

ment of a better nonnery nor of better women. And in the towne of Pollesworth ar xliiij. tenementes, and never a plough but one, the resydue be artifycers, laborers, and vitellers, and lyve in effect by the said house, and the repayre and resorte thar ys made to the gentylmens childern and sudjournentes that ther doo lif to the nombre sometyme of xxx<sup>tie</sup>, and sometyme xlt<sup>ie</sup> and moo, that their be right vertuously brought upp. And the towne and nonnery standith in a harde soile and barren ground, and to our estymacions, yf the nonnery be suppressed, the towne will shortly after falle to ruyne and de kaye, and the people therin to the nombre of vj. or vij. score persones are nott unlike to wander and to seke for their lyvyng, as our Lorde Gode beste knowith, who preserve youre lordshipe in good lif and longe, with encrease of honour. Wrytton at Maxstoke\* beside Coventre, the xxviiij. daye of July.

By the kinges commissioners, JOHN GREVYLL, SYMOND MOUNTFORT, THOMAS HOLTE, ROGER WYGSTON, GEORGE GYFFARD, ROBT. BURGOYN.

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The following letter furnishes us with another instance of the eagerness with which the courtiers sought after their share in the spoils of the monasteries. Sir Thomas Elyot was a distinguished diplomatist, a man of great learning, and had been an intimate friend of Sir Thomas More.

LXV.

SIR THOMAS ELYOT TO CROMWELL.

[From MS. Cotton. Cleop. E. iv. fol. 220\*.]

My moste speciall goode lorde, whereas, by your contynuell exercise in waighthy affayres, allso frequent access of sutars unto your goode lordship, I could not fynde oportunitie to gyve to your lordship due and convenyent thankes for your honorable and

\* Maxtock, a parish in Warwickshire, near the town of Coleshill.

gentill report to the kinges majesty on Wenysday last passid in my favour, I am now constrayned to supply with my penne my sayde duety, offryng unto your lordship all harty love and servyce that a poure man may ow and beare to his goode lorde and approved frende, which alldhowgh hability lakking in me, I can not expresse by any benefyte, your wisdom notwithstanding, which I have allway honoured and trustid, will I doubt not accept my goode intent, being, I thank Godd, ever syncere and withoute flatery or ill dissimulacion, I wisshing unto your lordship the honorable desyres of your hart, with the contynuall favor of Godd and of your prynce. My lorde, forasmoeche as I suppose that the kinges moste gentill comunicacion with me, and allso his moste comfortable report unto the lordes of me, procedid of your afore remembred recommendacions, I am animate to importune your goode lordship with moste harty desyres to contynue my goode lorde in augmenting the kinges goode estimacion of me; whereof I promyse yow before Godd, your lordship shall never have cause to repent. And where I perceyve that ye suspect that I favour not truely Holy Scripture, I wold Godd that the king and you mowght see the most secrete thowghtes of my hart, surely ye shold then perceyve that, the ordre of charity savyd, I have in as moche detestacion as any man lyving all wayne supersticions, superfluous ceremonyes, sklaunderouse joughlynges, countrefaite mirakles, arrogant usurpacions of men callid spirituall, and masking religions, and all other abusions of Christes holy doctrine and lawes. And as moche I injoy at the kinges godly proceeding to the due reformation of the sayde enormyties as any his graces poure subject lyving. I therefor beseeche your goode lordship now to lay apart the remembraunce of the amity betwene me and sir Thomas More, which was but *usque ad aras*, as is the proverb, consydering that I was never so moche addict unto hym as I was unto truthe and fidelity toward my soveraigne lorde, as Godd is my juge. And where my speciall trust and onely expectation is to be holpen by the meanes of your lordship, and naturall shame-

fastness more raigned in me than is necessary, so that I wold not prese to the kinges majesty withoute your lordshippes assistance, unto whome I have sondry tymes declarid myn indigence, and whereof it hath hapned, I therefor moste humbly desyre you my speciall goode lorde, so to bryng me into the kinges most noble remembrance, that of his moste bounteous liberalitey it may like his highnesse to reward me with some convenyent porcion of his suppressid landis, whereby I may be able to contynue my life according to that honest degree whereunto his grace hath callid me. And that your lordship forgete not, that neither of his grace nor of any other persone I have fee, office, pencion, or ferme, nor have any maner of lucre or advauntage, besydes the revenues of my poure land, which are but small, and no more than I may therewith mayntayne my poure house. And if by your lordshippes meanes I may achieve goode effect of my sute, your lordship shall not fynde me ingrate. And whatsoever porcion of land that I shall attayne by the kynges gift, I promyse to give to your lordship the first yeres frutes, with myn assured and faithfull hart and servyce. This lettre I have writen, bycause that I herd that your lordship went to the court; and as for my first sute, I shall at your lordshippes better laysour recontynue it, trusting allso in your lordshippes favour therin.

Writen at my house by Smythfeld, this Moneday.

Yours moste bounden,

TH. ELYOT, kt.

To my speciall goode lorde  
my lorde pryvy seale.

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The baths of Buxton, in the Peak of Derby, to which the next letter relates, were frequented as early as the times of the Britons and Romans. In popish times, these, in common with other wells and fountains, were regarded with a superstitious feeling, derived from the period of Saxon paganism, and preserved in many popular ceremonies to the present day. The wells at Buxton were dedicated to St. Anne, and the

chief place for drinking the waters is still called St. Anne's Well. The abbey of Burton upon Trent, in Staffordshire, was celebrated as the resting place of the bones of St. Modwen. The image alluded to in the following letter probably stood over the well, still known by the name of Modwen's well.

## LXVI.

SIR WILLIAM BASSETT TO CROMWELL.

[From MS. Cotton. Cleop. E. iv. fol. 232.]

Ryght honorabull my inesspeyciall gud lord, acordyng to my bownden dewte and the teynor of yowre lordschypys lettres lately to me dyrectyd, I have sende unto yowre gud lordschyp by thys beyrer, my brother, Francis Bassett, the ymages off sentt Anne off Buxtone and sentt Mudwen of Burtun apon Trentt, the wych ymages I dyd take frome the place where they dyd stande, and browght them to my owne howss within xlviii<sup>e</sup>. howres after the contemplacion of yowre seyd lordschypis lettres, in as soober maner as my lyttull and rude wytt wolde serve me. And ffor that there schulde no more idollatre and supersticion be there usyd, I dyd nott only deface the tabernaculles and placis where they dyd stande, butt also dyd take away cruchys, schertes, and schetes, with wax offeryd, being thynges thatt dyd alure and intyse the yngnorantt pepull to the seyd offeryng; also gyffying the kepers of bothe placis admonicion and charge thatt no more offeryng schuld be made in those placis tyll the kynges plesure and yowre lordschypis be ffurther knowen in that behallf. My lord, I have also lokkyd upp and sealyd the bathys and welles at Buxtons, thatt non schall enter to wasche them, tyll yowre lordschypis plesure be ffurther knowne, whereof I besych yowre gud lordschyp that I may be acertanyd off agayn att yowre plesure, and I schall nott fayle to execute yowre lordschypis cummandmentt to the uttermost of my lyttull wytt and power. And, my lord, as concernyng the opynion off the pepull and the ffonde trust that they dyd putt in those ymages, and the vanyte of the thynges, thys