Sir I am right glad of your masters health & of your good hope of his
spedie retorn and yet at his departure I wold have thought
Michaelmas as long tyme as for many causes it is, God guide hym,
blesse hym, "and" prosper hym, and I pray you in your retorne of writing vnto
hym to beseech hym for me to accept my humble Comendacons and to
retaine his wonted opinion of my redines to doe hym all the services
that I am hable, and my continuance in harty praier for hym/

Touching the matter of your letter for the course that king henry kept in
dissolution of abbies, I am sorie I am so little hable to satisfie, for
therof I have vtterlie no notes or writings wherupon I am hable to
ground any instructions./ But what I am hable I will set downe as I
have vnderstoode by that which I have red & heard.

The first entrance was a present given by Cardinall Wolsey who vnder
pretence and for better habilitie to build his sumptuous Colledge dissolved
Certaine smale howses and by that doing of hym self (I doute not
with good warrant from Rome) he dyd make lese in other the conscience
toward those howses.

After hym ther came to the kings service Mr Cromewell who had served
the Cardinall in those former doinges
That Cromwall was the man that by his zeale his wisdom and his Courrige was godes instrument to carry all to good effect. These means he vsed. He first found meanes to perswade the king that it lawfully might be done That for his Crowne and state in safetie it was it was [sic] necessarie to be done, for that he made appere to the king how by their meanes the Pope and clergie so great aucthoretie reuuenue alliance and prinsipallie captiuacion of the soules, and obedience of subiectes that they weare able to putt kinges in hazard of their will. That for his revenue and maintenance of his estate wares & affaires both in warr and peace, at home and abrode with others it was most profitable to disolue them for augmentacion of his tresure He allied the king so strongly with mighty forens in Germany, and that leauge [sic] of religion so as with their forces & his treasure and the consideracion of common perill by their comon enemy the pope he was hable to with stand and encountre any foren princes so at the Popes irritacion and prostituting his kingdome to the occupanti wold make any attempt against hym[.] This alliance was both by leauge [sic] with Saxonie and other and the mariage with the sister of Cleue.
The Emperour and french king were so in hostilite that eyther of them was glad to wine king Henry to his part, wherby either of them feared to irritate hym lest he coyning with the other might make to hard a match against the invader, wherby I thinke that the same hostilite was cherished by Cromewells Pollicie, whervpon grewe the play in france wherin were shewed the Emperor and the french king playing at tennise and the king of England paying for the balles, beside that though they had not bene in hostillitie, yet wither of them durst suffer the other to overgrow by impropriating to hym self anie thing in England, and so the Emperor hymself was glad to sit still althought the principall ground in shewe of the quarrell touched hym in honor for his Auntes repudiacion.

Cromewell caused preachers to go abroade & mainteine them to instruct the people and to perswade the subjectes consciences to stand fast to the king with feare of the Popes curse or his dissoluing of ther allegiance.

He caused to be placed in the Archebishops seate Cranmer and in diuere other bishopricks & hie places in the Clergie diuere protestantes by meanes wherof he was hable to execute great things among themselves, and they were not hable so muche as to enter into any full and
perfect counsell against hym, muche lesse to putt any thing in
publike denuntation and execucon as against the former kinges of
this realme.

He knew that the clergie had in king Richard the secondes tyme
suborned another with Collor of a next attempting the like with the
Marques of Excester, he cawsed the heades of that faction
to be cutt of: suche as the howse of guise is now in ffrance who
kepe the lorrane title of Caroloningians in breath against the
Capiningians or hugonetes.

He perswaded the king by mainteyning of equ[...]ins and by holding
Towe the over eminent power of such great ones as in tymes past
had like bellwethers led the shepish flockes of England against
their prince to be knit fast to hym the love of his comons and
specially of the Citie of London./

He placed Abbotes and priors in diuere great howses many lerned
men and men perswaded against those supersticions, which men were
redie to make surrender of their howses at the kinges
Comaundement./

He caused the king to restraine all paymentes to Rome & all resortes
of his subjectes that he for sutes appeales faultes & other causes

wherby both he kept treasure and held yt from his enemies &
restrayned his enemies from flying to forreine partes or conference
with them, he six visitacons to be made of all the religious
howses toching their een conversaſtion, wheruppon was retorned
the booke called the black booke expressing of euery suche house
the vile lyves and abhominable factes in murde of their
bretheren in Sodomies, in whordomes in destroying of children
in forging of deedes & other infinite horors of lyf in so muche as
deuiding all the religious persons of england into three partes, And
of thiese partes at the least weare Sodomites and this
Appearanced in writing with the names of their partes & factes: This
was shewed in parliament and the villaines made knownen and
Abhorred.

He caused the king of the Abbies possessions to make such dispersion
as it behoued infinite multitudes of their owne intrest to wyne
with the king in houlding them downe which he did by diuerse menes
and thiese among other vz. founding diuerse Bishopprickes and
Colledges with thiese possessions selling many of them to many men
for reasonable prices exchanging many of them with the nobility
and other for their auncient possession to their great gaine which
whome he exchaunged preferring many sufficient persons to the
kinges service who were sone raysed to Nobility and some to worshipp and good callinges and all indowded with maintenance out of the revenues of Abbies/

Here is all that I can remember

Ther was allso vsed for the manner of the disolution first diuurse Abbottes and other that could be thervnto perswaded or were some of them for that purpuse placed by the king made surrender of their howses and Conveyed them to the king by order of law. and had Competent pensions both them selues and their company during their liues/

Some being detected by the said visitation to have the kinges favor not to punishe them with reigor nor to publish their infamie for ther viability factes were likewsie Content to surrender for all the rest (which were then not many) the parliament being made acquainted with their vile lives were redilie contented both to confirme their surrenders and to give their consentes to the giving of all the rest to the king./

Now by whome you may lerne the rest I will enforce you/
Mr Chauncellor of the duchie was then the Lord Cromewells servant
and I thinke can say muche./

My Lord Treasorer by recordes in secrete tresurie and by collection
of monumentes of knowledge and by such other means as he hathe
Counsaille most of all men and best direct this to his naturall
Course./

Butt of a private man no man in England is in myne oppinion
Comparable to the recorder of london I am sure he canne deliuer
vs by bookes and writinges remayning with hym very many
thinges and I suppose sufficient for this question.

I meane to hast to london the rather to further you in this
matter by some Conference with you I propose to be ther on
monday I wold presently have come but that I had before
Appointed some Attendance here one my lord Cheyney and and
other for her maiesties service/

I have nothing to forward this matter at London more then I
haue here for touching this course: Omnia mea mecum porto /
Mr Milles I am your Masters, yours and all his

I Comend to you the towne of Iernememouth [i.e., Yarmouth] so farr as they wilbe well aduísed for they are honest men. So farre you well

At Sharpenhow in Bedfordshire iiijor myles beyond Luton xij myles beyond St Talbones this I write because you may know whether to send an other tyme I wold you had a profitable occasion to Come and see This last of august 1581.

Yours assured

ffor the residue I must referr you to the Statutes

Endorsed:
A copie of Thomas
Nortons Letter