

# Archæologia Cantiana.

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## LETTERS TO THE PRIOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY FROM UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

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THE ten letters of which transcripts and translations are given below were written by students from various Universities in Western Europe. They are all addressed to Prior Henry of Eastry, who entered upon his office in the year 1284, and for upwards of forty-six years presided over the great Benedictine monastery attached to the Cathedral church of Canterbury. The letters are not dated, but from internal evidence several, if not all, of them were written during the last decade of the thirteenth century. That the Prior should have kept them is somewhat strange, since, like most of their kind, they contained much that must have been both irritating and distressing to the recipient. Human nature does not change much in six hundred years and, *mutatis mutandis*, these undergraduate-letters of the thirteenth century were penned in circumstances much the same as those which occasion appeals to parents or guardians in the twentieth century. It would not have been surprising, therefore, if the Prior, after reading the letters, had destroyed them; but Henry of Eastry, being an extremely methodical person, laid up in his chancery every scrap of correspondence received by him, with the result that the bulk of it is yet extant, and now forms a section of the archives of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury known as "*The Eastry Letters.*"

The existence of the Eastry Correspondence was unknown when the late Dr. J. B. Sheppard compiled his report on the Canterbury Chapter muniments for the Historical MSS. Commissioners (1876-1883); hence the letters are not noticed therein. It was not until 1893 that they were discovered hidden away in hampers in a stable in the stone-masons' yard near the west end of the Cathedral. To this

depository the documents would seem to have been relegated early in the nineteenth century, when the great catalogue of the Chapter archives was being compiled by C. R. Bunce, who may have regarded these letters as of little importance, since they could not be of use in establishing a title to any property. The "*Eastry Letters*" have since been calendared, and those possessing special historical interest have been dealt with by Dr. R. L. Poole in a supplementary report issued by the Historical MSS. Commission in 1901, (Various Collections, vol. i, pp. 205-281) in which report extracts from some of the letters here following find a place.

Although the Prior and Chapter of Christ Church, Canterbury, from the early years of the fourteenth century spent annually considerable sums of money in maintaining members of their house at a "*studium generale*," there is no evidence that they did so in their corporate capacity at an earlier period. It is not until the year 1304 that an entry occurs in the accounts of the monastic treasurers of money laid out for the maintenance of students at a university. In that year the books record a payment of no less than 33£ 16s. for the travelling expenses, outfit, and maintenance of two Canterbury monks at Paris. As this was for a period for little more than twenty-one weeks the allowance seems an extremely liberal one,<sup>1</sup> since Sir Maxwell Lyte in his History of the University of Oxford (quoting from the Wardrobe accounts of Edward I) states that the king paid out no more than 30£ 19s. for the support of two Oxford students during nine months.

It was not until the last year of Eastry's long priorate that the Canterbury monastery acquired a hostel of its own in Oxford. In 1331 premises were obtained in the parish of St. Peter in the East, which comprised a hall, dormitory, common-room and oratory.<sup>2</sup> But although it was a modest establishment, accommodating only three monks, there seems to have been difficulty in keeping up even that small number of students, since a letter from Archbishop Islip

<sup>1</sup> In exp̃ns fratrum Andr'. de Hardres et Steph' de Faversham student' Parisiis cum passag': et apparatu eorundem a festo Sc̃i Math': Apli anno r.r.E. xxxii usque ad festum Sc̃i Valent': anno r.r. eiusdem xxxiii<sup>o</sup>-xxxiii-li xvis.

<sup>2</sup> Register L.f. 10.

to the Prior of Christ Church is extant, in which the Archbishop deploras the fact that there were no Canterbury monks studying at Oxford and suggests that the Prior should select a few of the more intelligent young monks for a university training. As this was in the year 1354 it is likely that the ravages of the Black Death may have been responsible for the shortage. Whether the Prior took any steps in the matter is not known; but seven years later (1361) the same Archbishop acquired a site to the north of St. Frideswyde's Priory upon which he built Canterbury College for a warden and twelve fellows. It is remarkable that only three of the fellowships were reserved for Christ Church monks by Islip's statutes, the rest being open to secular clerks. This, however, during Langham's primacy, was altered by papal mandate, whereby the seculars were turned out and the college reserved for the exclusive benefit of Canterbury monks. With the subsequent history of Canterbury College we are not here concerned, and we must revert to the undergraduate-letters addressed to Prior Henry before the close of the thirteenth century.

It would be natural to assume that these students for whose university career the Prior appears to have been more or less responsible were novices of the great Benedictine house over which he presided; but the letters contain nothing to show that any of the writers were monks or ever became monks. On the other hand, there is good evidence that the majority of the letters were penned by seculars. Thus Richard de Haut, who writes four letters, from Orleans, became, in 'after life, an ecclesiastical lawyer; and John Lyminge, who writes from Bologna, was already in possession of a benefice, having been collated to Pluckley rectory in 1281. Of the other students whose letters are preserved, we can only say that their names do not appear in Causton's list of Christ Church monks.<sup>1</sup> That they all regarded the Prior as a friend and benefactor to whom they could always appeal for assistance in emergencies is abundantly clear, though it is difficult to determine the extent of his responsibilities towards them. In some cases it was perhaps no more than a friendly interest in the careers of

<sup>1</sup> Ch. Ch. Cant. MS. D. 12.

youths whose parents were well known to him. For instance, Sir William de Haut, the father of Richard, was High Steward of the Liberties of Christ Church, and therefore must have been well known to the Prior, whose advice in the selection of a university for his son the Knight would be sure to value. Sir William de Haut resided at Wadenhall, in the parish of Waltham, seven miles south of Canterbury. That he was a man of means sufficient to pay for his son's education is indicated by the fact that in 1276 he built a chapel at his manor house of Wadenhall, and obtained from the Archbishop a licence for a chaplain to officiate therein on three days in the week. The office of Steward of the Liberties was also lucrative.<sup>1</sup>

As Richard—probably a younger son—was destined for Orders in the Church but felt no vocation for the cloister, the Prior may have recommended a training in civil and canon law as the readiest avenue to preferment for a secular clerk,<sup>2</sup> adding that nowhere could a better training in law be obtained than in the university of Orleans.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly Richard was sent to the university on the Loire. But the course for the Licentiate was a long one, extending (in the case of candidates who had not graduated previously in arts) over six years, and before it was ended Richard received from his father a peremptory and, as he alleges, an entirely unexpected, command to return home at once. Possibly this may have been due to some pecuniary shortage in the paternal exchequer, but more probably Sir William's action was the result of unfavourable reports of his son's conduct

<sup>1</sup> A document amongst the archives of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury records a grant made in the year 1276 by Henry, Prior of St. Gregory's, Canterbury, patron of the church of Waltham, with the consent of Thomas, vicar of the same, of all offerings made in the chapel of St. Edmund the martyr in the chapel of the manor house of Wadenhall, lately founded by Sir William de Haut, for the maintenance of divine service in the said chapel on three days in the week.

<sup>2</sup> Jurists, wrote Roger Bacon in 1271, "receive all rewards and benefices . . . any first-rate man betakes himself to civil law, because he sees that civilians are enriched by all prelates and princes. . . . the greedy Faculty of civil law attracts many of the clergy." *Opera Inedita*, pp. 84, 418.

<sup>3</sup> "As a school of law Orleans began almost from its foundation to surpass the fame of Paris . . . It remained throughout the middle ages the greatest Law university in France." *The Universities of Europe in the middle ages*, Hastings Rashdall, vol. ii, p. 139.

or progress. However this may have been, the prospect of leaving the university without his licentiate was exceedingly unwelcome to Richard, who at once writes to the Prior begging that he will persuade his father to reverse his decision, as he is at the moment making particularly good progress in his studies. The Prior's answer to this letter is not extant, but apparently he did use his influence with Sir William, since Richard was permitted to stay on at Orleans; but, as he could get from his father no funds for his support, the concession was not of much practical value.

In his third letter Richard has a still more piteous tale to tell. Tired of waiting for a remittance from his father, he has entrusted to a servant, who had been for some time in his service, and one in whose honesty he reposed complete confidence, the task of collecting among his (the writer's) friends a little money and other trifling gifts (*multis aliis frivolis*), but the rascal has absconded with everything. Consequently Richard has been obliged to pawn his fair copy of the Decretals, to redeem which he asks the Prior for a loan of three silver marks, since it would be such a pity to lose the book, which, if it were at his own disposal, might be sold for a price that would pay off all his debts. Unless the Prior can lend him the money, he will be compelled to return home about Whitsuntide, though he had not meant to do so until he had obtained his licentiate. Possibly he might obtain it next year, if he could get let off one volume of the Institutes, but at any rate in two years he would be sure to get the licentiate. His staying up or going down depends entirely on what the Prior can do for him. From Richard's fourth letter we learn that the Prior lent him the money. Whether he repaid it we do not know, but however this may have been there is evidence that Richard did well in after life—for many years he was one of the lawyers to whom the Prior and convent paid an annual retaining fee, and he was at one time commissary to the Archbishop. On his death, which occurred in 1338, he bequeathed to the Prior and Chapter his house in the "Mercerie" and his law books.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Lego religiosus viris Priori et conventui ecclesie Christi Cantuar: et susseccoribus suis imperpetuum messuagium meum &c quod habeo in civitate Cantuar: in quodam loco qui vocatur le Mercerie. Item totum*

Letter No. 5 is from the pen of John Pikenot, who writes from Paris. The Pikenots had long been resident in Canterbury where a lane in the city bore their name.<sup>1</sup> An earlier John Pikenot had been sacrist of Christ Church when the cloister was rebuilt in the first half of the thirteenth century, and a Richard Pikenot was a brother of the house early in the fourteenth century; but the name of Prior Eastry's correspondent does not appear in the list of Christ Church monks. His letter has the honourable distinction of being the only one of the series in which no appeal is made for pecuniary assistance, the object of the writer being to inform the Prior that one Huet, the son of the Prior's cook, had lately brought to Paris, and offered to the Abbot of St. Denys "certain precious and very holy relics of the blessed Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury," to wit "a piece of his scalp one inch in length together with a certain portion of his hair," alleging that the said relics had been entrusted to him for the above purpose by a Christ Church monk, named Robert of St. Austin's. Pikenot then goes on to say, that since the messenger could produce no covering letter from Dom Robert, the Abbot of St. Denys, being sceptical as to the genuineness of the relics, was at first disposed to imprison the messenger for attempting to foist worthless forgeries upon him. On second thoughts however, the Abbot had decided to retain the relics until he could get further evidence that they really were what they purported to be, and with this object he had sent the messenger back to Canterbury with a letter to Dom Robert. The concluding part of Pikenot's letter is obscure, owing to the illegibility of certain words in the text; but he seems to mention other relics of

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corpus juris civilis, Item decretalales: . . . (parchment defective) decretum una cum glosa Hostiensis in duobus voluminibus. Item summa copiose et speculum giudiciale. Item decem libros. . . . (defective) sub eo pacto et condicione ut ipsi pro eisdem rebus faciant celebrare imperpetuum in capella sua elemosinaria unum anniversarium pro anima bone memorie Roberti nuper Cant: Archiepiscopi et pro anima domini Willi de Haute militis et Juliane uxoris sue et pro anima mea. Tuesday next after the feast of St. Martin 12 Edw. iii. (Ch, Ch. MS. C. 724).

<sup>1</sup> Pikenot Lane was a few yards to the west of St. Margaret's street and ran parallel to that street from the High street as far as St. Margaret's church; it is now represented by the little blind alley behind the shops on the north side of St. Margaret's church, the entrance to the High street having long since been blocked up and built over.

St. Thomas in addition to those that had been offered to the Abbot of St. Denys, namely "a phial filled with the blood, and a portion of the heart of the glorious martyr," and of these he hints that the Prior, by the exercise of a little tact, might get possession. Attached to Pikenot's letter is the letter of the Abbot to Dom Robert, in which he describes the relics as being enclosed in a little coffer of red wood within a larger case of *cuir bouillé*, and adds that he intends to keep them carefully and reverently until he can be certified by the monk or by others concerning their genuineness. Probably this letter did not come into the hands of the monk, since Dom Robert of St. Austin's died in 1291, but into those of Prior Henry, who filed it with his other letters.

The writer of the next letter [No. VI] describes himself as "J. Parent a poor scholar of Paris." Since the name occurs in the rentals of property held of the Prior and Chapter in the city of Canterbury, it is likely that Parent was the son of a citizen well known to the Prior, and that the latter had made himself responsible for the cost of the lad's university career. Bad reports, however, had reached the Prior's ears of the conduct and progress of his protégé, with the result that he had stopped his allowance. Parent, of course, protests that these damaging reports are entirely untrue, and, then, by way of reingratiating himself with his patron, proceeds to make him an offer, which we can only hope the prior did not accept. He had been employed, he writes, by one of the Friars Minor to make a copy of a book which he describes as a most useful compendium of the Canon and Civil Law. It was about the same size as the book which used to lie near the shrine of St. Thomas<sup>1</sup> and had been compiled by a Franciscan friar, but the book was so strictly confined to the use of their order, that no one outside it could obtain a copy. Parent goes on to say that whilst he was transcribing the book, his fellow student had made another copy of it for their common use, and that they intended to multiply copies and offer them for sale; but before doing so they would like to know what the Prior thinks of the above scheme. He would have sent the book or part

<sup>1</sup> Containing, probably, an account of the passion and miracles of the saint.

of it on approval, had not his friend objected to his doing so, on the score that it might get lost on the way.

From Bologna we have a long letter from John of Lyminge, rector of Pluckley, to which benefice though only in subdeacon's orders he had been collated by Archbishop Peckham in 1281. He was reading Canon law at Bologna but had intended, after graduating there, to take a further course in the same faculty at Oxford—a practice not uncommon amongst the more ambitious scholars of the middle ages, and one to which Chaucer alludes in the line "Sundry scoles maken subtil clerks." But he was overtaken by a series of misfortunes, which threatened to bring his university career to an untimely end, unless the Prior can lend him some money. The tale he has to tell is as follows: First, in spite of repeated efforts he had been unable to obtain a copy of the "Decretum"<sup>1</sup>—an indispensable textbook for the study of Canon law—though he had appealed to all the dons (literatores) to let him have the book. To raise a little money (presumably to buy the book) he had even offered to sell one of his diplomas<sup>2</sup> to a fellow student who was going home. But, since the latter would give no more than ten shillings for this precious document, the would-be vendor was so bitterly disappointed that his health broke down entirely. Then he goes on to tell how, on his recovery, his Lombard servant had absconded, taking with him the writer's copy of the Decretals.<sup>3</sup> Though the thief had been caught and lodged in gaol, and the book recovered, the incident had cost the writer a good deal of money, especially as he had taken counsel's opinion as to whether he would be deemed guilty of irregularity if the thief should be executed. He begs therefore the Prior to send at once to the merchant bankers of Bologna letters of credit on his behalf, offering as security a lien on the fruits of his benefice.

The writer of the eighth letter, an Oxford undergraduate,

<sup>1</sup> The Decretum of Gratian, which was drawn up in the middle of the twelfth century was a Concordantia Discordantium Canonum, rather a Code.

<sup>2</sup> *Bulla*, a word sometimes applied to a document bearing a seal. See Ducange.

<sup>3</sup> Five books of Decretals were published in 1234 by authority of Pope Gregory ix.



gives only the first letter of his Christian name, viz. J. He informs the Prior that just as he was getting ready to go home he had been kicked by a horse so severely that it nearly cost him his life. However, he was now recovering from the effects of the accident, and being in a very impecunious state, he begs the Prior to hold out to him once more, a helping hand, if only out of respect for the memory of his (the Prior's) brother, who on his deathbed had commended the writer to the Prior's care. In conclusion he confesses that in the past he has been an idle fellow, but promises to amend his ways in the future. Since he adds in a postscript, that he had already written three times to the Prior without receiving any reply from him, it seems likely that the latter had doubts as to the *bona fides* of his correspondent.

Stephen of Bocland, the author of the next letter [No. 9] writes from Orleans. He begins by expressing great regret that reports have reached him that the Prior's health had been affected through his (the writer's) misconduct. But he begs to be given another chance, since he really does mean to work this term, adding that he has been fortunate in obtaining board and lodging free in the house of a certain Prior of Narni, a fellow student, for whom he acts as an amanuensis and who in return coaches him in the Decretals.

Letter No. 10 relates to horsedealing. The name of the writer is not given, nor is there anything in the letter to prove that it was written by a university student, though the fact that the writer is deeply in debt makes this probable. His object is to persuade the Prior to give more for a horse than its market value in order to help the vendor to pay his creditors and, if he should purchase the animal, to supply him with another mount; which on the face of it appears a somewhat impudent proposal.

The originals are written on narrow strips of parchment, except No. 7 which is on paper. Owing to the fading of the ink and the curious latinity in which the various writers express themselves, the task of deciphering and translating has been a somewhat difficult one; and though an honest attempt has been made to give an accurate text and literal translation of these letters I fear that I may not always have interpreted correctly the real meaning of the writer.

[E.C. IV. 25]

## I

RICHARD DE HAUT, A STUDENT OF LAW, AT ORLEANS, TO  
HENRY OF EASTRY, PRIOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY.

H(enrico) dei gracia prior Cant' R(icardus) de Haut si placet suorum clericorum minimus se ipsum totum cum perhenni promptitudine serviendi. Quia sagacitate ultra alia cuncta moventur illuc sibi refugium querere ubi solebant in discrimine tutam recipere defensionem, ego huius sagacitatis imitator compellor necessario me vestre subiicere defensionem, quia cum fere totus meus status ruine periculo supponatur ad vos qui me semper in omnibus liberaliter defendistis secure refugio, petens humiliter immunitatem mihi concedi tamquam fugienti. Noscat igitur vestra reverenda dominacio nuper a patre meo tale mandatum recepisse ut statim mandati sui viso tenore famulum meum pro equis querendis indilate sibi remitterem, et quod omnes meas sarcinulas contra reversionem predicti garcionis celeriter preperaveram, quia, ut dicit, non placet sibi amplius me debere hic commorari. Ex hoc mandato multiplici rationi mirabiliter sum stupefactus, tum quia de hospicio et societate bona mihi providi, tum quia lecturam de novo resumpsi, scilicet statim post Penthecoust (*sic*) et est mihi indultum quod presens lectura continuata ad festum Sci Mich, una cum eo quod legi in quadragesima pro lectura unius voluminis mihi debet computari, nec est modo aliquis de natione nostra nisi ego solus qui actualiter legat, quia omnes recesserunt sine spe revertendi. Alie eciam sunt rationes quam plures quas ne vos fatigem premitto. Supplico igitur vestre venerande dominacioni quatenus erga patrem meum mihi si placet dignemini graciose impetrare ut per annum futurum mihi concedat hic licenciam commorandi, quia ad legendum C (-*odicem*) anno futuro statum meum totaliter ordinavi, cui proposito predicto repugnabunt nisi vestra benignitas aliud duxerit ordinare. Si irreverenter et indiscrete scripsero parcat mihi si placet vestra dominacio quod ornatum sermonem non cupitis, dum tamen alias possit vobis constare de voluntate scribentis. Valeat semper dominus meus.

*Translation.*

## I

RICHARDE DE HAUT, A STUDENT OF LAW, AT ORLEANS, TO  
HENRY OF EASTRY, PRIOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY.

To Henry by the grace of God, prior of Canterbury, Richard de Haut, the least of his clerks, but always his very obedient servant, sendeth greeting. Since by a wise instinct, more than by anything else all things are moved to seek refuge where they have been wont to receive protection in times of stress, I am compelled perforce to imitate their wise example by submitting myself to your protection, because, now that almost my whole career is in danger, I flee to you who have ever on all occasions been my generous protector, humbly begging that the shelter which is ever a fugitive's due may be granted to me. Know then, reverend sir, that I received lately from my father a command to the effect that as soon as I had grasped its meaning, I should without delay dispatch my servant to seek for horses, and indeed I had got all my little luggage packed as quickly as possible, against the return of the aforesaid lad, because he says, it is not his pleasure that I should stay on here any longer. On receiving this command I was for more than one reason altogether dumbfounded, both because I have got into a good hostel, and a good set, and have started also a new course of reading, that is to say I did so immediately after Whitsuntide, and, as a favour my present course continued up to Michaelmas, is to be reckoned as the reading of one volume (*of the Institutes*). Nor is there now anyone of our nation, who as a matter of fact can read, because all have gone away without any hope of coming back. There are some other reasons too—a good many, which I pass over, lest I should tire you. Therefore I beseech your venerable lordship to be so good as to use your gracious influence with my father, so that he may give me leave to stay on here during the coming year, because I have made all my plans with a view to reading the Codex in the coming year, but they (*my parents*) will oppose this plan unless your kindly intervention should induce them to change their minds. If I have shown any want of respect or discretion in what I have written, please spare me, since your lordship does not desire fine words so long as you can feel certain from other sources that the writer means well.

May you ever farewell my lord.

[E.C. III. 41]

## II

## THE SAME TO THE SAME.

H(-enrico) dei gracia priori Cant' R(-icardus) de Haut suorum clericorum minimus se ipsum totum cum perhenni promptitudine serviendi. Ira dolor et tristitia calamum scribendi causa preparatum vix mihi permiserunt apprehendere ea ratione quod fortiter timeo tale quid attemptasse quod non possum honorifice consumpnare, quum illa sine quibus opus inceptum nullatenus valeo terminare dolo vel culpa mea non interveniente nescio qua de causa totaliter auferuntes, quum si vestra dominacio recolit mihi nuper propter iussum patris ad recedendum preparato, precum vestrarum interventu licenciam remanendi totaliter ad votum meum impetrastis et idcirco sub protectione alarum vestrarum lecturam ff (*Pandectae*) veteris prius assumptam in vigilia Sci Michis terminavi, et rursus Cod(icem) assumpsi legendum et hucusque cum venerabili comitiva scolarium lecturam continuavi, sed nunc formido quod compellar necessario cum confusione lecturam assumptam dimittere, quia a festo Sci Johis bapt' omnino nullas expensas potui optinere, et tamen pro hiis habendis multociens literas supplicatorias parentibus destinavi, nec scirem de hoc aliquam causam excogitare, nisi quod ad ipsorum mandatum statim cum *vigore* (?) non revertabar, cum igitur discretionem vestram non latuerit eum qui mandatum ad aliquid gerendum recepit omnia videri recepisse gerenda, sine quibus illud ne quid aliquo modo consumpnari, et vos ad supplicationem meam licenciam hic remanendi vestri gracia liberaliter impetrastis, adhuc omni devocione qua possum non cesso supplicare quatenus ea sine quibus hic remanere non possum ab eisdem mihi concedi non recusetis impetrare, alioquin cum opprobrio sempiterno in proximo compellar remeare, nondum tamen reverti propono quousque a vobis super hiis certum responsum optinero. Idcirco si placet super predictis dignemini patrem meum alloqui sagaciter prout semper consuevistis, ac si vobis ista per me non essent notificata *sancte* (?) si placet matri mee fratrem Johem de Hardres capellanus vestrum<sup>1</sup> vel alium super hoc a vobis specialiter instructum digemini destinare, ut consilio vestro manus euis congelate misericorditer aperiantur. Reverende domine precibus clericuli vestri si placet annuat

<sup>1</sup> John de Hardres, prior's chaplain, died 1300. *Canterbury Obituary* [D.12].

## II

## THE SAME TO THE SAME.

To Henry by the grace of God, prior of Canterbury Richard de Haut the least of his clerks, but always his very obedient servant sendeth greeting. I was so annoyed, grieved and depressed that I was scarcely able to hold the pen I had got ready for writing, because I greatly fear that I have begun a task which I may not be able to accomplish in an honourable manner, since for some cause that is unknown to me, but certainly through no deceitful conduct nor fault of mine everything necessary for carrying through the task I had begun is taken away from me. Your lordship will recollect, that a little while ago while I was all ready to go down in obedience to my father's bidding, you—at my request—obtained leave for me to stay on, and so under the protection of your wings I finished reading the ancient Pandects, which I had begun on the eve of St. Michael. And I have taken up again the reading of the Codex, and up to this point I have gone on with my course of reading together with the worshipful company of scholars. But now I fear that I may be forced shamefully to lay aside the course of reading I have taken up, since from the feast of St. John the Baptist I have been unable to get any funds at all, though I have many times sent letters to my parents asking them to let me have what I require, and I do not know how to account for this unless it be my failure to return at once as they bade me do. Therefore, as it cannot be hid from your wise mind that he who has received an order to do something, must be deemed to have received all things necessary for carrying it out, for without them it could not be carried out at all, and you know too, that at my entreaty, you were so good as to obtain leave for me to stay on here. I cease not to pray most earnestly that you will not refuse to ask that the things which are absolutely necessary if I am to remain here may be granted to me, otherwise I shall be compelled at once to go home—in eternal disgrace. I do not, however, intend to return until I get from you a definite reply to this letter. Therefore, if it please you, deign to say a wise word to my father, as indeed you have often been wont to do. And if what I have told you be not a private matter, please be so good as to send brother John of Hardres, your chaplain, or some other person, specially instructed by you in this matter,

quia a dominacione vestra totam statum meum et fortunam reputo dependere, adeoque reputo me penitus nil esse, nisi crederem me discretionem vestram optinere, jam enim tempus adest in quo maxime deberem proficere et laudem mihi acquirere, quia modo visus sum difficultate solacium quod prius erat mihi supplicium et tormentum. Faciatis igitur si placet de novo habere hominem deducendo me de iugo servitutas ad libertatem. Data Aurel' in vigilia Epiphanie Domini.

[E.C. IV. 60]

### III

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

H(-enrico) dei gracia priori ecclesie Christi Cant' Ric(ardus) de Haut suorum clericorum minimus se ipsum totum cum perhenni promptitudine serviendi.

Verborum ornatorum sprete solemnitate presentem meam necessitatem sicuti alias consuevi vestre dominacioni reserare compellor. Noverit vestra dominacio quod a festo Sci Johis Bapt' hucusque ab amicis meis fere nullas expensas optinere potui ipsis asserentibus hoc accedere propter penuriam nunciorum, tandem eisdem misi quemdam ribaldum qui michi longo tempore deservivit qui etiam pecuniam meam michi quere consuevit de quo sicut me ipso confidebam. Iste ribaldus ab amicis meis recepta pecunia cum multis aliis frivolis, sue salutis immemor, Deum pre oculis non habens, omnia fraudulenter asportavit, pro quo tantam turbacionem michi animo concepi quod in singulis meis agibilibus tanquam morbus sonticus accedit impedimentum. Idcirco in presenti necessitate que merito potest dici necessitatum necessitas, ad vos sub spe vestre confidencie quam hucusque non inveni defectivam animo titubanti confugio, supplicans affectuose quatenus pro pingnoribus (*sic*) meis redimendis iii Marcas argenti mihi mutuo concedere dignemini, et promitto per fidem meam quod infra annum a tempore mutui dati vobis satisfaciam in predictis, sive vivam, sive moriar naturaliter sive civiliter, et pro hiis solvendis astringam me sacramento. Preter

to my mother that by your advice her frozen hands may for pity's sake be thawed. O reverend Sir, be pleased to give a favourable answer to the prayers of your little clerk, since I reckon that my whole position and fortune depend upon your lordship, and to such an extent is this the case that if I did not believe I should obtain your kindly consideration I should count myself altogether down and out ; for this is just the time when I ought to be getting on particularly well and winning praise, for now I realise that there is a satisfaction in tackling a difficulty—a thing which I regarded at one time as punishment and torture. So please try again to get somebody to rescue me from the yoke of slavery and restore me to liberty.

Given at Orleans, on the eve of the Lord's Epiphany.

### III

#### THE SAME TO THE SAME.

To Henry by the grace of God, prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, Richard de Haut the least of his clerks, but always his very obedient servant sendeth greeting.

Putting aside a formal and ornate introduction I am forced to disclose to your lordship my present needy condition, as indeed on other occasions I have been wont to do. Your lordship should know that from the feast of St. John the Baptist to the present time, I have been able to get scarcely any funds from my friends, who allege that this is due to the lack of couriers. At length I sent to them a fellow who had been in my service a long time, who had been in the habit of gathering money for me, and was one in whom I had perfect confidence. Well, this fellow after getting money and many other little gifts from my friends, unmindful of his salvation, and having no fear of God before his eyes, fraudently went off with the lot, whereby I received so severe a shock, that a sort of paralysis affected all my faculties—as though some deadly disease had taken hold of me. Therefore in my present necessity which may well be called extreme, I flee to you in my embarrassment, in hope that you will extend to me the kindly consideration which so far I have never found wanting, earnestly beseeching you to be so good as to lend me three silver marks wherewith to redeem my pledges. I promise faithfully that I will repay the aforesaid sum within a year from the date of

hoc etiam omnia bona mea presentia et futura vobis sint pro hiis loco pignoris obligata, renunciabo etiam Macedoniano confitebor etiam in necessitatem scolasticam esse conversum, astringam etiam me sacramento contra predicta non venire. Et pro hiis omnibus exquerendis Ric(-ardum) de Wilmington consanguineum meum constituo procuratorem, concedens sibi potestatem generalem et liberam obligandi me forma suprascripta, et non tantum illa forma immo omni alia quam pro securitate habenda sciveritis excogitare. Scio quod pulchras decretales meas, quas gratia usus mei feci construere, et multa alia preciosa pro modica pecunia respective perdam nisi a vobis et aliis subsidium obtinero. Sed si Decretales superscriptas liberatas habuero ex ipsarum precio crederem omnibus satisfacere circa festum Pentecostes. Necessitatum habeo repatriare quod ante istud infortunium non proposueram quousque licenciam in legibus optinuissem, quam consequerer in anno sequenti per dispensationem unius voluminis, sed in biennio licenciam consequerer de rigore, moram tamen vel recessum totum reputo a vestra potestate dependere.

[E.C. IV. 109]

#### IV

##### THE SAME TO THE SAME.

H(enrico) deo gracia priori ecclesie Cant' R(icardus) de Haut suorum minimus, se ipsum totum si placet cum parata promptitudine famulandi.

Domine reverende ego memor vulgaris dicti quo dicitur *ubi amor ibi oculus* compellor oculorum mentalium affectu vobis domino meo protectori et defensori presenti scripto oculorum naturalium vicem representante necessario reserare, quod pro corporali presencia firmiter credo per vos acceptari. Noveritis etiam Domine reverende quod in firmo proposito ad huc persisto legendi *inforciatum* anno futuro et ut alias vobis scripsi finito libro infalibiliter propono licenciam in legibus optinere. Quod propositum scio viribus carere deberet nisi vestrum auxilium consilium et favorem ad duritiam parentum temperandam dignetur vestra benignitas impetrire de pecunia per vos mihi



the loan, whether I shall live or die—either by a natural death, or by the hand of the law, and I will bind myself by oath to pay the money. Further, all my goods present and future shall be assigned to you as security for the repayment of the money. Also I will give up my right to plead exemption under the Macedonian clause.<sup>1</sup> I will confess also that my necessitous condition is affecting my university career. I will also bind myself by an oath not to repudiate the aforesaid conditions. And I appoint Richard of Wilmington my kinsman as my proctor for the carrying out of all these matters, giving him full and free power to give my bond in the form abovesaid, and not only in that form, but in any other you may devise for the sake of security. Unless I shall obtain help from you and others, I feel sure that for the lack of a little money I shall lose my fair copy of the Decretals which I have compiled for my own use, and many other precious things as well. But if I have at my disposal the said Decretals, I believe, that with the price it would fetch, I could satisfy all my creditors about Whitsuntide. I must return home, though before this stroke of ill-luck I did not intend to do so until I had obtained the licenciate in laws, which I might manage to do next year by being let off one volume (*of the Institutes*); but in two years I should be sure to get the licenciate. However, I know that my staying up or going down depends entirely on what you can do for me.

## IV

## THE SAME TO THE SAME.

To Henry by the grace of God prior of the Church of Canterbury Richard de Haut the least of his clerks but always his very obedient servant sendeth greeting.

Reverend Sir, mindful of the common saying, "Where love is the eye is," I am compelled to open my mind to you my lord, protector, and defender in this present letter, which must be taken to represent my natural eyes, and, as I feel sure, will be accepted by you in place of a personal interview. You should know, then, reverend Sir, that I am going on steadily with the plan I made for reading the *Inforciatum*<sup>2</sup>—and, as I wrote to you on another

<sup>1</sup> The *senatus consultum Macedonianum*, forbade the lending of money to minors on a reversionary interest in a father's estate.

<sup>2</sup> The second part of the Pandects, from Book XXIV. title 2 to the end of Book XXXVIII. title 3.

liberaliter mutuata vestrae dominacioni satisfaciam termino solutioni prefixio quisicumque sequatur eventus. Si nimis irreverenter vobis scripsero huiusmodi commissi veniam instanter paulo mihi condonari, quia quemcumque sensum rigor verborum dictaverit mens tamen semper humilis est et in omnibus et per omnia vestris votis inclinata. Dignemini si placet personam Will(-elmi) de Gore nepotis Abbatis de Feversham habere recommendatam, quia de ipsius vitae moribus et assiduitate studendi et aliis bonis condicionibus in summo modo ausus essem pro eo testimonium bonum exhibere.

Valeat semper Dominus meus in adversitatibus fortissime constancia roboratus.

[E.C. IV. 12.]

V

JOHN PIKENOT AN UNDER GRADUATE (ALUMPNUM SCOLARIS) OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS TO HENRY OF EASTRY, PRIOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY.

Venerande religionis viro ac reverendissimo in Christo domino Henrico priori ecclesie Christi Cant' suus devotus J Pikenot alumpnus scholaris parisius si placet se ipsum cum omni reverencia et honore. Sacrosanctam matrem ecclesiam Christi quasi proles nepharia nequiter contempnerem, et erga vos quasi filius degenerans officerer ingratus si ea que in predicte ecclesie prejudicium et gravamen et in vestram quamcumque oriuntur, vobis celeriter non reserarem. Quare felicitati vestre significo quod pervenit ad partes Gallicanas quidam valetus nomine Hugunet filius Henrice coci vestri, qui deferebat Abbati sancti Dyonisii ex parte domini Roberti de Sancto Augustino<sup>2</sup> commonachi vestri preciosas et sanctissimas reliquias beati Thome Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi, videlicet unam peciam de craneo capitis ipsius ad mensuram unius pollicis una cum quadam parte capillorum suorum, quas quidem reliquias cum predictus Abbas in crastino cinerum recepisset admiratus est, et hiis fidem certam non adhibens, ipsas vanas et transfactorias esse exclamavit, et prenominacione Hugunet forte incarcerasset. Verumptamen

<sup>1</sup> Robert of St. Austin's died in 1291. *Canterbury Obituary*. [D. 12].

occasion, when I have finished the book I mean without fail to obtain the licence in laws, which plan I shall have no power to carry out unless your kindness shall deign to use your aid, counsel and influence for the purpose of softening the hard hearts of my parents. As for the money which you lent me so generously, I will give your lordship satisfaction for the same at the time fixed for its repayment, whatever may happen. If I have written with any want of respect for you I pray that you will at once grant me your pardon, since, however badly I may have expressed myself, my intention is to be always humble and ever subservient to your wishes. Please be so good as to receive kindly William de Gore, a nephew of the Abbot of Faversham because I can venture to speak very highly of his moral character, his industry in studying, and to his good qualities generally. May you always farewell, my lord, fortified by constancy in troublous times.

## V

JOHN PIKENOT AN UNDERGRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS TO PRIOR HENRY OF EASTRY.

To the religious and, very reverend in Christ, the lord Henry, prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, his devoted John Pikenot, undergraduate of Paris with all reverence and respect sendeth greeting.

I should be showing a wicked contempt towards the holy mother church of Christ, as though I were her worthless progeny, and to you my lord, I should be acting as an ungrateful and degenerate son, if I should not disclose to you at once matters which might be prejudicial and harmful to the aforesaid church and to yourself, whenever such arise. Wherefore I make known to your felicity that a certain varlet, named Hugunet, the son of Henry your cook, has come to France, bringing for the Abbot of St Denys<sup>1</sup> on behalf of Dom Robert of St Austin's your fellow monk, certain precious and very holy relics of the blessed Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury, namely : one piece of his scalp measuring one inch together with some of his hair. Now when the aforesaid Abbot received these relics on the day after Ash-Wednesday, he was astonished, and refusing to credit their

<sup>1</sup> Reginald Gissart, abbot of St. Denys, 1286-1304. *Gallia Christiana*, vol. vii., col. 396.

fatebatur se reliquias supradictas reservaturum quousque per indicia veriora vel per mandata papalia de premissis certificaretur, quum garcifer prenominatus literas quas recepit a predicto domino R(-oberto) itinere amittebat unde dominus Abbas ipsum valetum remittebat ut literas certicatorias de premissis reportaret verum prout existimo si prudenter et circumspecte procedetis reliquias prefatus de facili acquireretis quum dominus Abbas easdem as —<sup>1</sup> predicto garcifero voluit retro dedisse. De premissis omnibus diligenti facta inquisitione certificatus sum per illos qui tali et tanto exennio faciendo interfuerunt —<sup>1</sup> reservatur vobis quedam ampulla vetustissima plena sanguine et quedam pars cordis gloriosi martyris supradicti, quam quidem ampullam predictus garcifer —<sup>1</sup> buerat detulisse in Pykardiam et eam deputavit conservandam Thome Frere filio Thome de Borkynge quondam servientis vestri. Denunciavit tamen valectus prenominatus quod predictus dominus R(-obertus) in brevi ad partes transmarinas accedet.

Valent in Christo Jesu.

R. ABBOT OF ST DENIS TO ROBERT OF ST AUSTIN'S, MONK OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY IN CANTERBURY.

Viro religioso et honesto fratri Roberto dicto de Sco Augustino monacho Sci Trinitatis Cant', R. misericordia ecclesie beati Dionis in francia humilis Abbas salutem et sinceram in domino noveritis nos a Hueto serviente vestro ut dicit recepisse quodam os cum capillis de capite beati Thome martyris, sicut vestre nobis directe littere asserebant, existens in quodam parvo scrinio ligni rubei, incluso in alio maiori scrinio de corio bullito; et quod predictum os cum capillis care secure et reverenter reservare proponimus quousque de relatione litterarumstrarum super hoc facta per vos aut alios viros fide dignos fact'<sup>2</sup> nobis fuerit certa fides. Valet, Dat die Jovis ante Brandon.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Illegible.

<sup>2</sup> Inserted over the line.

genuineness declared that they were worthless forgeries, and perhaps he would have imprisoned the aforesaid Hugunet. However, he said he would keep the abovesaid relics, until, by more trustworthy evidence or by papal mandates, he should be certified of their genuineness. And since the aforesaid servant on the journey lost the letters which he had received from the aforesaid Dom Robert, the lord (*abbot*) sent back the varlet to get letters of authentication concerning the matters already stated. But in my opinion if you go to work wisely and cautiously, you might easily get possession of the aforesaid relics, since the lord Abbot (*illegible*) wanted to give them back to the abovenamed varlet. After making careful enquiry concerning the whole matter, I have been assured by those who were present for the purpose of making this important gift . . . that a very ancient phial filled with the blood, and some portion of the heart of the aforesaid glorious martyr is reserved for you. As for the phial, the aforesaid rascal . . . (confessed) that he brought it over to Picardy, and that he meant to keep it for Thomas Frere, son of Thomas of Borking, who was at one time in your service. However, the aforesaid varlet declared that the aforesaid Dom Robert will soon be coming to foreign parts. They farewell that are in Christ Jesus.

TO THE RELIGIOUS AND WORTHY MAN, BROTHER ROBERT CALLED OF ST AUSTIN'S, MONK OF THE HOLY TRINITY, CANTERBURY.

R. by divine mercy the humble Abbot of St Denys in France, sendeth greeting and love unfeigned in the Lord.

Know ye that we have received from one Huet, who says that he is your servant, a certain bone together with hairs from the head of the blessed martyr Thomas, (as your letters addressed to us assert) contained in a little case of red wood enclosed in a larger one of *cuir bouillé*, and we intend to lay up the aforesaid bone and hairs affectionately, securely and reverently, until by the report of your letters we shall be certified concerning this matter either by you or other person worthy of credit.

Farewell, Given on the Monday before Brandon.

<sup>1</sup> Dies Brandonum=1st Sunday in Lent.

[E.C. III. 49]

## VI

J. PARENT, POOR SCHOLAR OF PARIS TO HENRY OF EASTRY,  
PRIOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY.

Venerande religionis viro domino H(enrico) permissione divina divina priori ecclesie Christi Cant', J Parent pauper scholaris Paris' si placet salutem, et se ad pedes provolutum in debita promptitudine famulandi.

Quum nuper intellexi quedam falsa et enormia de me ore mendacium fuisse seminata eaque ad aures vestras devenisse, ita quod fidem iis adhibentis vestram elemosinam a me subtraxistis et quam michi Dei amore mittere incepistis nec sinitis perire licet immerito Deus novit. Hinc est quod doloris angustia nubilatus cum unicum meum refugium post Deum spem singularem, eciam patrem et matrem pro nulla causa ut iam amittere debeam non desino ululare, nec est michi medela aliqua nisi tantum via veritatis. Et quia inter cetera vobis si possem in aliquo . . .<sup>1</sup> complacere, et si possem investigare que vestro honori cederent vel utilitati protinus intimare, vobis significo quemdam tractatum qui *Tabula iuris* appellatur a iure canonico et civili esse abstractum et a quodam fratre minore esse compilatum, qui continet XV sexternos, fere voluminis illius libri qui ad feretrum solebat iacere, in quo quidem tractatu sententias famosorum doctorum iuris canonici et civilis et interdum divini, ut in prohemio attestatur recitat compiler. Iste tractus tam a religiosis quam eciam secularibus vehementer desideratur, quia ut dicitur nunquam liber aliquis ad hunc usum humanum utilior eo fuerat compertus. Sed huius exemplar fratres minores neminem extra suum ordinem permittunt habere. Huius tamen tractus ego et socius meus exemplar bonum et verum habemus, quia cuidam fratri dictum librum percipsi, interim eciam socius meus ad utilitatem nostram communem ipsum nobis scripsit. Et proponimus conducere exempla et totum librum paratum exponere venditacioni, quod non faciemus donec responsum a vobis habeamus. Partem libri vel totum vobis mississem ad inspiciendum si socius meus non permittens tenuit de amissione propter itineris longitudinem et maris peric . . .<sup>1</sup> Valet in Christo et Virgine gloriosa, Vestrum beneplacitum mihi significetis si placet. Script' Parisiis die Cinerum.

<sup>1</sup> Here, and in other places in this letter the ink has faded so much that it is difficult to be sure of the right reading.

## VI

J. PARENT, A POOR SCHOLAR OF PARIS TO PRIOR HENRY OF EASTRY.

To the religious and venerable man the lord Henry by divine permission prior of the Church of Christ in Canterbury, J. . Parent, a poor scholar of Paris sendeth greeting—if he may be permitted to do so—and prostrate at his feet declares that he is ready to do him instant service. Since it has recently come to my knowledge that certain false and monstrous reports concerning me have been spread abroad and have reached your ears, with the result that believing them to be true you have withdrawn from me the alms which for the love of God you undertook to send to me. Hence it is that being enveloped in a thick cloud of grief since I am now in danger of losing the help of one who, after God, has been my sole hope, even father and mother to me, and for no reason at all, I cease not to bewail my lot, nor can I see any way out except only the way of truth. And because I am always ready to please you in any way I can, and to the best of my power to look out for and at once notify to you anything that may bring you honour or profit, I bring to your notice a certain treatise, which is called *Tabula Juris* and is an abstract from the Canon and Civil law, which was compiled by one of the friars minor. The book contains fifteen gatherings of six, and is almost of the same size as the book which used to lie near the shrine (of *St. Thomas*).<sup>1</sup> In this treatise the compiler recites the opinions of the famous doctors of the Canon and Civil law, and sometimes of the Divine law as well—as is stated in the preface. This treatise is in great request not only by the religious but also by seculars because it is said no other book has ever proved more useful to men than this one. But the Franciscans allow no one outside their own order to possess a copy. Nevertheless I and my fellow student have a good and true copy of this treatise, because I wrote out the said book for a certain friar, and in the meantime my fellow student made a copy of it for our common use, and we mean to go on making copies, and, when the whole book is ready, to offer it for sale, but we will not do so until we have a reply from you. I would have sent you part or even the whole of the book on approval, but my fellow student refuses to consent, maintaining that it might get lost on the long journey or through the danger of the sea-voyage. Farewell in Christ and the glorious Virgin. Please let me know what your wishes may be. Written at Paris on Ash-Wednesday.

<sup>1</sup> Probably a book containing the passion and miracles of *St. Thomas* of Canterbury.

[E.C. II. 46]

## VII

JOHN DE LYMINGE, A STUDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA TO HENRY OF EASTRY, PRIOR OF CANTERBURY.<sup>1</sup>

Venerabili in Christo suo domino H(enrico) dei gracia priori Cantuar' devotus clericus suus Joh(annes) de Lymmingg salutem et ad pedem oscula se pronum. Domine reverende receptis literis vestris ex uno latere animus meus requireret pro tanto quod vestra dominacio mihi scribere placuit statum suum quibus est favente Domino vos vigere perpendi munere sospitatis, ex altero vero contristabar (h)esitans vos quicquam sinistrum concepisse ex eo quod nondum meritis super mutuo vos requirere capuose presumpsi, super hiis mihi si placet ignoscentes cum propositi mei fuerat in studio Bononiensi per aliqua tempora in iure canonico studuisse ac demum juxta consilium vestrum Oxoniam transtulisse ac legisse decretales, et hec magister Johannes de Bestan tunc in curia existens mihi frequenter consulebat. Sed talia non sunt mea fata cum super emptione decretorum omnes literatores interpellaveram quos speraveram in tante necessitatis articulo, ac uberioris promocionis mihi fortassis accrescende meis petitionibus annuisse, qui tamen inhumaniter rogata contempnentes totaliter proposuerant excusacionis obiectum, adeo quod latoꝝ presens de propriis rediens de quadam Bulla quam impetraveram mihi tantum Xsolidos reportavit, ita quod ob doloris angustiam tanta subitanea invasit infirmitas quod de vita medici desperabant, finaliter tamen altissimo regraciato pristinae sum sanitati restitutus. Postmodum vero quidam meus garcio Lombardus qui mihi deservierat propter absenciam pueri mei, decretales meas furtive surripuit quem capi procuraveram ac in carcere potestatis detineri, et cum tormentis supponi debuisset per interpositas personas me cercioravit ubi absconderat librum meum, et de cuius consilio tale facinus perpetravit, ita quod per Dei gratiam rehabeo librum illum quorum occasione de prudencia cum consilio magnos sumptus apposueram ne irregularitatem incurrerem alioquin truncatum fuisset capud eius. Hinc est domine reverende quod adeo tristis est anima mea propter divisorum infortuniorum occursus propter quos tam grande contraxi es alienum quod mortem solacium ac vitam supplicium reputo temporibus iam

<sup>1</sup> This letter is written on paper, the rest are on vellum.



## VII

JOHN OF LYMINGE A STUDENT OF BOLOGNA TO PRIOR HENRY OF EASTRY.

To the venerable in Christ his lord, Henry, by the grace of God prior of Canterbury, his devoted clerk John of Lymming sendeth greeting, and humbly kisses his feet.

Reverend Sir, on receipt of your letters, though on the one hand I was very pleased to learn that your lordship's health (by God's favour) was in a flourishing condition, on the other hand I was very sorry to feel uncertainty as to whether you had taken offence at my having presumed to ask you for a loan which I have not yet really earned, for this I pray you to pardon me, since I had intended to go on studying the Canon law in the university of Bologna for some time longer, and then, in accordance with your advice, to have passed on to Oxford, to read there the Decretals, and this Master John of Bestan<sup>1</sup>, who at that time was resident at the (*papal*) court, often advised me to do. But such is not to be my lot, since all the scholars of whom I made enquiries about buying the *Decretum* and who, as I hoped, would have granted my request out of regard for my necessitous condition, and possibly from a desire to further my interests, paid no attention to my request but most unkindly rejected it altogether. So that when the bearer of this letter, being about to return home on business offered me only ten shillings for a certain diploma which I had obtained, my disappointment was so keen that I became seriously ill—indeed the doctors despaired of my life. At length, thanks to the most High, I was restored to my former health. But soon afterwards my Lombard servant, who, in the absence of my own boy, waited upon me, dishonestly went off with my Decretals. I managed to get him arrested and lodged in prison, and when he was about to be placed under torture, he disclosed to me,—through the medium of other persons,—where he had hidden my book, and through whose prompting he had perpetrated such a crime, and so by the grace of God I have regained possession of the book. All this has cost me a very considerable sum of money, for I thought it prudent to take advice lest I should incur irregularity, if it had not been for that, the man would have been beheaded.

<sup>1</sup> John de Bestane was rector of Cliffe from 1288 to 1305. See Arch. Cant. Vol. XV., p. 222.

modernis. Quapropter dominationem vestram semper reverendam corde contrito humiliter imploro quatinus fructus ecclesie mee sicuti vestri gracia scripsistis acceptare velitis, ac statim latorem presentium cum literis mercatoribus Bonon' commorantibus directis remittere quia Curia statim in festo beati Michaelis de urbe veteri recedet si papa vivat, ut mihi specialiter quidam scripserant, de quibusdam negociis meis premunientes non est diu, cum civitas urbis veteris a Bononia parum distet.<sup>1</sup>

Ignorans per omnia quid sim facturus priusquam cum litteris vestris reversus fuerit puer meus, dominationi vestre fideliter promitto per presentes quod quicquid propter solutionem celerem apposueritis vobis resarcire nullatenus contradicam scientes quod usurarum vorago et fideiussorum conductio substantiam meam quasi exhauriunt universam, adeo quod predicti fructus in magno ad exonerationem meorum non sufficerent debitorum, si placet consilium vestrum mihi rescribentes et si nollem quod pluribus innotesceret nescio quid facturus sum penitus desperatus, mihi insuper si placet significantes quid annis singulis dum steterim in partibus istis pro fructibus ecclesie mee dare velitis quia propter absentiam garcionis mei magnos sumptus ac iacturam. Vigeat salus domini mei per tempora infinita, de omnibus mihi collatis et meis et presentium portitori etiam de magna . . . pecunie sibi collata vobis altissimus sistat retributor. De privilegio de quo bene scitis . . . lit . . . certioravi per Thomam de Essex super quo . . . (*illegible*).

[E.C. IV. 1.]

### VIII

J . . . A SCHOLAR OF OXFORD TO HENRY OF EASTRY,  
PRIOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY.

Reverendo domino suo propriis meritis metuendo, domino  
H(enrico) de Estria permissione divina priori Christi Cant'

<sup>1</sup> Dr. R. L. Poole dates this letter Sept., 1291. Pope Nicholas IV. died 4th April, 1292. Hist. MSS. Rep. Various Colls., vol. I., p. 260.

Hence it is, reverend Sir, that my spirits are so low through the occurrence of these diverse misfortunes, which have caused me to run so deeply into debt that at the present moment I reckon death comfort and life misery. Wherefore with contrite heart I humbly beg your ever reverend lordship, that you will take over the income of my church, as you have already kindly consented to do ; and that you will at once send back the bearer of these present letters with letters addressed to the merchants living at Bologna, because the (*Papal*) court will depart from Viterbo immediately after the feast of blessed Michael, if the pope shall live, as I have been specially informed not long since by people who a little while ago wrote to me on business, since the city of Viterbo is not far away from Bologna. Though I have no idea what I shall do until my boy comes back with your letters, I faithfully promise your lordship by these present letters, that whatever conditions you may be pleased to impose for speedy payment, I will in no wise oppose them since it is common knowledge that the voracity of money lenders and the finding of sureties are, as it were, draining dry all my resources, so that the afore-said profits in their entirety would not suffice to free me from the burden of my debts. Please give me your advice when you write, although I do not wish that the matter should be made known to a number of people. I know not what to do, in fact I am quite at my wits end. Moreover be pleased to let me know what you will be willing to allow me for the profits of my church as long as I remain in these parts, because I have incurred great expense and loss through the absence of my servant.

May the health of my lord ever flourish. The most High will repay you for all that you have bestowed upon me and mine and also on the bearer of these letters.

Concerning the privilege which you know all about, I have said something in the letters sent by Thomas of Essex.

### VIII

#### AN OXFORD SCHOLAR TO PRIOR HENRY.

To his reverend and worthy lord, the lord Henry of Eastry, by divine permission prior of Christ church, Canterbury, his clerk J scholar of Oxford sendeth a respectful greeting and the assurance that in all things he is his very obedient servant.

Since no one can altogether avoid the strokes of fortune,

ecclesie suus si placet, J scholaris Oxonie salutem reverenciam et in omnibus humiliter ad pedes inclinatum.

Cum nemo fortunatos casus possit evitare superveniens tamen infortunium multociens amicorum remedio solet relevari, vestre vero sanctitati non sine lacrimis et gemitu notifico, quod die veneris proxima ante festum sancti Petri ad vincula ex percussione cuiusdam equi sicut iterando accessisse (sic) proposui ad propria magna mihi causabatur angustia, cuius occasio fere propriam suffocavit substantiam, tamen divina mediante gracia, et cuiusdam medici medela, ad statum perveni meliorem, quare dominacionem vestram humiliter et reverentissime caritatis intuitu et precum domini fratris vestri optentu, quas pro fomentacione mea in extremitate dierum suorum fraternitati vestre fudit speciales dixi exorandum quatenus pro precibus et euis anime solamine manum vestram mihi extendatis ad nutricem, scientes quod tempora perdita amaritudine sunt mihi plena qua propter personam meam more prehabito vagam vel frivolis intendentem nunquam invenietis sed omnibus et per omnia pro viribus et ultra sciencie promotive commendatam. Valete et valeant qui vos valere desiderant. Noverit dominacio vestra latorem presencium in omnibus certum esse et fidelem. Scripta die Sci Mathei Apostoli, ter vobis litteratorie mandavi tamen aliquod responsum non (*re*) cepi.

[E.C. III. 70]

## IX

STEPHEN DE BOCLAND STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ORLEANS TO HENRY OF EASTRY, PRIOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, CANTERBURY.

Reverendo in Christo patri metuendo domino H(enrico) dei gracia ecclesie Christi Cant' priori cuius humilis in omnibus S de Bocland scolaris iuris se ipsum totum cum omni diligentia serviendi.

Preparscit Deus peccatoribus et non statim properat ad vindiciam immo quandocumque redere eius in . . .<sup>1</sup> gremium pietatis. O domine dulcissime quorundam rumoribus intellexi me corpus vestrum et animum in defectum mei turbavisse quod non credebam, quia si unquam feci contra vos vel vestros vel quod cedere posset in vestrum preiudicium vel vestrorum, scilicet scienter, tunc moriar de dolore, et si quid igranter

<sup>1</sup> illegible.

yet often misfortune when it comes may be relieved by the help of friends, I make known to your holiness not without tears and groans that on the Friday next before the feast of St Peter's chains I was kicked by a horse just as I meant to start on my journey home, by which accident I nearly lost my life. However, by the aid of divine grace, and the skill of a certain doctor I did get better. Wherefore humbly, and most respectfully, I beg your lordship, for charity's sake and out of regard for the prayers of your Worship's brother, which in his last days he poured forth to your fraternity with special reference to my maintenance, that you will extend to me your nursing hand, if only in answer to his prayers, and for the solace of his soul, since you know how bitterly I regret my mispent time, wherefore you will never more find me an idle or frivolous fellow as indeed I was wont to be in the past, but in all things and always I will do my very utmost to make the acquirement of knowledge my foremost aim.

Fare well and may those fare well who wish you well. Your lordship should know that the bearer of these letters is a trustworthy and faithful person. Written on the day of St Matthew the Apostle. Thrice I have addressed a letter to you, but have received no reply.

## IX

STEPHEN OF BOCLAND, STUDENT OF ORLEANS TO PRIOR HENRY.

To the reverend father in Christ the respected lord Henry by the grace of God, prior of the church of Christ in Canterbury Stephen of Bocland, a humble scholar of the law, and in all things his obedient servant sendeth greetings.

God pardoneth sinners and doth not hasten at once to take vengeance, at any rate whenever they return in penitence to His bosom. I have been given to understand, my dearest lord, by certain gossiping people that your bodily and mental health has been upset by my misconduct, a thing I could not believe, because if I have ever acted in opposition to you or yours, or, done anything injurious to your interests or to those of your house that is to say wittingly I should die for very shame. If on the other hand I have

feci fiat sicut vlgariter de peccatore . . . (?) Sane ego pauperimus vestram nobilitatem interpello plossis manibus flexis genibus lacrimarum infusione et sanctissime caritatis intuitu ut vestra gracia et misericordia mihi indigenti minime denegetur, nam dicit litera non dampnatur qui cecidit sed qui post casum resurgendi propositum non assumit. Verissime iuro per illum qui ex nichilo omnia creavit quod amodo quicquid prius fecerim vel dixerim me in melius in futuram scolas exercendo, nam sum cum quodam priore Naverina qui legens est Aur' et sum in domo sua et ad expensas suas, cui scribo, a quo audio decretales quousque in melius fuerit provisum. Valete, indubitanter redditus mei tam breves sunt quod raro movit voluntas partes meas visitare ratione qua diligo cicius defectum pati inter ignotus quam inter notos. Valete bene et diu cum augmento graciae salutaris. Pro Deo miseremini mei ratione patrie, per Deum si sciretis de omnibus qualiter res se habet nunquam erga me fuissetis *commoti* (?) Valete valete.

[E.C. II. 48]

X

[An anonymous letter addressed to prior Henry of Eastry. The writer, probably a university student, begs the prior to buy his horse since he is deeply in debt.]

Patri filius obedientiam cum promptitudine. Si ita est sicut vobis datur intelligi de Bayardo per aliquem forte non suus amicus, ideo scio quod non venditus rediit quia ad verum valorem vendi non potuit, scio tamen quod aliquos habet Bayardus emulos quibus aliquando pro viribus bene servivit et est hoc nota ingratitude, sed non mihi minus placet, sed bone pater dampno meo non indigetis. Videdis districtiones meas et oppressiones diversorum debitorum. Videtis erga paternitatem vestram de III marcis exire erga capellanum vestrum de V marcis, erga rectorem de Eastrye de IX marcis, secundum quod mihi heri retulit, erga servientem nostrum de Meapeham de IX marcis, exceptis V marcis que debeo domino superiori et aliis sociis sit mihi conscientia fida testis, et preterea dulcis pater pro misericordia Jesu Christi misericorditer compatiamini statui meo dando meo (sic) VII marcas pro bayardo, et si non placet sub

done anything of the kind unwittingly let me receive the punishment that commonly is meted out to one who errs. At any rate, being in extreme poverty I appeal to your lordship with clasped hands, bended knees, and tear-stained cheeks that for the sake of charity and pity you will not withhold from your poor clerk your favour and compassion. For saith the written word "he who has fallen is not condemned but he who after a fall makes no attempt to rise." I solemnly swear by Him who out of nothing created all things that whatever I may have done or said in the past I will attend better to my studies in the future for I am with a certain Navarine prior who is reading at Orleans,—living in his house and at his expense and acting as his amanuensis, from whom also I hear the Decretals until I can make better provision. Farewell. My income is so miserably small that I seldom have any desire to visit my native parts, since I would rather be short of money amongst strangers than amongst those to whom I am well known.

Farewell, and long may saving grace be added to you. For God's sake pity me out of regard for my country. By God if you only knew how matters really stand you would never have any anxiety on my account. Farewell, farewell.

## X

A son to a father sendeth instant obedience. If some one has given you a bad report of the Bay, perhaps it was someone who does not like him. Though I know he returned unsold because he could not fetch his full value, I know too that there are some people who owe the Bay a grudge, though at one time, to the best of his powers, he served them well, and this is extremely ungrateful, but I like him none the less for that. But, good father you will not take advantage of my poverty. You are aware of my difficulties, and the overwhelming amount of my debts. You know that three marks are due to your fatherhood, five marks to your chaplain, nine marks to the rector of Eastry (according to what he told me yesterday), nine marks to our servant of Meapeham, and this,—with the exception of five marks which I owe to the lord subprior and to other comrades,—is on my conscience really all. And further, sweet father, I pray you for the mercy of Jesus Christ to show your pitiful compassion for my condition by giving me seven marks for the Bay, and if you do not care to give the seventh mark as part of the price, give it as

illo titulo dare septimam marcam, addatis illam sub titulo elemosine, et sic habetis illum pro duo (sic) marcis minus quam valet. Valet IX marcas, scit omnia sciens quod nisi cetera sarcina debitorum non facerem verbum de valore bayardi, tamen de me et meis ut ita loquar vestra voluntas fiat, sed pro amore gloriose virginis quam diligitis intime non minuatis quicquam de VII marcis, et si illum retinetis supplico quod unam equituram mihi mittatis. Interim valeat meus pater in Christo omni die melius.



alms, and even so you will be getting him for two marks less than his value, for he is worth nine marks. He who knows all things knows that if it were not for this burden of debt, I would not say a word about the value of the Bay. However, as far as I and my affairs are concerned, I will only say do as you please. But for the love of the glorious Virgin, for whom you have special affection, do not take anything off the seven marks, and if you keep him (*the horse*) I beg you to send me something to ride. In the meantime my father may you, in Christ, every day fare better.