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Read 3rd February, 1830.

DEAR SIR,

In the Register belonging to the monastery of St. Edmundsbury, compiled in the time of William Curteys XXV Abbot, are two letters from King Henry VI. addressed, one to the Abbot, and the other to the Alderman and Bailiffs of the town, for the suppression of Lollards, and other seditious persons. As these letters, or any on the occasion which gave rise to them, do not occur in our historians, I send you copies of them: they appear to have been written in 1431.

Your obedient humble Servant,

JOHN GAGE.

a "1431. Soone after Easter the Lord Protector was warned of an assembly of certaine lewd persons, under pretence of religious minded men, to be assembled at Abingdon, wherefore he sent thither certaine persons, and also rode thither himself, and there arrested the Baily of the towne, named William Mandevil, a weaver, the which was appointed for a Captaine, who had named himself Jack Sharpe of Wigmer's land, in Wales, who being examined, confessed that he meant to have done many mischiefs, especially against priests, so that he would have made their heads as cheap as sheepes heads, (that is to say) three or foure a penny, (or, as some write, ten for a penny); many
Letters from King Henry the Sixth,

I.

[Regist. Curteys penes Edm. Wodehouse, Armig. fol. 301.]

Līa dīi Regis de P'uato sigillo direct dīo A. p insurrecēo Lollardoṣ latronū & at malefacoṣ quide euitando, p eo ὡδ nonnulli huīṣ malefacores in Comī Cantabrīg insurgere pponebant, put in eadem līa plenī declaraī; curīs līe tenor sequīt in hec verba.

Be the Kyng.

Ryght trusty & welbelouyd, for asmoche as that, in this holy tyme of Whytsonwoke, the mysgoūned men of dyūs Shires of this oure land, & in especyal the Shire of Kent, aswel lollardes as other robbers & pillers of oure peple, were, in grete noumbrate, & in ryotous wyse, gaderyng in the said Shire of Kent, to haue do the harme that they coude haue myght, and to have subūtyd al the polletique reule of this oure land; of the whiche mysgoūned men, S'r Nichol Coneway, knyght, the whiche is now take & set faste in presoṇ, shuld a bene a Capitaigne; and of

of his complices were taken and sent to divers prisons. Their Captaine was drawne, hanged, and headed at Abingdon, and his head was sent to London and set on the bridge, his other futors were executed in divers places and countries to the terror of other. Also, the thirteene of July, Richard Russel, woolman, was drawne, hanged, and quartered, for that he would have made Dukes and Earls at his pleasure." Stowe's Annales, edit. 1631, fo. 372. "While these things were doing in France, Henry Beauforde, Cardinall of Winchester, was sailed again into Englande, to appease and represse certain divisions and commocions, sprung up by mischevous and pernicious persons, within the realm, which, under the colour of a new sect of religion, conjured together, to disquiet and vert the whole quietnes of the realme. But after that William Maundeville and Jhō Sharpe were taken and executed by the governor and the kinge's justices, the remnaunt yielded and confessed there offences, whereof two articles wer these, as some men wrote, —that priestes should have no possessions; and that all things, by the order of charitié amongst Christian people, should be in common." Hall, edit. 1543, fo. 120 b. See also Annales Wilhelmi Wyrcester, 1431.
the whiche also mysgoûned men there be takyn & in ñsone a grete noumbër; and, as we be now enformyd, there is like to be a semble gaderyng in Cantebër Shire, and as it is sayd, abowte Cantebër townë;

We wol therfor that anone, aff the sight of thyse our Irês, ye doo al the diligence that ye can & may to the good reule of our saide Shire of Cantebër, and in especyal have a sight that there be no gaderyng of suche mysgoûnyd men, and at al tymes to be redy, wî all the myght power that ye can & may gete for the resistence of ther malicious entent & purpos as it is to ñsume they wold doo & execute. And more où We wil & charge yow to certefye vs in this behalf, from tyme to tyme, as the caasshal happen & require. Yoven vndir oure p'ue seal, at Westmû, the vte day of Juyn.

II.

[It. fol. 84.]

By the Kyng.

Trusty and welbeloued, the malicious entent and p'pos of goddis treito's and oures, heretiques in this oure Reaume, cûmenly called lollardis, the which now late by settyng vp of cedicious billes, and oûwise, treiturly exhorted, stired, and meued ye poeple of oure land, to assemblé, gadre, and arise a yenst goddis pees and oures, is not vnknowyn to yow, ne to no man endewed with reson, forsight, or discrecion: ye which how be it yat yei of high subtilite, fraude, and felenesse; feyñ, ðtende, and write such thyng as yei trowe to blynde with yoo yat be simple, and to drawe by thire hertis and affeccions to yem and thire entent, intendynge neûlesse and p'posyng, with oute eny doute, ye sub- usion of ye xûen feith, and bileue of vs also, and of alle estatis, and gentilmên, and genaly of all trewe xûen men and wûmen, yat wol not folow hem, and assiste hem in here damnable errours, entent, and p'pos; and wolde destroie alle politique rule and goûnaile, spûel and temporel.
And considerynge yat yei, ayenst godds lawe and mannes, sture oure poeple, with oute oure cõmaundement or auctorite, to assemble and arrise, and yerwith p'pos and wolde take vpon hem and vsurpe aswel oure roial powere and auctorite as ye chirches, and vse correccion and goînaille in no wise be langyng vnto hem yat owen to be goûned, and not so to goûne; ye which sturyng and vsurpacion of oure roial power, by ye lawe of this oure land is tresoû, ech resonable man may wel sele, yat in eschuynge of, chastisynge, and reddoure of oure lawes, yei so doing, wolde neue' be yaire willes come to rekenyng ñof, but dispose hem to be out of subjection, obeissance, or awe of vs, and of oure lawe; and, as God knoweth, neyere wolde yei be subjitt to His, ne to mannes, but wolde be louse and free, to robbe, reue, and dispoille, slee, and distroie alle men of estate, thrift, and worship, as yei p'posed to haue do in oure fadres daies, and of ladds and lurdains wolde make lordes, and geîaly wolde vse, do, and fulîlle alle yeire lustys and willes yat God forbede: and howe be it yat by ye grace of oure lord, and ye grete and notable diligence of oure bele vncle of Gloucestî oure lieutenant, and of othir Coñissioners and juges in sondry places, lawful execucioû hay be doon vpon diuse of ye said godds treito's and oures, the which of reson owed to haue be vnto hem and yeire complices extreme confusion and rebuke; neîyelesse it is credibly frome day to day reported vnto oure said lieutenant and consail here, in diûse wises, yat ye wiked and maîlicious p'pos of ye said traitours cesseth not, but continueth and abidey: wherfor, how be it, yat We wrote late agoo vnto yow yat be knowe true vnto god and vs, to yentent yat folweth: neîlesse, for as much as We know not wheõ youre said lîes come vnto yow or no, We write eft vnto you, p'ying yow hertly and also chargyng yow on ye feith, trouth, and ligeance yat ye howe to god and to vs, yat with alle diligence, and with oute delay or tareyng, ye ordeyne and array yow and youres, and sture othir siche as wol accompanye yow, to be redy to assemble, with oyere of oure trewe liege men to do ye same, and withstande, myghtily chastise, and subdue ye damnable malice and entreprize of goddis said traito's and oures, ye which yee and alle oure
trewe liege men haue gret cause and ma\e to haue in grete awayte. And, in especiale, We wol and charge yow, yat yee enquire, considere, and take gode hede, fro tyme to tyme, whexch of ye inhibantes in ye cuntree aboute yow haue nowe of late tyme absented hem, or absent hem hereafter, o\ýwise yen yaire occupacion or craft axeth; and also of straunge and vnknowen comers, such as eny ma\e of ille suspicion may resonably be felt ynne, and yat ye areste, serch, and examine hem in ye straitest wise, whens yei come, and wher yei have be, and of alle ye dayes, tymes, and places of yeire absence, and also of soweris of cedigious, disclaundrous, or trubulos langage, or talys. O\ý yis nat suffer-ynge pryue gaderynges, or conuenticles to be had or made, be nyght, or be day, yere aboute yow, hauyng alwey your recours and resort, when someuе yow thynk yat nede is, for yo' soco', your help, and confort, to our saide lieutenant and consail, whome ye shul fynde e\ý wele willed and disposed to purvey yat yat may be to your suretee and confort, and ese; and faillith not in due and diligent executcio of yese yynges be forsaid, as ye desireoure psperite and youres and welfare. Yeven vndreoure priue Seel at Wesmynstre ye vj day of Juyl.

Tooure trusty and wel beloued
ye Alderman & Balifs of our town of Bury.