

Original Documents.

THE FORMAL DECREE OF DIVORCE OF SIR JOHN STANLEY, OF HONFORD, AND MARGARET HIS WIFE; DATED JUNE 25, 1528.

From the Muniments of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

WE were recently enabled, by the courteous permission of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, to bring before our readers the will of Sir John Stanley, of Honford, made on the occasion of his becoming a monk professed of the Abbey and Convent of Westminster, printed in extenso. The following is an authentic copy of the ceremonial of the formal separation, or "divorce a thoro," of Sir John and his wife, the Lady Margaret Stanley, in the due form of law upon that occasion. The ceremony took place on 25th June, 1528, in the sacristy or "revestry" of St. Paul's, on the south side of that cathedral, in the presence of William Benett, L.D., acting under the commission and authority of the Cardinal Presbyter, Archbishop of York, Primate and Chancellor of England and Legate a latere of the Apostolical See (Clement VII.), who was authorised to take the examinations of Sir John and his wife on the subject of their separation then contemplated.

The two parties appeared before the commissary, and a libel or petition was presented stating their intention and desire, of which the tenor is set out at length, followed by the oral statement, in English, of Sir John himself and also of the Lady Stanley, signed respectively by themselves, as of the above date.

The formal sentence or decree of Dr. Benett is there set forth verbatim, stating the voluntary separation or divorce "ob religionis ingressum." It is followed by a notarial attestation of the instrument and a recital of the witnesses present at the Act. Such is a short summary of this record. A few observations on this ceremony may not be out of place.

Instruments of this kind, being of the nature of other like proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Courts, will not be found among the pleadings of the secular Courts, and they are not, so far as I am aware, to be met with in our law reports, or the formularies of our ordinary courts. It is, therefore, desirable to print it as a specimen of a very late date, shortly before the profession of a monk became disused in England.

The process, however, is one of very early occurrence of our ecclesiastical history. "Si vir et uxor pro religiosa vita divortere inter se consenserint, nullatenus sine conscientia episcopi fiat." Concil. Rom. Cap. Leon. IV. anno 853.

The formularies of Marculphus contain reference to a similar divorce on the like ground. Canciani Leg. Antiq., vol. ii. p. 238.

The Constitutions of St. Edmund of Canterbury, A.D. 1236, sect. 31, 32, recognize the divorce by reason of "transitus ad religionem," and enjoin great circumspection in the admission of this cause of separation except by consent of both parties, and by special licence of episcopal authority only. Among very much later authorities, we find in the edition of Durandus de Mailles (ed. Lyon, 1776) that very curious, and not very edifying, questions might arise as to the relative state of things between the affianced, or married, couple, which might make such formal separation expedient, necessary, or admissible; but on this I have said enough.

I need not add that such divorce is under no circumstances a divorce "a vinculo," but "a thoro" only.

E. S.

UNIVERSIS SANCTE matris ecclesie filiis ad quos litere nostre testimoniales sive hoc presens publicum instrumentum pervenerint sive pervenerit, et quos infrascripta tangunt seu tangere poterunt quomodo, libet in futurum, Willelmus Benett, legum doctor, in ecclesia Cathedrali Divi Pauli London' canonicus prebendatus, Reverendissimi in Christo patris et domini, domini Thome, miseratione divina tituli sancte Ceciliae sacrosancte Romane ecclesie presbiteri Cardinalis, Eboracensis Archiepiscopi, Anglie Primatis et Cancellarii, ac Apostolice sedis etiam de latere Legati, audience causarum et negotiorum alter Auditor in causa et causis infrascriptis, ac inter partes subscriptas Commissarius sive Judex delegatus sufficienter legitime ac specialiter deputatus, salutem in Auctore salutis ac fidem indubiam presentibus adhibere. Ad Universitatis vestre noticiam deducimus et deduci volumus per presentes quod xxv^{to} die mensis Junii, anno domini millesimo quingentesimo xxvij^{to}. indictione prima, pontificatus sanctissimi in Christo patris et domini nostri domini Clementis, divina providencia hujus nominis Pape septimi, anno quinto, coram nobis in domo sive sacristia vocata the Revestrye of Powlys, ex parte australi chori ejusdem ecclesie notorie situata, in notarii publici subscripti ac testium infrascriptorum presentiis, quarundam literarum commissionalium dicti reverendissimi patris nobis factarum et directarum ac sigillo ipsius sigillatarum, et nobis realiter presentatarum, ac in presencia nostra perfectarum, onus in nos cum ea, qua decuit, reverencia ob honorem dicti reverendissimi patris committentis assumpsimus, ac juxta vim, formam, effectum et tenorem earundem procedendum fore decrevimus, quarum quidem literarum commissionalium tenor sequitur, et est talis.

Thomas, miseratione divina tituli Sancte Ceciliae Sacrosancte Romane ecclesie presbiter Cardinalis, Eboracensis Archiepiscopus, Anglie Primas et Cancellarius, ac Apostolice sedis etiam de latere Legatus, dilecto nobis in Christo Magistro Willielmo Benett, legum doctori, in ecclesia Cathedrali divi Pauli London' canonicu prebendato, nostre audience causarum et negotiorum auditorum uni, salutem, graciā et benedictionem. Cum, ut fide digno accepimus testimonio, dilecti nobis in Christo Johannes Stanley miles, et domina Margareta Stanley, vir et uxor, verique et legitimī ac indubitati conjuges, ex certis, veris, justis, legitimis et rationabilibus causis eos et eorum utrumque ad id specialiter vicissim moventibus, hujus mundi pompis et vanitatibus, carnisque illecebris ac ceteris mundi deliciis renunciare, ad votum professionis regularis legitime et canonice emittere, juraque et obsequia conjugalia ad invicem remittere, relaxare et dissolvere, ac se ab eisdem juribus et obsequiis conjugalibus mutuo et unanimiter ac concorditer absolvere et liberare, licentiamque ingrediendi religionem approbatum et monasterium quocumque aptum et idoneum adinvicem tribuere a diu deliberaverunt et decreverunt, ac summopere affectarunt et affectant, in presenti modo eorum desideris in ea parte annuere vellemus. Quare nobis humiliter supplicari fecerunt hujusmodi propositum eorum approbare, ratificare et confirmare, ac alias et aliter animarum eorundem saluti prospicere dignaremur. Nos igitur, qui alias sumus multiplicitate impediti, quominus dicti negotii expedicioni in persona nostra interesse valeamus, de tuis constantia, puritate et sana doctrina, ac circumspectionis industria in hiis et aliis plurimum confidentes, ad examinandum vice et auctoritate nostris dictum Johannem et Dominam Margaretam super premissis; et si ipsos in hujusmodi volun-

tate perseverare, ac premissa non ex animi levitate sed spiritus integritate, digestoqe et laudabili proposito procedere, nec aliud canonicum in ea parte obviare reperire poteris impedimentum, desideria eorundem admittere in premissis, votumque et promissionem eorundem in personam et pro utilitate ac commodo ecclesie Catholice recipiendi, admittendi, ratificandi, et comprobandi, ceteraque omnia alia et singula faciendi, gerendi, et expediendi, que in premissis aut circa ea necessaria fuerint seu quomodolibet oportuna, tibi vices nostras committimus, ac plenam in domino tenore presentium concedimus potestatem. Datum in edibus nostris apud Hampton Cowrte, xxij^o die mensis Junii, Anno Domini millesimo quingentesimo vicesimo octavo; dilectumque nobis in Christo Magistrum Ricardum Watkins, publicum sacra auctoritate apostolica notarium, in legibus baccallarium, in actorum nostrorum scribam in ea parte assumpsimus et recepimus. Ac deinde comparuerunt coram nobis tunc ibidem judicialiter et pro tribunali ad effectum infrascriptum sedentibus in dicti notarii ac scribe nostri ac testium infrascriptorum presencie, personaliter provide et circumspecte persone, Johannes Stanley, miles, Coventrensis et Lichfeldensis diocesis, ac Margareta Stanley, ejus uxor et conjux legitima ac indubitata, ut asseruerunt; atque tunc ibidem quandam libellum sive quandam summariam petitionem sive articulos in scriptis redactos dederunt, et eorum uterque dedit; cuius quidem libelli, summarie petitionis sive articulorum tenor sequitur, et est talis.

In Dei nomine. Amen. Coram vobis venerabili et egregio viro magistro Willelmo Benett, legum doctore, Reverendissimi in Christo patris et domini, domini Thome miseratione divina tituli sancte Cecilie sacrosancte Romane ecclesie presbiteri Cardinalis, Eboracensis archiepiscopi, Anglie primatis et Cancellarii, ac Apostolice sedis etiam de latere Legati, ejusque audiencie causarum et negotiorum auditorum uno, ac judice et commissario in infrascriptis, ac inter nos personas inferius descriptas specialiter, sufficienter et legitimate deputato, Nos, Johannes Stanley miles, et domina Margareta Stanley, Coventrensis et Lichfeldensis Diocesis, vir et uxor, verique, legitimi ac indubitati conjuges, volentes juribus et obsequiis conjugalibus adinvicem alter alteri remittere, ipsaque jura et obsequia adinvicem relaxare, et nos ab eisdem absolvere et liberare abinvicemque separari, ad effectum ut religionem approbatam et monasteria apta et idonea ingredi et intrare, ac inibi nos convertere, incorporare et profitere possimus, dicimus, proponimus, allegamus et suggerimus articulatim, prout sequitur. In primis, quod nos, memorati Johannes et Domina Margareta, fuimus et sumus vir et uxor, verique, legitimi ac indubitati conjuges, Coventrensis et Lichfeldensis Diocesis, Cantuariensisque provincie, vestreque jurisdictioni notorie subditi, ac pro talibus et ut tales communiter dicti, tenti, habitu, nominati et reputati palam, publice et notorie, et ponimus conjunctim divisim ac de quolibet. Item quod nos, iidem Johannes et Margareta, post multiplices hujus seculi delicias et periculosas voluptates, ad salutis portum pervenire volentes, pro Christi amore animarumque nostrarum salute, et quo liberius, ac quietius et tranquillius per residuum vite nostre Domino nostro Jhesu valeamus famulari, de renunciando hujus seculi pompis et vanitatibus, carnisque illecebris, ac ceteris mundi deliciis et voluptatibus, ac de remittendo adinvicem alter alteri jura et obsequia conjugalia quecumque, ipsaque jura et obsequia adinvicem relaxando, et nos ab eisdem absolvendo et liberando, adinvicemque separari petendo, ac religionem approbatam

et monasteria apta et idonea ingrediendo et intrando, ac inibi nos convertendo, incorporando, et profitendo, a diu inter nos deliberavimus et sepius tractavimus diligenter et ponimus, ut supra. Item quod post premissa nos, Johannes et Margareta, non vi, metu vel dolo inducti, nec aliqua machinatione sinistra mediisve illicitis circumventi, sed ex nostris mera, pura, spontanea, simplici, et absoluta voluntatibus, ex spiritus integritate et sinceritate, animoque deliberato, provisoque ac perpenso et digesto consilio, ac absque levitate animi quacumque, tandem de omnia et singula premissa facienda et expedienda inter nos unanimiter et concorditer decrevimus et conclusimus, adque eadem omnia et singula facienda et expedienda nos preparavimus ac preparamus in presenti, et ponimus, ut supra. Item quod volentes nostra desideria in premissis debitum et condescendentem ac efficacem effectum, et expeditionem sortiri omni jure, titulo, interesse et clameo, quod alter in alterum habet, aut habere potuit vel potest, in et circa personas nostras, ac jura et obsequia conjugalia quecumque adinvicem unanimiter et concorditer renunciare, ac illud in manus reverendissimas reverendissimi in Christo patris et domini, domini Thome legati a Latere predicti, ac vestras manus venerabiles auctoritate dicti Reverendissimi patris, seu alterius ejusdemque sufficientem potestatem in ea parte habentis resignare, ac jura et obsequia conjugalia inter nos remittere, ac religionem approbatam et monasteria apta et idonea ingredi, et inibi nos convertere, incorporare, et profiteri volumus, prout etiam sic jam renunciamus, resignamus, remittimus, et vovemus, et ponimus, ut supra. Item quodad sic renunciandum, resignandum, vovendum, religionemque et monasteria hujusmodi ingrediendum et intrandum ceteraque premissa expediendum et faciendum nullum nobis canonicum obviavit aut obviare potuit vel potest impedimentum, et ponimus, ut supra ; item quod premissa omnia et singula fuerunt et sunt vera. Unde facta fide de premissis per nos dictis propositis, allegatis et suggestis, ad quam faciendum juxta juris exigenciam offerimus nos promptos et paratos, pro loco et tempore congruis et oportunis ; et ad hoc petimus nos admitti ; fuit et est quatenus premissa veritate fulciantur et nitantur, hujusmodi renunciatio, resignacio, et votum, ceteraque omnia et singula in hac parte per nos petita, proposita, allegata, et suggesta approbadum, admittendum, ratificandum et comprobandum, licenciaque nobis ad religionem et monasteria hujusmodi ingrediendi et intrandi, ac inibi nos convertendi, incorporandi, et profitendi, danda et concedenda, litereque testimoniales desuper fiende ac justicia nobis in premissis omnibus et singulis ministranda, ulteriusque facienda, statuenda et decernenda, ac declaranda per vos et vestrum in hac parte finale decretum quod juris fuerit et rationis. Que proponimus et fieri petimus omni via, modo et juris forma meliori qua possumus. Ad probationem superfluam in premissis nos non astringentes, sed officium vestrum reverendissimum humiliiter in omnibus et singulis implorantes. Et allegarunt et petierunt, ac eorum uteisque allegavit et petiit, prout ibidem continebatur. Et tunc ibidem incontinenti nos ad eorum et utriusque eorundem petitionem hujusmodi libellum, summariam petitionem seu articulos admisisimus, et successive eundem libellum, summariam petitionem sive articulos, ad utriusque eorundem petitionem repetimus in vim positionum et articulorum, ac eorum utrumque super eisdem juramento eorum corporali onerari de mera veritate dicenda et examinari fecimus. Quibus positionibus omnibus et singulis per eosdem et eorum utrumque confessatis, dictus Johannes, in prenominate

domine Margarete Stanley ejus conjugis predicte presencia, ac de ejus expressa voluntate, consensu, et assensu tunc ibidem expresse ad id adhibitis et intervenientibus, quandam renunciationis sive resignationis, necnon promissionis et voti emissionis ac dimissionis, et absolutionis ac relaxacionis scedula in scriptis in lingua nostra vernacula redactam fecit, legit et interposuit, ceteraque gessit et exercuit, prout in dicta scedula plenius continetur ; cujus tenor sequitur, et est talis.

" In the name of God, Amen, before you the honorable Master William Benett, Doctour of Lawe and Chanon and Prebendary of the Cathedrall Churche of Saynt Poule in London, and Auditor of the causes and busynes in the Audience of the moste Reverend fader in Godd, Thomas, by the mercy of Godd Almyghty Cardinall Preste, Archbischopp of Yorke, Primate and Chauncellour of England, and Legat a Latere of the See thapostolique, in the cause and causes herunder wrytten, Commissary lawfully and specially assigned and deputed, and before you, notarye publique and autentique person, and before you, lawfull and honest witnes here being present, I, John Stanley, Knyght of the Diocesse of Coventrie and Lichfeld, maried man and husband of the Right Worshipfull woman Dame Margaret Stanley, willing and coveyting for certeyn true, just, lawfull and reasonable causes moving me and my mynde in this behalf, speciallie and principallie for the love and honour of Godd, and the helth, quietnes, and tranquillitie of my soule and mynde, to renounce, forsake and relinquishe all and singler the pomyps, vanities, pleasures, and delectations of this world and my said wiff, and to departe utterlye for evermore from my said wiff, hir bedd and company, with all such rights and interest which I have in hir, and utterly to be dismayssed and absolved from hir, and semblable to absolve and releax her in all and singuler the premisses. And furthermore, to thend and effect I may the frelier, more quietly, and with a more tranquilitie the reste of my lif serve Almyghtie God, to make a laufull vowe to summe approved religion, and so to entre unto the same religion, and therwith submytt myself to the yook of obedience and observance of the same religion ; induced to thes by no maner compulsion, feare or disceite, nor by any maner synestre machinacion, or crafte circumvented or begyled, but only of myn own mere, pure, free, simple and absolute will, with a full and a deliberat purpos and will, tryed counsell and advise only, of the clerenes and integritie of my good mynd and soule, and not of any sensuall or light appetite of mynd, utterlie and hollie, by the expresse consent and assent of the said Dame Margarete my wiff, forsake and renounce all and all maner right, tytle, interest or clayme which in this present tyme have, myght or may have in the said Dame Margaret my wiff before said ; and the same hollie do nowe unto the moost honorable hands of the moost Reverend Father in Godd, Lord Thomas, Archebisshopp of York and Legat de Latere, and unto the hands of you, or any other persone or persons having power sufficient to admytt this my resignation, resigne, geve over, and from my said wiff totallie and expresslie departe, in and by thes writinges ; and furthermore promys and avowe chastitie, and chastelie to leve perpetually from hensforth, during my lif naturall, after the rule and order of Saynt Benett, unto which religion I doo promisse to entre, and ther by Godds ayde and helpp of Godd shall professe myselfe and make my profession according to thordinaunce regulars there. And, over this, of myn own fre and liberall will and

mynde geve and graunte to the forsaide Dame Margarett my wiff, in as large and ample maner and form as I may or can, full power, authoritie, licence and libertie by thes presentes to entre into any laufull and approved religion and the Monastery thereof, and therin to dwell and professe herself, and make her profession in due fourme of lawe to observe the said religion. Also promys by thes presents never to make any clayme unto her, nor never to call her oute of the said Monastery and religion, but now in this present tyme relax and dismyss, delyver and acquite her for ever from all and singuler right, title or interest, which I have or may have in any maner wise in the same Dame Margaret my wif, by reason of the sacrament of matrymony, by the which she and I were in the face of the Churche laufully coupled togeder."

Et consequenter tune ibidem prenominata Domina Margareta Stanley in prenarrati Johannis Stanley, militis, mariti sui predicti presencia, ac de ejus expressis voluntate, consensu et assensu, tune ibidem expresse ad id adhibitis et attributis, quandam renunciationem sive resignationem, necnon promissionis et voti emissionem ac dimissionem, et absolutionis ac resignationis schedulam in scriptis in lingua nostra vernacula pariformiter redactam fecit, legit et interposuit, ac cetera gessit quemadmodum in dicta scedula continebatur ; cuius tenor sequitur, et est talis.

"In the name of God, Amen, before you the Honorable Master William Benett, Doctour of Lawe, and Chanon and Prebendary of the Cathedrall Churche of St. Poule in London, and Auditor of the Causes and busynes in the Audience of the moost Reverend Father in God, Thomas, by the mercy of God Almyghti Cardinall Preste, Archebusshopp of Yorke, Primat and Chancelour of England, and Legate a Latere of the See Apostolique, in the cause and causes herunder written commyssary lawfully and specyallie assigned and deputed, and before you, notarie publique and auctentique persone, and before you, lawfull and honest witnes here being present, I, Dame Margaret Stanley, maried wiff of the right worshipfull man, Sir John Stanley, Knyght, of the Diocese of Coventre and Lichfeld, willing and coveyting for certayn true, juste, laufull and reasonable causes moving me and my mynde in this behalf, speciallie and principallie for the love and honour of God, and the helth, quietnes and tranquilltie of my soul and mynde, to renownce, forsayke and relinquishe all and singuler the pomyps, vanyties, pleasours and delectations of this world, and my said husband, and to departe utterlie for evermore from my said husband, his bedd and cumpany, with all suche rightes and interest which I have in hym, and utterly to be dismyssed and absolved from hym ; and semblable to absolve and relax hym in all and singuler the premyses ; and furthermore, to thend and effect I may the frelier, more quietlie, and with a more tranquilltie the reste of my lif serve Almyghtie God, to make a lawfull vowe to summe approved religion, and so to entre unto the same religion, and therwith submytt myself to the yoke of obedience and observance of the same religion ; induced to this by no maner compulsion, feare or deceyte, nor by any maner synystre machination or crafte circumvented or begyled, but only of myne owen mere, pure, free, simple, and absolute will, with a full and a deliberat purpose and well tryed counsell and advise only of the clerenes and integratie of my good mynd and sowle, and not of any sensuall or light appetite of mynd, by the expresse consent and assent of the said Sir John Stanley, my husband, utterly and hollie forsayke and

renownce all and all maner right, title, interest or clayme, whiche in this present tyme have, myght or may have, in the said Sir John Stanley, my husband ; and the same hollie doo nowe unto the moost honorable hands of the moost Reverend Father in Godd, Lord Thomas, Archebusshopp of Yorke, and Legate de Latere, and unto the handes of you or any oder person or persons having power sufficient to admitte this my resignation, resigne, geve over, and from my said husband totallie and expresselie departe, in and by thes writinges. And furthermore promys and avowe chastitie, chastelie to lyve perpetuallie from hensforth during my life naturall, after the rule and ordre of Sainct Benett, unto which religion I doo promys to entre, and there by Gods ayde and helpe of Godd shall professe myselfe and make my profession according to thordinaunces regulars there. And over this, of myn owen free and liberall will and mynd, geve and graunte to the forsaid Sir John Stanley, my husband, in as large and ample maner and fourme as I may or kan, full power, authoritie, licence and libertie, by thes presentes, to entre unto any lawfull and approved religione and the Monasterie thereof, and therein to dwell and professe hym selfe and make his profession in due fourme of lawe to observe the said religione. Also promys by thes presentes never to make any clayme unto hym, nor never to call hym oute of the said Monasterie and religione, but now in this present tyme releax and dismysse, delyver and acquitte hym for ever from all and singuler right, title or interest which I have, or may have, in any maner wise in the same Sir John Stanley my husband, by reason of the sacrament of Matrimony, by the which he and I were in the face of the Churche lawfully coupled togeder."

Quibus scedula per eosdem Johannem et Dominam Margaretam sic ut premittitur perfectis, prenominati Johannes et Domina Margareta respective et successive in manibus suis propriis hec verba, videlicet :— Redd by me, Sir John Stanley, Knyght, and subscribed with myn owne hand, the xxv^{ti} day of June, Anno Domini 1528,—Redd and subscribed by me, Dame Margaret Stanley, the yere and day above wrytten,—subscripterunt. Quibus factis, prenominati Johannes et Domina Margareta se nostris decreto et sentencie submiserunt, ac humiliter supplicarunt, et eorum uteisque supplicavit et peciit, quatenus dictas renunciationes, resignaciones, dimissiones, relaxaciones, absoluciones, promissiones, votorum et emissions, ac cetera omnia et singula in eisdem scedula et earum utraque contenta et specificata, in persona ac pro utilitate et commodo ecclesie Catholice recipere, ac easdem et omnia et singula in eisdem et earum utraque contenta, cetera que premissa per eosdem petita admittere, approbare et ratificare, necnon sentenciam diffinitivam, sive finale decretum in et super premissis ferri et promulgari, ceteraque peragere in hac parte necessaria seu oportuna dignaremur ; ad quorum peticionem :—

“ Nos, prefatus Willelmus Benett, commissarius antedictus, auctoritate tam commissionis dicti reverendissimi patris suprascripti quam submissionis, supplicationis et petitionis vigore, quandam sentenciam diffinitivam, sive quoddam finale decretum tunc in scriptis tulimus et promulgavimus. Cujus quidem sentencie diffinitive seu decreti finalis tenor sequitur, et est talis. In Dei nomine, Amen. Auditis, visis et intellectis, ac plenarie discussis per nos, Willielmum Benett, legum doctorem, ecclesie Cathedralis divi Patli Londoniensis Canoni-

cum et prebendatum, ac reverendissimi in Christo patris et domini, domini Thome, miseracione divina tituli sancte Ceciliae sacrosancte Romane ecclesie presbiteri Cardinalis, Eboracensis Archiepiscopi, Anglie Primatis et Cancellarii, ac Apostolice sedis etiam a latere Legati, ejusque audience causarum et negotiorum auditorum unum, ac ipsius reverendissimi patris in negocio infrascripto ac inter partes inferius nominatum commissarium et judicem specialiter, sufficienter, et legitime deputatum, meritis et circumstantiis cuiusdam cause separacionis sive divorci voluntari ad effectum et ob religionis ingressum, que coram nobis Willielmo Benet Canonicus, Auditore, et Commissario predicto ad promotionem, suggestionem, et instantem peticionem venerabilium personarum Johannis Stanley militis, Coventrensis et Lichfeldensis Diocesis, ac Domine Margarete Stanley, uxor et conjugis dicti Johannis Stanley, militis vertebatur, vertitur, et pendet indecisa, rimato primitus et diligenter recensito toto et integro processu in dicta causa habito et facto, servatisque per nos in hac parte de jure servandis, prenominatis Johanne et Margareta in personis propriis coram nobis personaliter et judicialiter comparentibus ac sentenciam et finale decretum petentibus et seipso nostris sentencie et decreto hujusmodi submittentibus, ad nostre sentencie diffinitive sive finalis decreti prolacionem in hac parte feren-
dam, ex submissione et ad instantem peticionem parcium et personarum predictarum duximus procedendum et procedimus, in hunc modum. Quia per acta habita, allegata, confessata pariter et probata comperimus et luculenter invenimus suggesta, proposita et allegata in libello seu articulis ex parte dicti Johannis Stanley militis, et Domine Margarete Stanley, uxor et conjugis predicti, contenta et deducta. Quorum quidem libelli seu articulorum tenor sequitur, et est talis. In Dei nomine. Amen, &c."

Quem libellum seu articulos pro hic lectum et insertum haberi volumus, et mandamus fuisse et esse vera ac sufficienter et legitime probata et confessata, ac nichil effectuale deductum, propositum, allegatum, probatum, aut confessatum quod peticionem et intentionem dicti domini Johannis Stanley et Domine Margarete antedictae in hujusmodi libello seu articulis contentum et factum impediret seu quomodolibet enervaret. Idecirco nos, Willelmus Benet, Canonicus, Auditor et Commissarius predicti, Christi nomine primitus invocato, ac solum Deum oculis nostris preponentes, de consilio jurisperitorum cum quibus communicavimus in hac parte, suggesta, proposita, allegata et narrata per eosdem Johannem et Margaretam in hujusmodi libello seu articulis, ad quem seu quos nos referimus in hac parte, et pro lectis et insertis haberi volumus et habemus, fuisse et esse vera; ac ideo renunciationes, resignationes, et vota eorumdem, ac cetera omnia et singula per eosdem Johannem et Margaretam in hujusmodi libello seu articulis petita approbanda, admittenda et ratificanda fore, licenciam que eisdem Johanni et Margarete religionem quamcunque approbatam et monasterium quocumque aptum et idoneum ingrediendi et intrandi, ac inibi se convertendi, incorporandi et profitandi, dandam et concedendam fore, literasque testimoniales desuper pro majori firmitate premissorum, ac quo libentius et citius ad religionem et monasterium hujusmodi recipi, assumi et admitti possent, fiendas fore pronunciamus, decernimus et declaramus, ac approbamus, admittimus, ratificamus, damus et concedimus, quantum de jure poterimus, per hanc nostram sentenciam diffinitivam sive finale decretum, quam sane quod ferimus et promulgamus in hiis scriptis.

Quam quidem sentenciam diffinitivam, seu finale decretum hujusmodi sic per nos latam et recitatam prenominati Johannes et Domina Margareta, et eorum uterque, vive vocis oraculo tunc ibidem approbarunt et approbavit, ratificarunt et ratificavit; et deinde dictus Johannes et Domina Margareta nos commissarium antedictum ex premissis omnibus et singulis literas testimoniales unas seu plures confici, ac subscriptione et signo dicti notarii scribe nostri hujusmodi subscribi, signari et publicari. In quam autenticam et publicam formam redigi, ac sigilli autentici appensione communiri decernere et facere dignaremur. Ad quorum petitionem nos sic decrevimus, et in eorundem omnium et singulorum premissorum fidem et testimonium has presentes literas nostras testimoniales, sive hoc presens publicum Instrumentum per dictum magistrum Ricardum Watkins, notarium publicum et actorum nostrorum in hac parte scribam hujusmodi, scribi, subscribi et publicari, ac ipsius signo, subscriptione, nomine et cognomine solitis et consuetis signari, et sigilli audiencie causarum dicti reverendissimi patris, quod in custodia et manibus nostris habemus, appensione fecimus et mandamus communiri.

Data et acta ac gesta fuerunt omnia et singula predicta, prout superscribuntur et recitantur, coram nobis et per nos Willielmum Benett, Auditorem et Commissarium predictum, Indictione, pontificatu, mense, die et loco predictis. Presentibus tunc ibidem in omnibus et singulis predictis venerabilibus et egregiis viris: Magistris Willielmo Styllington, Archidiacono Norwicensi, Johanne Olyver et Edmundo Bonere, legum doctoribus, ac discretis viris, Dominis Johanne Asshelyne et Johanne Andrews, Capellanis, Londonis commorantibus, testibus ad premissa vocatis specialiter et rogatis.

Et ego, Ricardus Watkyns, Landavensis Diocesis clericus, publicus sacra auctoritate apostolica notarius, in legibus bacalarius, atque in premissis actorum scriba per dictum dominum Commissarium et Judicem delegatum specialiter assumptus et deputatus. Quia premissis omnibus et singulis dum sic ut premittitur sub anno domini, Indictione, pontificatu, mensis die et loco predictis per dictum dominum Commissarium, ac per et inter partes predictas agebantur et fiebantur, una cum prenominatis testibus presens personaliter interfui eaque omnia et singula sic fieri vidi et audivi, et in notam sumpsi, ideo has presentes literas testimoniales in tribus pergamenci pecuis, manu aliena (me interim aliter occupato), fideliter scriptum exinde confeci, publicavi, et in hanc publicam et autenticam formam redigi, signoque et nomine ac cognomine meis solitis et consuetis una cum predicti sigilli appensione signavi, publicavi et subscripti, ad mandatum dicti domini judicis et partium predictorum rogatum in fidem et testimonium omnium et singulorum premissorum. Et constat inde cancellationle duarum linearum in calce dicte sumarie petitionis superius conscripte, quam approbo, et omni sinistra suspitione carere volo, ego notarius antedictus.