as the vilest property, pay heavy tribute and are afflicted with injustice daily. I noted down what he said

*They are led off to war agaynst their will, are exposed to death without weapons, and deprived of their wives and children. And after they raise their sons, they lose them. Their boys are taken off to the Palace, circumcised and instructed in the rites of the Prophet.*

And yet methinks these Turks are not like unto the barbarians described by John Mandeville and Brother Higden, who live without the law altogether. They hath their Law, in manie ways like unto our own.

## 28 August

Scrope is now relieved but not cured. He is calmer now in his language. He will work on his Dicts of Moral Philosophy. This night I even thought of somethinge things for this boke of his. So I went to visit Scrope. I told him I had bene reding his boke agayne and liked it. I said I liked much the part about Pygmalion.

*Now this Pygmalion was a sculptor who carveth a woman out of ivory. According to Ovid, after seeing some real women engaging in whoredom, he hath tired of them and fell in love with his carving, which was both fair and lovely. In time, Venus her festival day came, and Pygmalion made offerings at her altar. There, Pygamlion prayed that his his ivory be changed into flesh. And, when he returned home, he kissed the carving and found that its lips be*

After Agincourt

*warm. He kissed it agayne and touched its Upper Part with his hand and found that the ivory lost its hardness, while he gained his. But whether he touched its Lower Part is not recorded. Yet Pygmalion married the ivory sculpture and together they had a son, called Paphos, from whom the island derived its name, and so we must conclude that he did.*

And Scrope hath set out the tale in his boke, in text, gloss and allegory, in manner followeing

*Text*

*Pygmalion his image for to feel,  
If that thou be wise, set thereby no deal,  
For of such an image so well wrought  
The beauty thereof is too dere bought.*

*Gloss*

*It may be understood by some that Pygmalion disprayed the lewdness of lewd women and enamoured him on a maiden of right grete beauty, the which would not, or might not, understand his piteous complaints, no more than the image of a stone had done; but at the last he prayed her so much and kept him so near her that the maiden loved him and at his will he had her to marriage. But it is said by others that a good knight should not be so besotted of such a made image that he leave to follow the craft of arms, to which he is bound by the order of knighthood.*

*Allegory*

*Pymgalion his image is one that a good knight should not be so besotted as to fall into the sin of lechery. Wherefore St Jerome saith O fire of hell, of whom the wood is gluttony, the flame is pride, the sparks are foul words, the smoke is evil name, the ashes is poverty, and the end is the torments of Hell. And St Peter the Apostle said Voluptatem existimantes diei delicias, cinquinaciones et maculae deliciis affluentes, in conviviis suis luxuriantes.*

I told Scrope twas very good but a little intricate for me. Twere better to tell the tale plain, and let the reader draw his own conclusions. But he saith in that case, there was no benefit to be had at all from presenting Gloss and Allegory and that was the entire end of his exertions.

## **29 August, the Beheading of John the Baptist**

Sir John spake of the reasons for our present disconents

*Covetise is sprede wide amongst us. And as for the lower order of men, they are no longer content with their estate and degree. Every man wishes for to better himself, instead of sticking to the place appointed by God. Wherefore is it that it is oft seen that a yeoman doth represent as the state of a squire, an esquire of a knight, a knight of a lord, a lord of a Duk, a Duk of a king. Therefor manie men going about every degree be found in no degree, attempting every order be not of any order, for they be Argy in lucre, Tantalus in labour, and Sardanapalus in beds.*

MEMORANDUM. Diodorus saith that Sardanapalus exceeded all previous rewlrns in sloth and luxury. He spent his whole life in BED. He dressed in women clothes and PAINTED HIS FACE. He had manie concubines, both female and male. He wrote his own epitaph, which stated that physical gratification is the onlie purpose of life.

Sir John saith times had changed. The age of chevalrie was no more. Agincourt was the gretest of victories but since then our Knights have become Knights of Venus liefer than of Mars. And then he broke into a song for his grene age of yore.

*Oh ye knights of England, where is the custom and usage of chevalrie that was used in those past days? What do ye now but go to the baths and play at dice? And some use not honest and good living agaynest all order of knighthood. Leave this! Leave it! And red the volumes of the Holy Grail, of Lancelot, of Galahad... of Gawain.... There thou shall see manhood courtesy and gentleness. And look in the latter days at the noble acts since the conquest, as in the days of King Richard Cuer de Lion, of Edward the Firste and Edward the Thirde and his nobles sons, of Sir Robert Knowles, Sir John Hawkwood, Sir John Chandos, as recorded by Master Froissart. And allso the victorious and noble King Harry and the captains under him.... whose names shine gloriously by their virtuous and noble acts...*

MEMORANDUM. John Hawkwood was the most villainous and arrant knave in the history of Englisshe knighthood, though famous. Yet, if Sir John be justified, it no part of fame that a man be virtuous.

## 30 August

The priests have bene celebrating the passing of Harry the Fifte, with yeredays. He died this day at the Château of Vincennes near Paris, in the yere of the Incarnacion 1,422, from the flux he contracted at Meaux. He was not yet 36 yeres old. We shall shortly see the end of all that grete generation, though the Good Old Duk Humfrey, and the Cardinal his Uncle, and my master, liveth yet.

Should I marry Margaret Howes or should I go on with my Catherine, if she wilt have me still?

I was in the Inner Court musing on this my dilemma when a horseman arrived with a bill. Catherine her hand. She saith she was in the mansion at Ormesby when a grete crowd of riotous people arrived, arrayed in manner of war with leather jackets, headpieces, bows and arrows, and pans with burning tinder in them, long crowbars, and pickaxes with which they mined the walls and broke both gates and doors, and thus came into her dwelling house.

She, and twelve with her, hath bene driven out. Then those shittyhawks broke up all the rooms and chests and rifled them and as in a robbery carried off the goods, clothes and monie that she had there, and doubtless hath divided it among themselves. And now a garrison of them maintain it for Moleyns and what should she do?

And she in the main Inn in the village, with not a living soul else she can turn to but God alone.

I went to the barracks and spoke with Basset and Mundeford. And then to my grete content, they butted me no buts but clept up a dozen of our best and we saddled up and rode for Ormesby incontinent. I was amazed they did not tarry for to ask for Sir John his permission but all he can think on is past glories and he has started to sing to himselfe. And it was enoughe to know that Tuddenham was at work and I needed them.

We set off at a canter, stopping in a wood near Ormesby last night. We were cold and wet and tired but our Ghostes were revived with some liquor brought from the barracks with some pork pies.

## 31 August

And as we roused ourselves from our bedragged condition in the morning, we talked of how to approach the recovery. Should we lay on a siege, or attempt a full frontal attack? Basset said the men were readie now for anythinge. They hath had several months of idleness and needed action. But I counselled caution. The mansion might be well defended by now. We had supplied my Lady with a good deal of abylymentes which her enemies will now have in their possession. I discussed a ruse with Basset who agreed it was sound and they would all play their part.

We surrounded the Place but did nothinge to discover ourselves. Then I spied with my good eye the chief skytehawk in occupation. It was John Wymondham.

Our men, like the Romans of old, lay in wait at the back of the house. I approached the front. I threw a stone at a window and a man came to the door and

told me to go fuck myself. Or perhaps he saith swyve. Tis all one.

I said I wanted to speak to the shittyhawk John Wymondham and I told him I was the man who had trespassed all over his village and pissed in the common well there, when he thought I had departed.

Wymonmdham came to the door. We fell to fighting straightway, while all his fellows came out of the house to see him thrash me to death, and hopefully gut me with his ripping knife.

Which he would have done.

But while he was stomping in my face, prior to lyvery of the *coupe de grass*, while they were all a cheering, our fellows had carried the Place from the rear, like rates upp a drayne. And we came at them from every side. I was never so heartened in all my days, save when I first kissed Catherine.

Our men hastily overpowered the rest, for they were all good veterans and the enemy but rascally henchmen who knew onlie how to kick a man when he is down and outnumbered. And I could see from the corner of my good eye that Catherine was amongst them, wielding a good wooden stool agaynest nose, shin and ballock alike.

I was lying under Wymondham when they found me at last, having put an arrow in his shoulder to disable him like a stag. He had pretty well torn off my ear and shafted me thoroughly but Prayse God I was alive and had my good eye still.

No one will trow this in the yeres to come. If I grow old and sit down with whatever frendes I have then, they will conceyve I have engaged in a mere fiction of the law, and manufactured a case of forcible entry, *vi et armis*.

But now, this night, I have retired to the Inn, while the men stayed to make the mansion house more secure.

And Catherine was here in the Inn and she so grateful.

We hath repaired to our own chambers and I writing this paper by candlelight as so oft and quietly content with my lot. For this writing hath ceased to be a chore and become a pleasure unto me. It doth settle my ghoste before I rest my body. And in this way the Journal hath become allmost a frende, though unlike Pygmalion his ivory it doth not respond to the touch.

Now it is nerely midnight and my stock of candles is allmost spent. I must for bed.

Is that a knock at my door?