

Spring 5-17-1951

# A Study of the Legend and Cult of the Boy Martyr, Saint William of Norwich

Helen B. Scrivner

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hist\\_etds](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hist_etds)



Part of the [European History Commons](#), and the [History of Religion Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Scrivner, Helen B.. "A Study of the Legend and Cult of the Boy Martyr, Saint William of Norwich." (1951).  
[https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hist\\_etds/194](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hist_etds/194)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Electronic Theses and Dissertations at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in History ETDs by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [disc@unm.edu](mailto:disc@unm.edu).

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO-UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



A14429 088719

378.789

Un 3 Oscr

1951

cop. 2





THE LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO



Call No.

378.789  
Un30scr  
1951  
cop.2

Accession  
Number

165772











# UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO LIBRARY

## MANUSCRIPT THESES

Unpublished theses submitted for the Master's and Doctor's degrees and deposited in the University of New Mexico Library are open for inspection, but are to be used only with due regard to the rights of the authors. Bibliographical references may be noted, but passages may be copied only with the permission of the authors, and proper credit must be given in subsequent written or published work. Extensive copying or publication of the thesis in whole or in part requires also the consent of the Dean of the Graduate School of the University of New Mexico.

This thesis by ... Helen B. Scrivner .....  
has been used by the following persons, whose signatures attest their acceptance of the above restrictions.

A Library which borrows this thesis for use by its patrons is expected to secure the signature of each user.

NAME AND ADDRESS

DATE

---



## MANUSCRIPT THESIS

Unpublished theses submitted to the Master's and Doctoral degrees and deposited in the University of New Mexico Library are open for inspection but are to be used only with due regard to the rights of the author. Bibliographical references may be made, but passages may be copied only with the permission of the author. The proper credit must be given in subsequent written or published work. Extensive copying or publication of the thesis in whole or in part requires also the consent of the Dean of the Graduate School of the University of New Mexico.

This thesis by \_\_\_\_\_  
has been used by the following persons, whose signatures attest their acceptance of the above restrictions.

I, Library which borrows this thesis for use by its patrons is expected to secure the signature of each user.

DATE

NAME AND ADDRESS



A STUDY OF THE LEGEND AND CULT  
OF THE BOY MARTYR, SAINT WILLIAM OF NORWICH

By

Helen B. Scrivner

A Thesis

In partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in History

The University of New Mexico  
1951



A STUDY OF THE RACIAL  
OF THE NEW SOUTH, 1865-1877



John E. Sarver

RAC CONTEST

ERASE BOX

EFFICIENCY

1877

In partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in History

The University of Kentucky

1977



This thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Committee of the University of New Mexico in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

*E. F. Castetter*  
DEAN

DATE

*5/17/51*

Thesis committee

*J. C. Russell*

CHAIRMAN

*John E. Longhurst*  
*Marion Darga*



This thesis directed and approved by the candidate's committee has been accepted by the Graduate Committee of the University of New Mexico in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Thesis Committee

*[Handwritten signatures and text, likely the names of the thesis committee members]*



378.789  
Un30 scu  
1951  
Cop 2

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PROBLEM . . . . .	1
Statement of the problem . . . . .	1
Importance of the study . . . . .	2
Organization of the remainder of the thesis . . . . .	3
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE . . . . .	5
The manuscript of Thomas of Monmouth . . . . .	5
Other medieval sources . . . . .	7
Other reference materials . . . . .	10
Limitation of previous study . . . . .	14
III. THE LEGEND AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND . . . . .	15
The legend . . . . .	15
England in the twelfth century . . . . .	18
IV. GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE AND SPREAD OF INFORMATION . . . . .	22
Geographical range . . . . .	22
Spread of information . . . . .	30
V. SOCIAL CLASSES . . . . .	36
Classes of people mentioned in the chronicle . . . . .	36
Reasons for distribution among classes . . . . .	38
VI. THE MIRACLES OF SAINT WILLIAM . . . . .	41
Diseases and cures . . . . .	41

165772



278.17  
1951  
Cap 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE	CHAPTER
1	I. THE PROBLEM . . . . .
1	Statement of the problem . . . . .
2	Importance of the study . . . . .
	Organization of the remainder of the thesis . . . . .
2	II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE . . . . .
3	The manuscript of Thomas of Cantimpr . . . . .
7	Other medieval sources . . . . .
10	Other references . . . . .
14	Limitation of previous study . . . . .
15	III. THE LEGEND AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND . . . . .
15	The legend . . . . .
16	England in the twelfth century . . . . .
22	IV. GEOGRAPHICAL ASPECTS OF THE LEGEND . . . . .
22	Geographical maps . . . . .
23	Spread of information . . . . .
23	V. SOCIAL ASPECTS . . . . .
	Classes of people mentioned in the chronicle . . . . .
23	How the distribution of these classes . . . . .
24	VI. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LEGEND . . . . .
24	Diseases and cures . . . . .



CHAPTER	PAGE
Other miracles and visions . . . . .	48
VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	52
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	56



24	.....	Effect of pH and Temperature
25	.....	VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
26	.....	BIBLIOGRAPHY

# EFFICIENCY OF ERASE BOND RAC CONTENT



## MAPS

	PAGE
1. Geographical Range of the Cult of Saint	
William in England . . . . .	28
2. Localities Mentioned in East Anglia . . . . .	29



Table

1.	Geographical names of the Gulf of Mexico	83
2.	Localities mentioned in text	83



## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

A boy named William died at Norwich, England, in the year 1144. The story was told that he had been murdered by the Jews of that city, crucified in a ritual required by their religion. The case, however, was never proved. Although William was popularly venerated as a saint by the people and clergy during the years following his alleged martyrdom, he has never been canonized. About the year 1172 Thomas of Monmouth, a monk at Norwich Priory, wrote a treatise called The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich. In 1896 this work was brought to light with the publication and translation of an old manuscript hitherto unknown in modern times.<sup>1</sup>

Statement of the problem. For some years following the death of William the cult flourished and many people came to the tomb of the boy saint to worship and seek miraculous help. It is the aim of this study to follow the diffusion of the story and its impression on those whom it reached. We will plot the geographical range of the cultus

---

<sup>1</sup>Augustus Jessopp and Montague Rhodes James, editors, The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich by Thomas of Monmouth (Cambridge: University Press, 1896).



THE STORY

A boy named William died of typhoid fever, in the year 1144. The story was told that he had been persecuted by the Jews of that city, crucified in a ritual murder, and their religion. The case, however, was never proved. Although William was persecuted as a Jew by the people and clergy during the years following his alleged martyrdom, he has never been canonized. About the year 1172 Thomas of Cantimpré, a monk of Flanders, wrote a tract entitled the life and passion of St. William of Norwich. In 1898 this tract was translated into English and published as a translation of an old manuscript of the same name in modern English.

Statement of the problem. For some years following the death of William the story circulated and many people came to the tomb of the boy slain to worship and seek miraculous help. It is the aim of this study to follow the diffusion of the story and the legend on which it is based. We will also trace the geographical range of the legend.

I am indebted to many friends and to the University of Toronto for the facilities and assistance which have been afforded me in the preparation of this study. The life and passion of St. William of Norwich by Thomas of Cantimpré (Cambridge: University Press, 1898).



for the twenty-eight years covered by the chronicle, locating the places mentioned by Thomas. We will also consider other historical evidence of the story having reached localities not mentioned in the narrative. We will suggest ways that the information may have been carried. Besides following the travels of the legend we shall note which classes of the people that came seeking miraculous help from the saint seem to have been most impressed by the story. Finally, we shall survey the miracles performed, noting the kinds of diseases cured and the nature of other miraculous happenings and visions. From this study we hope to gain some insight into the minds of the people and conditions in twelfth century England.

Importance of the study. Religion played a large part in the lives of the people throughout the middle ages. The saints were their heroes. Hence, the study of a cult can give us some insight into the intellectual history of the period.

Stories of the miraculous happenings at the shrine of a saint were bound to spread. The spread of such stories should be a good indicator of the lines of communication. The range, together with clues as to how the news was carried, should add to our knowledge of the spread of ideas and information in this period.







We know that those years in the middle of the twelfth century in England were unsettled ones, times of hardship and uncertainty for many. To the shrine of the boy saint came those with physical, mental, and emotional afflictions, hoping that their prayers, offerings, and faith would induce the saint to intercede for them and bring miraculous help for their troubles. The survey of the social classes of those seeking this religious and magical solution to their troubles will indicate those least able or willing to cope with their problems by rational means. It will show the ones most affected by a period of stress and strain. St. William was not a saint of lasting fame, but the fact that his cult flourished so greatly at that particular time probably means that his followers felt a need for resort to the supernatural especially during those years. Disease and miraculous cures may be found in almost any period of history, but where there is an unusual outburst we can look for something to explain this in the background of the time.

Organization of the remainder of the thesis. Before taking up the problem itself we shall consider the literature and materials available pertaining to the problem. This is done in Chapter II. In Chapter III we give the story of the legend and such historical background of the time as seems necessary. In Chapters IV, V, and VI we deal with the



We know that those years in the middle of the twelfth century in England were unsettled ones, times of anarchy and uncertainty for many. To the throne of the boy-king came those with physical, mental, and emotional afflictions, hoping that their prayers, offerings, and gifts would induce the saint to intercede for them and bring assistance here for their troubles. The anxiety of the actual sickness of these seeking this religious and magical solution to their troubles will indicate these later years or willing to cope with their problems by rational means. It will show the ones most affected by a period of stress and strain. William was not a saint in looking upon his own land and his own situation as given to him as a gift for merit to probably secure the aid of the saints for help for himself and the kingdom. He was not a saint in those years. His own and his kingdom's troubles in those years are noted in history, but where there is no record of them we can look for some thing to explain this in the background of the time.

Organization of the material in this thesis. Before taking up the problem itself we shall consider the literature and materials available pertinent to the problem. This is done in Chapter II. In Chapter III we give the story of the legend and such historical background of the time as seems necessary. In Chapter IV, V, and VI we deal with the



different phases of the problem in its geographical aspects, social implications, and the nature of the miracles. Chapter VII gives the summary and conclusions.



different phases of the problem in its geographical aspects,  
social institutions, and the future of the island. Chap-  
ter VII gives the summary and conclusions.

EFFICIENCY

ERASE-OUT

PAGOWENT



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

While this study is primarily a close examination of the work of Thomas of Monmouth, other materials were used to make it meaningful.

The manuscript of Thomas of Monmouth. For the whole story of William of Norwich our only authority is Thomas of Monmouth, a monk of the cathedral priory of Norwich. Dr. Augustus Jessopp and Dr. Montague Rhodes James edited and translated what they believe to be the only surviving manuscript of his work. This manuscript they date as probably before 1200, very near to the time Thomas finished his composition in 1172 or 1173. In fact, they think it quite likely to have been transcribed from the autograph itself.<sup>2</sup> The work is arranged in seven books. Although it is called The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich, William dies in the fifth chapter of the first book and the remainder of the material deals with his miracles. The editors wrote some comments on the history of the manuscript and the legend. This writer knows of no further detailed examination that has been made of that manuscript to date.

---

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., "Introduction," pp. 1-1111.



## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

While this study is primarily a close examination of the work of Thomas of Monmouth, other materials were used to make it meaningful.

The manuscript of Thomas of Monmouth, for the story of William of Normandy and only authority is Thomas of Monmouth, a work of the cathedral priory of Exeter. Dr. Augustus Jessopp and Dr. Montague Rhodes James edited and translated what they believe to be the only surviving manuscript of his work. This manuscript they date as probably before 1200, very near to the time Thomas finished his position in 1173 or 1175. In fact, they think it quite likely to have been transcribed from the original itself. The work is arranged in seven books. Although it is called The Life and Miracles of St. William of Normandy, William also in the fifth chapter of the first book and the remainder of the material deals with his miracles. The editors wrote some comments on the history of the manuscript and the legend. This writer knows of no further detailed examination that has been made of that manuscript to date.



Besides translating the manuscript from the Latin, the editors wrote a lengthy introduction. What little is known about Thomas of Monmouth is told; the history of the Benedictine Priory at Norwich is sketched; East Anglia in the reign of Stephen is described briefly; a note by the Rev. W. Hudson, "The Political Condition of Norwich in the middle of the 12th Century, as likely to affect the Jews resident in the City," is given; careful attention is given the manuscript, the text, and the history of the book; the legend is told; finally, there is some information on the cult and iconography of St. William.<sup>3</sup> The footnotes are principally concerned with East Anglian history, Norfolk topography, and family history.

The editors found some elements of social history imbedded in the document itself and suggested that a student could find many others. In their introduction they mention briefly several items. Of the secular clergy, every priest that Thomas names was married; in spite of decrees and pressure the secular clergy in the diocese of Norwich went on taking wives until late in the thirteenth century. Auricular confession had not been made obligatory and secrecy was not of the essence of confession in those days. Also they mention a few references indicating more education

---

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., "Introduction," pp. i-lxxxviii.



Besides transmitting the manuscript from the editor, the editor wrote a lengthy introduction. What little is known about Thomas of Norwich is told; the history of the Benedictine priory at Norwich is sketched; last words in the reign of Stephen is described briefly; a note by the Rev. W. H. Rouse, "The Political Condition of Norwich in the Middle of the 12th Century, as likely to affect the laws resident in the city," is given; several attention is given the manuscript, the text, and the history of the book; the legend is told; finally, there is some information on the life and iconography of St. William. The introduction is principally concerned with the history of the priory, its topography, and family history.

The editor found some elements of social history included in the document itself and suggested that a student could find many others. In their introduction they mention briefly several items. Of the secular clergy, every effort that Thomas knew was carried; in spite of houses and preserve the secular clergy in the diocese of Norwich went on taking wives until late in the thirteenth century. Another conclusion had not been made obligatory and society was not of the essence of contemplation in those days. Also they mention a few references indicating more education.



among all classes than they expected. They remark upon the references to "moneymen" as indicating a good deal of money changing hands. They note the prevalence of surnames in East Anglia in the twelfth century.<sup>4</sup> Chiefly, however, these authors were concerned with the history of the manuscript and the legend itself.

Other medieval sources. A number of medieval chronicles mention William but usually very briefly. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle under the year 1137 St. William is described as a boy crucified by the Jews at Norwich.<sup>5</sup> Mathew Paris in his shorter work, Historia Anglorum, mentions a case of the Jews at Norwich against a boy in the year 1235.<sup>6</sup> John Capgrave in The Chronicle of England tells about William but under the year 1236.<sup>7</sup> The editor of that work mentioned that Capgrave's chronology was confused in many places and very far from accurate until the latter part

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., "Introduction," pp. xv-xviii.

<sup>5</sup>Benjamin Thorpe, editor, Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 2 vols. (Rolls Series)(London, 1861) II, 232.

<sup>6</sup>Mathew Paris, Historia Anglorum, edited by Sir Frederick Madden, 3 vols. (Rolls Series)(London, 1866-69) II, 375; III, 271.

<sup>7</sup>John Capgrave, Chronicle of England, edited by Francis Charles Hingston, (Rolls Series)(London, 1858) p. 154.



among all classes than they expected. They found that the  
reference to "monkeys" as indicating a good deal of money  
changing hands. They note the prevalence of monkeys in  
East Africa in the twelfth century. Chiefly, however, these  
authors were concerned with the history of the manuscript  
and the legend itself.

Other medieval sources. A number of medieval authors  
also mention William but usually very briefly. In the  
Anglo-Naxon Chronicle under the year 1154, William is  
described as a boy expelled by the Jews at Norwich.<sup>5</sup>  
Nathan Paris in his shorter work, Historia Anglorum, men-  
tions a case of the Jews at Norwich against a boy in the  
year 1154.<sup>6</sup> John Capgrave in The Chronicle of England tells  
about William but under the year 1154. The editor of that  
work mentions that Capgrave's chronology was confused in  
many places and very far from accurate until the latter part

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., "Introduction," pp. xx-xviii.

<sup>6</sup> Historia Anglorum, ed. by Nathan Paris, 3 vols. (Rolls Series) (London, 1861-77), 2:282.

<sup>7</sup> Historia Anglorum, ed. by Nathan Paris, 3 vols. (Rolls Series) (London, 1861-77), 2:282.

<sup>8</sup> John Capgrave, Chronicle of England, ed. by Francis Charles Bingham, (Rolls Series) (London, 1863), p. 124.



of his work.<sup>8</sup> Bartholomaei de Cotton, a Norwich monk, in his Historia Anglicana relates that St. William was a boy martyred by the Jews at Norwich in the year 1144.<sup>9</sup> Since he was writing at Norwich he may have seen Thomas' chronicle. In three of the Annales Monastici we find recorded that William, a boy, was crucified by the Jews at Norwich in 1144. These three were written at Waverly, Bermundeseia, and Worcester.<sup>10</sup> The Chronica Monasterii de Melsa likewise gives a brief note of the case for around the year 1147.<sup>11</sup> In the Flores Historiarum there is also a record of the case for the year 1143.<sup>12</sup> In the Eulogium for the year 1144 a

---

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., "Introduction," p. xxiii.

<sup>9</sup>Bartholomaei de Cotton, Historia Anglicana, edited by Henry Richards Luard. (Rolls Series)(London, 1859) p. 68.

<sup>10</sup>"Annales Monasterii de Waverleia," in vol. II of Annales Monastici, edited by Henry Richards Luard. (Rolls Series)(London, 1865) p. 230.

"Annales Monasterii de Bermundeseia," in vol. III of Annales Monastici, edited by Henry Richards Luard. (Rolls Series)(London, 1866) p. 437.

"Annales Prioratus de Wigornia," in vol. IV of Annales Monastici, edited by Henry Richards Luard. (Rolls Series)(London, 1869) p. 379.

<sup>11</sup>Edward A. Bond, editor, Chronica Monasterii de Melsa, 3 vols. (Rolls Series)(London, 1866) I, 138.

<sup>12</sup>Henry Richards Luard, editor, Flores Historiarum, 2 vols. (Rolls Series)(London, 1890) II, 65.



of his work. Bartholomaeus de Cotton, a Norwich man, in his Historia Anglicana relates that St. William was a boy martyred by the Jews at Norwich in the year 1144.<sup>9</sup> Since he was writing at Norwich he may have seen Thomas' chronicle. In three of the Annales Monasterii de Waverleia we find recorded that William, a boy, was executed by the Jews at Norwich in 1144. These three were written at Evesham, Herefordshire, and Worcester.<sup>10</sup> The Chronica Monasterii de Waverleia likewise gives a brief note of the case for around the year 1144. In the Annales Monasterii de Waverleia there is also a record of the case for the year 1143.<sup>11</sup> In the Introductio for the year 1144

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., "Introduction," p. xlii.

<sup>10</sup>Bartholomaeus de Cotton, Historia Anglicana, edited by Henry Richards Luard. (Rolls Series) (London, 1902) p. 68.

<sup>11</sup>Annales Monasterii de Waverleia, in vol. II of Annales Monasterii, edited by Henry Richards Luard. (Rolls Series) (London, 1866) p. 230.

Annales Monasterii de Waverleia, in vol. I of Annales Monasterii, edited by Henry Richards Luard. (Rolls Series) (London, 1866) p. 437.

Annales Prioratus de Wigornie, in vol. IV of Annales Monasterii, edited by Henry Richards Luard. (Rolls Series) (London, 1869) p. 292.

<sup>12</sup>Edward A. Bond, editor, Chronica Monasterii de Helles, 3 vols. (Rolls Series) (London, 1867) I, 138.

<sup>13</sup>Henry Richards Luard, editor, Annales Monasterii de Helles, 3 vols. (Rolls Series) (London, 1867) II, 65.



famine is recorded and also St. William of Norwich, crucified by the Jews.<sup>13</sup> The year 1144 is given also by Radulphi de Coggeshall.<sup>14</sup> Robert of Torigni places him in the time of King Stephen and mentions the many miracles at the tomb.<sup>15</sup>

While the record of St. William is given in a number of these medieval chronicles it is probable that the information was copied from one to another. The items are usually quite brief and sometimes inaccurate. The editors of Thomas of Monmouth's book believe that it had little or no circulation outside East Anglia.<sup>16</sup>

As to what may have given Thomas the notion of a Jewish ritual murder, Jessopp and James suggest that he may have read a story told by the fifth century church historian, Socrates. This occurrence of child-murder by Jews at Inmestar although quite an outrage does not seem to have been a ritual murder. Between that case in the fifth century and the date of William there seems to be a blank.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup>Frank Scott Haydon, editor, Eulogium, 3 vols. (Rolls Series)(London, 1858) III, 73.

<sup>14</sup>Radulphi de Coggeshall, Chronicon Anglicanum, edited by Josephus Stevenson. (Rolls Series)(London, 1875) p.12.

<sup>15</sup>"The Chronicle of Robert of Torigni," in vol. IV, Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I, ed. by Richard Howlett. (Rolls Series)(London, 1889) pp. 250-1.

<sup>16</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., p. lxi.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. lxii-lxiv.



1. The name is recorded and also St. William of Norwich, mentioned  
 by the town. 12 The year 1144 is given also by Richard of  
 Cogenhall. 13 Robert of Torigny places him in the time of  
 King Stephen and mentions the many miracles at the tomb. 14  
 While the record of St. William is given in a number  
 of these medieval chronicles it is probable that the infor-  
 mation was copied from one to another. The letters are  
 usually quite brief and sometimes inaccurate. The letters  
 of Thomas of Rhymer's book believe that it had little or  
 no circulation outside East Anglia. 15

16 As to what may have given Thomas the notion of a  
 Jewish ritual murder, Joseph and James state that it may  
 have been a story told by the thirteenth century Jewish  
 chronicler. This occurrence of child-murder by Jews  
 at Leicester although quite an outrage does not seem to have  
 been a ritual murder. Between that time in the thirteenth  
 century and the date of William there seems to be a gap. 17

- 
- 18 Frank Scott Hayden, editor, Chronicles of the Jews, 3 vols.  
 (Rolls Series) (London, 1893) III, 75.  
 19 Richard de Cogenhall, Chronicles of the Jews, ed.  
 by Joseph Stevenson. (Rolls Series) (London, 1893) I, 13.  
 20 The Chronicle of Robert of Torigny, ed. by  
Chronicles of the Jews, ed. by Joseph Stevenson, 1893, I, 13.  
 21 By Richard Howlett. (Rolls Series) (London, 1893) I, 13.  
 22 Joseph and James, op. cit., p. 141.  
 23 Ibid., pp. 141-142.



Other reference materials. Brief accounts of William of Norwich may be found in some modern reference books. The New Catholic Dictionary<sup>18</sup> and The Catholic Encyclopedia<sup>19</sup> mention him. William is listed in The Book of Saints compiled by the Benedictine Monks.<sup>20</sup> There is an account of his martyrdom in The Lives of the Saints by S. Baring-Gould; in this the authority given is Capgrave, but that would be because the first edition was composed before the discovery of Thomas of Monmouth's manuscript.<sup>21</sup> However, that Capgrave's sole source was Thomas of Monmouth is shown by Jessopp and James.<sup>22</sup>

Jewish works also show some interest in William because of the supposed manner in which he died. The Jewish Encyclopedia gives an account of "William of Norwich," and

---

<sup>18</sup>"William of Norwich," in The New Catholic Dictionary, (New York, The Universal Knowledge Foundation, 1929), p. 1020. No author is given but the authorities are The Catholic Encyclopedia and Butler.

<sup>19</sup>Raymund Webster, "William of Norwich," The Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1913), pp. 635-6. The author here adds, "For the whole story of William of Norwich our only authority is Thomas of Monmouth, a monk of the cathedral priory of Norwich."

<sup>20</sup>Benedictine Monks, compilers, The Book of Saints (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), p. 271.

<sup>21</sup>S. Baring-Gould, The Lives of the Saints (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1914), III, 461-6.

<sup>22</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., pp. liv-lviii.







further material about the case is given under the item "Blood Accusation."<sup>23</sup> It was this accusation against their religion which especially concerned the Jews and brought them so much grief for many years. Joseph Jacobs in The Jews of Angevin England records the case but does not have the book by Thomas of Monmouth since he was writing before its publication.<sup>24</sup> In a more recent work, A History of the Jews in England, Cecil Roth tells of "the terrible precedent set at Norwich in 1144."<sup>25</sup>

Two other modern works have been found which mention St. William of Norwich. In Studies in Church Dedications by Frances Arnold-Forster we find listed the chapel known as "S. William-in-the-Wood" which has now vanished.<sup>26</sup> William Hutton wrote The Lives and Legends of the English Saints,<sup>27</sup> choosing some of the child saints for a part of

---

<sup>23</sup>Joseph Jacobs, "William of Norwich," XII, 524, and Herman L. Strack, "Blood Accusation," III, 260-7, The Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1913)

<sup>24</sup>Joseph Jacobs, The Jews of Angevin England (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1893), pp. 19-21.

<sup>25</sup>Cecil Roth, A History of the Jews in England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), p. 13.

<sup>26</sup>Frances Arnold-Forster, Studies in Church Dedications, 3 vols. (London: Skeffington & Son, Piccadilly, 1899), II, 532-3.

<sup>27</sup>William H. Hutton, The Lives and Legends of the English Saints (London: Wells, Gardner, Darton, & Co., Ltd., 1903), pp. 286-7; 323ff.



Further material about the case in question under the title "Blood Association,"<sup>23</sup> it was this association on that point religion which especially concerned the case and brought them so much grief for many years. Joseph Jacobs in his Jews of London records the case but does not have the book by Thomas of Rotherham since he was writing before its publication.<sup>24</sup> In a more recent work, A History of the Jews in England, Cecil Roth tells of the terrible proceedings set at Rotherham in 1144.<sup>25</sup>

Two other modern works have been found which mention

St. William of Rotherham. In Studies in English Literature by Francis Arnold-Lester we find traced the case of the Jews as "E. Williams in the case" which is not a case. William Butler wrote The Jews and London in the Middle Ages,<sup>26</sup> choosing some of the entire entries for a book of

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Jacobs, William of Rotherham, p. 111, 112, and Herman I. Strack, "Blood Association," II, 180-2, 181, Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1913).

<sup>24</sup> Joseph Jacobs, The Jews of London in the Middle Ages (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), pp. 18-21.

<sup>25</sup> Cecil Roth, A History of the Jews in England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> Francis Arnold-Lester, Jews in English History, 3 vols. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1907), II, 128-9.

<sup>27</sup> William I. Butler, The Jews and London in the Middle Ages (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1907), pp. 180-2, 181.



his work to show the influence of Christianity upon the national character.

For historical background any of a number of books might have been used. The ones consulted here were the History of England by W. E. Lunt,<sup>28</sup> a general comprehensive work of textbook nature, and the essays on "The Anarchy" and "Trade and Industry" written by Smith for Traill's Social England.<sup>29</sup> Austin Lane Poole in his Obligations of Society in the XII and XIII Centuries gives some material useful in discussing the social classes.<sup>30</sup> British Medieval Population by J. C. Russell provides useful data for this period and we quote some of his figures.<sup>31</sup>

Two articles in Speculum, one by C. H. Haskins, "The Spread of Ideas in the Middle Ages," and the other by J. F. Willard, "Inland Transportation in England during the Fourteenth Century," gave some help in looking for ways that the

---

<sup>28</sup>W. E. Lunt, History of England (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945).

<sup>29</sup>A. L. Smith, "The Anarchy," and "Trade and Industry" in Social England, edited by H. D. Traill (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1909), Vol. I, Part II, pp. 367-72; 512-525.

<sup>30</sup>Austin Lane Poole, Obligations of Society in the XII and XIII Centuries (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1946).

<sup>31</sup>J. C. Russell, British Medieval Population (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1948).



his work to show the influence of Christianity upon the  
national character.  
For historical background any of a number of books  
might have been used. The ones consulted here were the  
History of England by H. P. Hall,<sup>28</sup> a general comprehensive  
work of textbook nature, and the essays on "The Anarchy" and  
"Trade and Industry" written by Smith for Trails of Social  
England.<sup>29</sup> Austin Lane Poole in his Origins of Society  
in the XII and XIII Centuries gives some material useful in  
discussing the social classes.<sup>30</sup> British Medieval Legislation  
by J. C. Russell provides useful data for this period and we  
quote some of his figures.<sup>31</sup>

Two articles in Speculum, one by C. H. Jackson, "The  
Spread of Ideas in the Middle Ages," and the other by S. L.  
William, "Medieval Transportation in England during the four-  
teenth century," have some help in looking for ways that the

---

<sup>28</sup>H. P. Hall, History of England (New York: Harper  
and Brothers, 1946).  
<sup>29</sup>J. I. Smith, "The Anarchy," and "Trade and Industry"  
in Social England, edited by H. P. Hall (New York: 1-4  
New York, 1909), Vol. I, Part II, pp. 387-39; 313-323.  
<sup>30</sup>Austin Lane Poole, Origins of Society in the  
XII and XIII Centuries (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1946).  
<sup>31</sup>J. C. Russell, British Medieval Legislation (Ber-  
keley: University of New Mexico Press, 1946).



legend of St. William might have been carried.<sup>32</sup> Also of help in this line was the book An Historical Geography of England before A.D. 1800, edited by H. C. Darby.<sup>33</sup> Another essay which told of the way the king's court moved about was "Exchequer Migrations to York in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries" by Dorothy M. Broome.<sup>34</sup>

In the study of miracles and cure of diseases we consulted two texts on abnormal psychology<sup>35</sup> and Diseases of the Nervous System by F. M. R. Walshe.<sup>36</sup> Another work, Civilization and Disease by Henry E. Sigerist<sup>37</sup> was also helpful in interpreting that aspect of the study.

---

<sup>32</sup>C. H. Haskins, "The Spread of Ideas in the Middle Ages," Speculum, 1:19-30, 1926.

J. F. Willard, "Inland Transportation in England during the Fourteenth Century," Speculum, 1:361-74, 1926.

<sup>33</sup>H. C. Darby, editor, An Historical Geography of England before A.D. 1800 (Cambridge: University Press, 1936)

<sup>34</sup>Dorothy M. Broome, "Exchequer Migrations to York in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," Essays in Medieval History (A. G. Little and F. M. Powicke, editors; Manchester, 1925), pp. 291-300.

<sup>35</sup>Edmund S. Conklin, Principles of Abnormal Psychology (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927)

H. L. Hollingworth, Abnormal Psychology (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1930)

<sup>36</sup>F. M. R. Walshe, Diseases of the Nervous System (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1944)

<sup>37</sup>Henry E. Sigerist, Civilization and Disease (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1945)



legend of St. William might have been carried. <sup>32</sup> Also of help in this time was the book on historical geography of England before A.D. 1800, edited by E. C. Parry. <sup>33</sup> Another essay which told of the way the king's court moved around was "Archepiscopal Residences in York in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries" by Dorothy M. Brown. <sup>34</sup>

In the study of diseases and cure of disease we have collected two texts on abnormal psychology <sup>35</sup> and diseases of the Nervous System by T. M. H. Nichols. <sup>36</sup> Another work, "Civilization and Disease" by Henry A. Sigerist <sup>37</sup> was also selected in interesting that aspect of the study.

- 
- <sup>32</sup> J. H. Nash, "The Spread of Disease in the Middle Ages," *Speculum*, 1:12-30, 1936.
- <sup>33</sup> J. H. Nash, "England's Transportation in England during the Fourteenth Century," *Speculum*, 1:361-74, 1936.
- <sup>34</sup> E. C. Parry, editor, *An Historical Geography of England before A.D. 1800* (Cambridge: University Press, 1936).
- <sup>35</sup> Dorothy M. Brown, "Archepiscopal Residences in York in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," *English Historical Review*, 41:1-11, 1936.
- <sup>36</sup> T. M. H. Nichols, *Diseases of the Nervous System* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937).
- <sup>37</sup> Henry A. Sigerist, *Civilization and Disease* (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1936).



For an understanding of the importance of saints in the Middle Ages, The Mediaeval Mind by Henry O. Taylor was very helpful.<sup>38</sup> An essay on "Popular Canonization" was of interest in considering the position held by St. William in his time.<sup>39</sup>

Limitation of previous study. What little attention has been given to the story of St. William since the publication of the work of Thomas of Wymouth seems to have been with regard to the accusation against the Jews of a ritual murder required by their religion. Moreover, none of the minor saints seem to have been much studied especially with the idea of using their cults as a reflection of lines of communication and as indicators of special social and intellectual conditions.

---

<sup>38</sup>Henry Osborne Taylor, The Mediaeval Mind (London: The Macmillan Company, 1927) 2 vols.

<sup>39</sup>Guibert de Nogent, "Popular Canonization," Life in the Middle Ages (G. G. Coulton, editor; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), pp. 16-17.



For an understanding of the importance of evidence in the Middle Ages, see The Medieval Mind by Henry J. Taylor, very helpful. An essay on "Popular Communication" and of interest in considering the position held by St. William in his time.<sup>32</sup>

#### Limitation of previous work. What little attention

has been given to the story of St. William since the publication of the work of Thomas of Monmouth (to whom it may be said with regard to the accusation against the loss of a ritual murder required by their relation. However, none of the minor saints seem to have been mentioned, especially with the idea of using their relation as a vehicle of ideas of communication and an indication of social control and intellectual conditions.

<sup>32</sup> Henry J. Taylor, The Medieval Mind (London: The Macmillan Company, 1927) 2 vols.  
<sup>33</sup> The Middle Ages (N. Y. Cowles, editor; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), pp. 10-17.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE LEGEND AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Middle Ages produced numerous chronicles and legends of the lives of the saints, the purpose of which was to give edifying examples of the grace of God working in holy men. The story of one of these, William of Norwich, a boy martyred at the age of twelve, is told in the chronicle by Thomas of Monmouth. The chronicle tells little of his life but describes the miraculous happenings connected with him after his death in 1144 until the year 1172. We shall now consider the legend and briefly take a look at twelfth century England where it flourished.

The legend. According to the writings of Thomas William was born in 1132 in a little village called Haverlingland about eight miles from Norwich. When he was twelve years old he became a tanner's apprentice in the city. On the Saturday before Easter in that year, 1144, a corpse identified as that of William was found in Thorpe Wood near Norwich. When the accusation was made that the Jews of Norwich had murdered the boy out of hatred of Christianity and, since several miraculous things had been reported, William was considered a martyr and the body was moved to the Monks' Cemetery. There it remained for several years







while tales of the martyrdom languished. Meanwhile Bishop William Turbe succeeded to the See of Norwich and, when one of his tenants had been accused of murdering a Jew, he re-opened the case of William as a counter-accusation in the king's court. The Jews were never convicted in court but the story persisted. Five years after the death of William, Aelward Ded, a citizen of Norwich, told in a death-bed confession that he had met the Jews as they were taking the body to Thorpe Wood but had been forbidden by the king's sheriff from telling the story then. About this time Thomas, the author of the chronicle, appeared as a monk at the Benedictine Priory at Norwich and heard the story from others, as it had progressed up to that time. Before long he got himself appointed sacrist for the sepulchre. In 1150, because of a new outbreak of visions and miracles, the body was moved to the chapter-house. In this same year Prior Elias died and Richard de Ferrariis, who succeeded as prior, permitted a carpet which Prior Elias had not allowed, to honor St. William's tomb. From this time on, the miracles were numerous. The body was moved into the cathedral the next year and three years after that to the Martyrs' chapel. About 1168 Bishop William Turbe consecrated the chapel of "St. William-in-the-wood" to mark the spot where the boy's body had been found. The miracles continue, involving



while tales of the martyred heroines, Elizabeth and  
 William were succeeded to the sea of Norway and, when one  
 of his servants had been accused of murder, a few, he re-  
 opened the case of William as a counter-accusation in the  
 king's court. The Jews were never convicted in court but  
 the story persisted. Five years after the death of William,  
 around 1100, a citizen of Norwich, told in a book, that  
 he had not the Jews as there were telling the  
 body to the grave hood but had been forbidden by the king  
 sheriff from telling the story that, about this time, the  
 the author of the chronicle, agreed as a counter-accusation  
 against the story of Norwich and hence the story was  
 as it had progressed up to that time.  
 himself appointed sheriff for the county, and in 1100, he  
 came of a new outbreak of violence and the king  
 moved to the chapter-house. In this first trial  
 died and Richard de Boreville, who succeeded as sheriff, per-  
 mitted a corpse which prior which had been allowed, to remain  
 at William's tomb. From this time on, the witness were  
 numerous. The body was moved into the church of St. Andrew  
 year and three years after that in the church of St. Andrew.  
 About 1100 Bishop William tried to convert the church of  
 "St. William-in-the-wood" to make the spot where the body  
 body had been found. The witness continued, however,



people from as far away as Worcester and Canterbury. Thomas finished his book in 1172 or 1173 and the curtain falls there.<sup>40</sup>

Although at Norwich the cultus flourished for some time, William has never been canonized. However, this is not unusual as there are many hundreds of "Saints" whose claims to that title rest on the traditional veneration accorded them.<sup>41</sup>

The chapel known as "St. William-in-the-Wood" has vanished, but its site can still be identified on what is now called "Mousehold Heath."<sup>42</sup>

St. William's martyrdom was unique in that it seems to be the first case recorded in which it was claimed that the Jews crucified a Christian as a ritual murder required by their religion. The Jews firmly deny any such practice

---

<sup>40</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., The material given is summarized from the chronicle of Thomas.

<sup>41</sup>Benedictine Monks, compilers, The Book of Saints (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944), "Preface" p. ix. The explanation given here adds that for many of these traditional "saints" there is no proof now available for the legitimacy of their canonization. These remain with that recognition given them by the Bishops and people who were their contemporaries, but with a strict prohibition of any extension of their "cultus."

<sup>42</sup>Frances Arnold-Forster, Studies in Church Dedications (London: Skeffington & Son, Piccadilly, 1899) Vol. II, pp. 532-33.



people from as far away as Worcester and Cambridge. Thomas  
finished his book in 1778 or 1779 and the printing press  
there.

Although at Norwich the entire situation for some  
time, William has never been abandoned. However, this is  
not unusual as there are many instances of "leaves" where  
again to that little part of a traditional version  
referred them.

The chapter known as "St. William in the Woods" has

vanished, but the site can still be identified by the  
now called "Wonschold's Forest".

St. William's martyrdom was the last in a series  
to be the first case recorded in which it was claimed that  
the Jews carried a Christian as a ritual murder, required  
by their religion. The Jews simply say that with evidence

40 Joseph and James, 1778. The material given is  
summarized from the accounts of 1778.

41 Domesticating Books, especially, the book of Esther  
(New York: The Hamilton Company, 1907). The book of Esther  
The explanation given here is that for many of these  
traditional "miracles" there is no proof, now available, of the  
legitimacy of their canonical status. These remain as  
recognition given them by the Church and people who were  
their contemporaries, but with a total rejection of any  
extension of their "miracles".

42 Thomas Arnold-Rosseter, English Literature  
from (London: Shakespeare, 1907). Vol. II.  
pp. 388-39.



connected with their religion.<sup>43</sup> It has never been proved and has been called "one of the most notable and disastrous lies of history."<sup>44</sup> Thomas told the story as explained to him by a converted Jew.<sup>45</sup> Since then there have been many such accusations which have continued down to the present century. As these cases probably did not arise independently, we can consider them as indicating the spread of the story of St. William.

Historical background. In his book, Thomas of Monmouth covers a period of approximately forty years from the birth of William in 1132 until he closes the story in 1172. This coincides with the reign of Stephen (1135-1154) and almost twenty years of the reign of Henry II. Preceding the reign of Stephen the Norman rule in England had shown a history of steady advance in good government. However, Stephen became involved in a conflict for the crown and civil war broke out. He lost the support of the nobles and a period

---

<sup>43</sup>Herman L. Strack, "Blood Accusation," The Jewish Encyclopedia, III, 260-67.

<sup>44</sup>Raymund Webster, "William of Norwich," The Catholic Encyclopedia, XV, 635-36.

<sup>45</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., pp. 93-94. Theobald, the Jew, explained how the Jews each year drew lots to see which group was to crucify a Christian and that the task fell in that year to the Norwich Jews.



connected with their religion.<sup>45</sup> It has never been proved  
and has been called "one of the most popular and interesting  
lies of history."<sup>46</sup> Thomas told the story as explained to  
him by a converted Jew.<sup>47</sup> Since then there have been many  
such recollections which have continued down to the present  
century. As these cases probably did not arise independently  
of the story of St. William.

Historical background. In his book, St. William,  
month covers a period of approximately 100 years from the  
birth of William in 1133 until his death in 1155.  
This coincides with the reign of Stephen (1135-1155).  
Almost twenty years of the reign of Henry II (1155-1189).  
reign of Stephen the Norman rule in England was in a  
state of steady advance in good government.  
became involved in a conflict for the crown and  
broke out. He lost the support of the nobles and

---

<sup>45</sup>Thomas I. Brown, St. William, Oxford University Press, 1911, 200-201.  
<sup>46</sup>Raymond Reuter, The Reign of Stephen, 1920, 100-101.  
<sup>47</sup>Thomas and James, St. William, 1911, 100-101.  
the Jew, explained how the Jews were used to  
which group was to exercise a right of the Jew  
in that year to the Norwich Jews.



of feudal anarchy ensued which lasted almost to the end of his reign.<sup>46</sup>

According to an entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle we learn the following concerning the results of the strife between the barons and Stephen:

When the traitors perceived that he was a mild man, and soft, and good and did no justice. . . they filled the land full of castles. . . . When the castles were made, they filled them with devils and evil men. Then took they those men that they imagined had any property, both by night and by day, peasant men and women, and put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them with unutterable torture. . . . Many thousands they killed with hunger. . . . They laid imposts on the towns continually. . . ; when the wretched men had no more to give, they robbed and burned all the towns. . . . Then was corn dear, and flesh, and cheese and butter; for there was none in the land. Wretched men died of hunger; some went seeking alms who at one while were rich men; some fled out of the land. Never yet had more wretchedness been in the land.<sup>47</sup>

The Normans had opened a wider field of commercial activity for the towns, and Norwich was one of the most prosperous.<sup>48</sup> Considerable numbers of Jews came to England after the conquest, settled in the towns as wards of the

---

<sup>46</sup>W. E. Lunt, History of England (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945), p. 103.

<sup>47</sup>Benjamin Thorpe, editor, Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 2 vols. (Rolls Series)(London, 1861) II, 230-231. This is given under the year 1137, the same year in which the martyrdom of William is recorded.

<sup>48</sup>A. L. Smith, "Trade and Industry," Traill, editor, Social England (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1909) Vol., I., Part II., pp. 518 ff.



of feudal anarchy which lasted almost as long as  
his reign.<sup>46</sup>

According to an entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle  
we learn the following concerning the results of the battle  
between the barons and Stephen:

When the traitors assembled that he was a villain  
and not a lord, and good in his kingdom. . . .  
the land full of castles. . . .  
made, they filled them with English and Welsh men.  
took they those men that they in the land had, and  
both by night and by day, gave them men and women, and  
put them in prison for their gold and silver, and  
tured them with wretchedness. . . .  
sands they killed with sword. . . .  
on the towns continually. . . .  
had no more to give, they robbed and burned all the  
towns. . . .  
and better; for there was none in the land, nor  
man died of hunger; some were cast down into the  
while were rich men; some died of the plague, some  
yet had more wretchedness than in the land.

The barons had a great share of the  
activity for the town, and Stephen was one of the great  
progresses.<sup>47</sup> Considerable reports of the same in  
after the conquest, noted in the form of a list of the

<sup>46</sup> E. Hart, History of England (New York: 1907),  
and Stephens, 1907, p. 103.  
<sup>47</sup> Benjamin Thorpe, Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,  
2 vols. (Loth's Series) (London, 1892), II, 20-21. This is  
given under the year 1137, the first year in which the  
narration of William is recorded.  
<sup>48</sup> J. I. Smith, Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,  
Social England (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1931),  
Part II, pp. 618 ff.



king rather than as citizens, and incurred the hatred of the Christians by their practice of lending money at prohibitive rates of interest.<sup>49</sup> Probably this had something to do with the willingness of the Christians to believe derogatory stories about the Jews in Norwich.

The church and the towns were the two centers of hope and progress in the medieval world. They made decided advances in power and claims even during the difficult time of Stephen's reign. The boroughs were advancing steadily and no doubt served as havens from the disorders outside. The church also was something like a city of refuge. Following the Norman conquest there was a rapid increase in the number of monasteries. William of Newburgh wrote: "In the short time Stephen bore the title of king there arose in England many more dwellings of the servants and handmaids of God than had risen in the whole century past."<sup>50</sup>

It is of interest here that these monasteries seem to have sought much after the bodies and relics of saints. At times imposters were venerated as saints, false relics

---

<sup>49</sup>W. E. Lunt, History of England, p. 139.

<sup>50</sup>A. L. Smith, "The Anarchy." H. D. Traill, editor, Social England (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1909) Vol. I., Part II, pp. 367-388.



being rather than as citizens, and because the interest of the Christians by their position on foreign lands is not inhibitive rates of interest.<sup>12</sup> Probably this had something to do with the willingness of the Christians to believe heretical stories about the Jews in London.

The church and the towns were the two centers of hope and progress in the medieval world. They were destined to advance in power and claims even during the difficult time of the church's reign. The heretics were attacking steadily and no doubt arrived at points from the Christian outside. The church also was something like a city of refuge. Following the known elements there was a great number in the number of heretics. Within a century there was a great number of time spent here and a little of time spent in England many more dwellings of the heretics and heretics of God than had risen in the whole country.<sup>13</sup>

It is of interest here that these heretics were not to have sought much after the heretics and heretics of England. At times heretics were reported as heretics. These heretics

<sup>12</sup>W. E. Johns, *History of England*, p. 100.  
<sup>13</sup>A. L. Smith, "The Heretics of the Middle Ages," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 22-23.



were sold and even false miracles were fabricated.<sup>51</sup> Pilgrimages to the tombs of the martyrs and offerings brought by the devout may have been a source of considerable revenue for the monasteries and churches, and also for the villages and towns close by.

William lived his short life, died, and performed miracles in an England torn by the civil strife of Stephen's reign, where towns were growing and commerce increasing, where people hated the Jews yet the king partly protected them, where monasteries increased in number, and where saints and their relics were popular.

---

<sup>51</sup>Guibert de Nogent, "Popular Canonization," Life in the Middle Ages (G. G. Coulton, editor; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), pp. 16-17.







## CHAPTER IV

### GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE AND SPREAD OF INFORMATION

From Norwich the word of the miracle-working St. William spread so that twenty-eight years after his martyrdom it had reached northward to Scarborough and York, southward to Canterbury, and as far west as Worcester and nearby Pershore Abbey. Of course, those who experienced or witnessed miracles at the tomb would tell their tale at every opportunity, others would repeat it, and so the legend would grow. Within about a hundred years at least six other boys in various parts of England were supposed to have been martyred by the Jews, so at least that aspect of the story continued long after Thomas closed his narrative and the miracles and offerings dwindled away.

Geographical range. The earliest miracles, as would be expected, generally occurred in the immediate vicinity of Norwich. As they grew more numerous, pilgrims came and visions were reported from farther away, but still many from Norwich were favored by the saint.

One of the first miracles connected with a cure occurred at some distance, however. It was a vision which occurred to a man named Lewin, living in the marshes near Ely. His father went to Norwich to try to learn of what







holy person his son had had a vision but learned nothing. A little later the parish priest, going to Synod, heard the Jews accused of murder of a Christian boy so then they knew that it was William that Lewin had seen in his vision, and they went to the tomb with offerings and thanks.<sup>52</sup>

Another miraculous vision occurring some little distance from Norwich in the very early days was that of a maiden whose name is not given, who lived in Dunwich, near Ipswich in Suffolk. In her vision she saw the Bishop Herbert, founder of the Church of Norwich, and the holy boy martyr. By this vision the hysterical girl was freed from persecution of a devilish incubus which was trying to seduce her.<sup>53</sup> These two early miracles took place before Thomas arrived at Norwich so he reports them carefully, he says, as they were told to him.

Several of the early miracles took place within the cloister itself or concerned those closely connected with it. Botilda, the wife of Girard who was the Monks' cook was miraculously delivered of a child.<sup>54</sup> One of the monks

---

<sup>52</sup>Jessopp and James, editors, The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich by Thomas of Monmouth, pp. 67-74.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 79-85.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp. 78-79.



half person his son had a vision but later...  
A little later the person...  
was accused of murder of a...  
that it was William...  
they went to the tomb with...  
another...  
distance from...  
neither whose name is not...  
Ipswich in...  
port, founder of the...  
martyr. By this vision...  
personification of a...  
has been...  
Thomas arrived at...  
he says, as they were...  
Several of the...  
mistaken itself or...  
it. ... the wife of...  
was miraculously delivered of a child...

of St. William of Norwich by James...  
Joseph and James, editors, The...  
Ibid., pp. 77-78.  
Ibid., pp. 78-79.



was cured of a toothache.<sup>55</sup> Another monk, Peter Peverell, had a vision.<sup>56</sup> Thomas himself had several visions which is probably what got him his job as sacrist.<sup>57</sup> Throughout the whole story the monks have miraculous help and visions.

A number of these coming to the sepulchre of St. William came from small villages near Norwich. The editors of the chronicle frequently add notes to tell at what distance some of them are located. These are mentioned: Markshall, 4 miles; Setchy, 3 miles, on the Nar; Tudenham, 10 miles; Postwick, 4 miles; Bedingham, 10 miles, on the road to Bunjay; Tivetshall, 12 miles to the south; Helgheton, 7 miles; Flordon, 10 miles; Belaugh, 8 miles north on the Bure; Hadeston, 10 miles south; Haveringland, 8 miles.

Some of the other villages mentioned were probably also located in Norfolk. Numerous villages mentioned in Domesday had considerable eleventh century populations but had disappeared before the end of the Middle Ages; the Black Death was one factor in this.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., pp. 129.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp. 129-32.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., pp. 116 ff.

<sup>58</sup>H. C. Darby, editor, An Historical Geography of England Before A.D. 1800. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1936) p. 208.







Yarmouth, downstream from Norwich, and its outlet to the sea, is mentioned several times. In some instances sailors from Yarmouth were saved from storms at sea by the virtue of St. William.<sup>59</sup>

Then we have people from in or near other east-coast ports of England, from Scarborough, Lynn, and Ipswich.<sup>60</sup>

A dean of the province of Lincoln came to Norwich and also a woman from Lindsey, a part of Lincoln to the north. A man from a district of the province of York, from beyond the Humber, came to Norwich as a result of a vision and miraculous cure. Another man made a long pilgrimage on crutches from York.<sup>61</sup>

From the south a woman, bent double, came walking with hand trestles from St. Edmund's Bury. A group of pilgrims came from Cambridge to present offerings at the newly-dedicated chapel of St. William-in-the-wood. A woman from London was sent to Norwich by a vision to tell a man named Gurwan how to cure his son. A man from Canterbury while traveling through Norwich obtained the cure of his

---

<sup>59</sup>Jessepp and James, op. cit., Yarmouth sailors are mentioned pp. 152, 158, 254, 276.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., Scarborough, p. 278; Lynn, p. 195; Ipswich, p. 79 and p. 203.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., Lincoln, p. 197; Lindsey, p. 271; York, p. 195 and p. 271.



Yarmouth, Acadians from Norwich, and the outlet to  
the sea, is mentioned several times. In some instances  
sailors from Yarmouth were saved from storms at sea by the  
virtue of St. William.<sup>52</sup>

Then we have people from in or near other east-coast  
ports of England, from Scarborough, Lynn, and Ipswich.<sup>53</sup>  
A dean of the province of Lincoln came to Norwich and  
also a woman from Lindsey, a part of Lincoln to the north.  
A man from a district of the province of York, from beyond  
the Humber, came to Norwich as a result of a vision and  
miraculous cure. Another man made a long pilgrimage on  
ordered from York.<sup>54</sup>  
from the south a woman, Saint Cecilia, came walking  
with handkerchiefs from St. Edmund's Bay. A group of  
pilgrims came from Cambridge to present offerings at the  
newly-dedicated chapel of St. William-in-the-wood.  
woman from London was sent to Norwich by a vision to tell a  
man named Gervase how to cure his son. A man from Canterbury  
while traveling through Norwich obtained the cure of his

<sup>52</sup> Jessup and James, *op. cit.*, Yarmouth sailors are  
mentioned pp. 152, 153, 254, 273.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, Scarborough, p. 273; Lynn, p. 195; Ipswich,  
p. 75 and p. 205.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, Lindsey, p. 197; Lindsey, p. 271; York,  
p. 195 and p. 271.



companion and horse so that he might proceed. Later another came from Canterbury on a miraculous journey.<sup>62</sup>

A letter written by a monk of Pershore Abbey came from the west of England, telling the story of a remarkable vision by a girl nearby in Worcester.<sup>63</sup>

These are the principal places mentioned in the chronicle from which pilgrims came or where believers lived who experienced visions. There is however, another type of evidence which shows that the story must have been spreading during these years. St. William's martyrdom was alleged to have been a ritual murder whereby the Jews crucified a Christian. Following shortly was a similar case of a boy named Harold in the city of Gloucester in 1168. In 1181 such an incident was reported at Bury St. Edmunds where a certain Robert was the alleged victim. In Bristol in 1183 there was yet another. The relics of these youths like those of St. William of Norwich were subsequently venerated as those of martyrs'. The first ritual murder accusation on the continent was that of Blois in 1171.<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., St. Edmund's Bury, p. 205; Cambridge, p. 279; London, p. 167; Canterbury, p. 160 and p. 291.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., Pershore and Worcester, pp. 283 ff.

<sup>64</sup>Cecil Roth, A History of the Jews in England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941) p. 13.



companion and horse so that he might proceed. Later another came from Canterbury on a missionary journey.<sup>52</sup>

A letter written by a monk of Pershore Abbey came from the west of England, telling the story of a remarkable vision by a girl nearby in Worcester.<sup>53</sup>

These are the principal places mentioned in the chronicle from which glowing cases of where believers lived who experienced visions. There is however, another type of evidence which shows that the story must have been spread- ing during these years. St. William's martyrdom was alleged to have been a ritual murder whereby the Jews strangled a Christian. Following shortly was a similar case of a boy named Harold in the city of Worcester in 1157. In 1161 such an incident was reported at Bury St. Edmunds where a certain Robert was the alleged victim. In Bristol in 1162 there was yet another. The relics of those youths like those of St. William of Norwich were subsequently venerated as those of martyrs. The first ritual murder accusation on the continent was that of Blois in 1171.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., St. Edmund's Bury, p. 205; Cambridge, p. 272; London, p. 157; Canterbury, p. 100 and p. 291.  
<sup>53</sup> Ibid., Pershore and Worcester, pp. 208 ff.  
<sup>54</sup> Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931) p. 12.



The cases in England continued. At an unknown date a boy named Herbert suffered at Huntingdon. In 1192 a boy was said to have been murdered by the Jews at Winchester. In 1244 the body of a boy was found in London with Hebrew letters written or painted on the limbs and trunk, and signs of torture. In 1255 occurred the case most notable of all next to that of St. William. It was said that a great assembly of Jews from all England after a mock trial murdered a little boy named Hugh with mimicry of the crucifixion. He had last been seen entering a Jew's house, and his body was found at the bottom of a well. It seems that the crime was so far brought home to the satisfaction of the king's justices in London that eighteen suffered for it. The cult of St. Hugh grew rapidly. He was buried in Lincoln Minster, his tomb was a favourite place of pilgrimage for centuries and his fame far surpassed that of any other Lincolnshire saint.<sup>65</sup>

On the following pages are sketched an outline map of England and an enlarged map of southeastern England. On these are shown those places named by Thomas for which we can find a reasonably accurate location. Most of those not shown were probably very small villages no longer existing.

---

<sup>65</sup>W. H. Hutton, The Lives and Legends of the English Saints (London: Wells, Gardner, Darton & Co., Ltd., 1903) pp. 327-8.



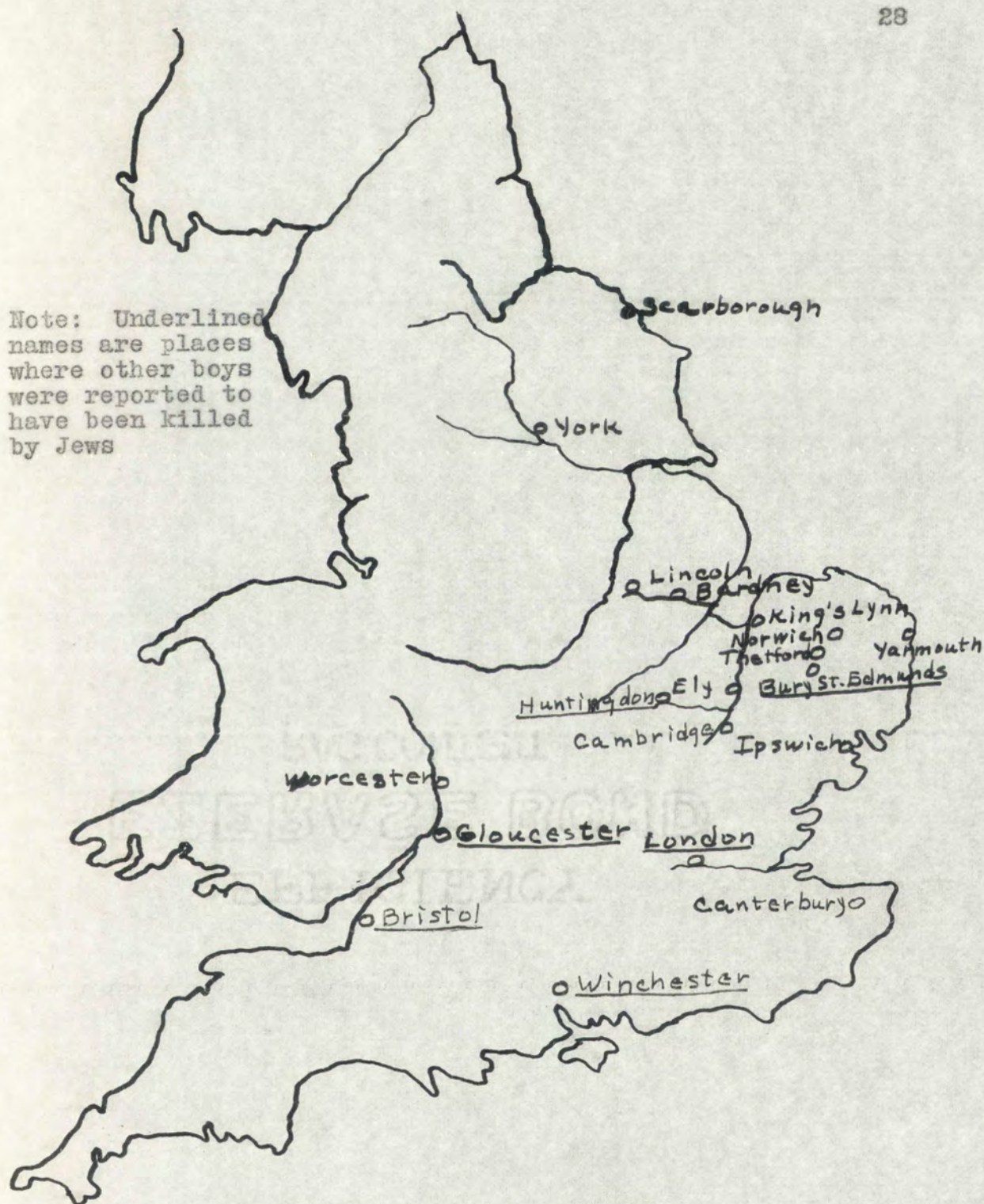
The case in England continued. At an unknown date a boy named Herbert entered at Winchester. In 1332 a boy was said to have been murdered by the Jews at Winchester. In 1334 the body of a boy was found in London with Hebrew letters written on painted on the limbs and trunk, and signs of torture. In 1335 occurred the case most notable of all next to that of St. William. It was said that a great assembly of Jews from all England after a week trial murdered a little boy named Hugh with a variety of the cruelties. He had last been seen entering a Jew's house, and his body was found at the bottom of a well. It seems that the crime was so far brought home to the satisfaction of the King's Justice in London that eighteen entered for it. The wife of St. Hugh grew wealthy. He was buried in Lincoln Minster, his tomb was a favorite place of pilgrimage for centuries and his name has surpassed that of any other Lincolnshire saint.

On the following pages are sketched an outline map of England and an enlarged map of southeastern England. On these are shown those places named by Thomas for which we can find a reasonably accurate location. Most of those not shown were probably very small villages no longer existing.

Edw. R. Hutton, The River and Remains of the English  
 Saints (London: Wills, Gardner, Hutton & Co., Ltd., 1903)  
 pp. 257-8.



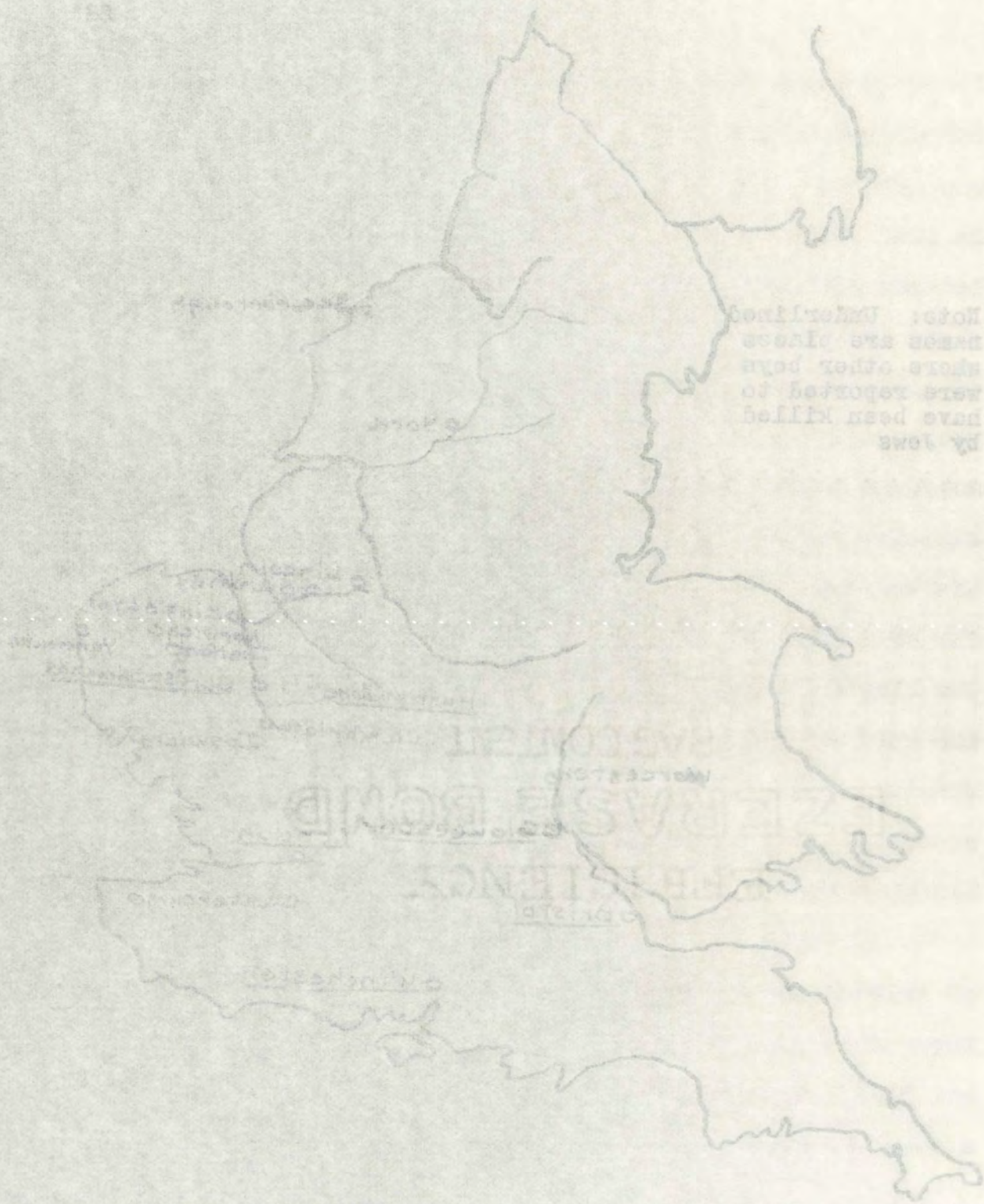
Note: Underlined names are places where other boys were reported to have been killed by Jews



GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE OF THE CULT  
OF SAINT WILLIAM IN ENGLAND

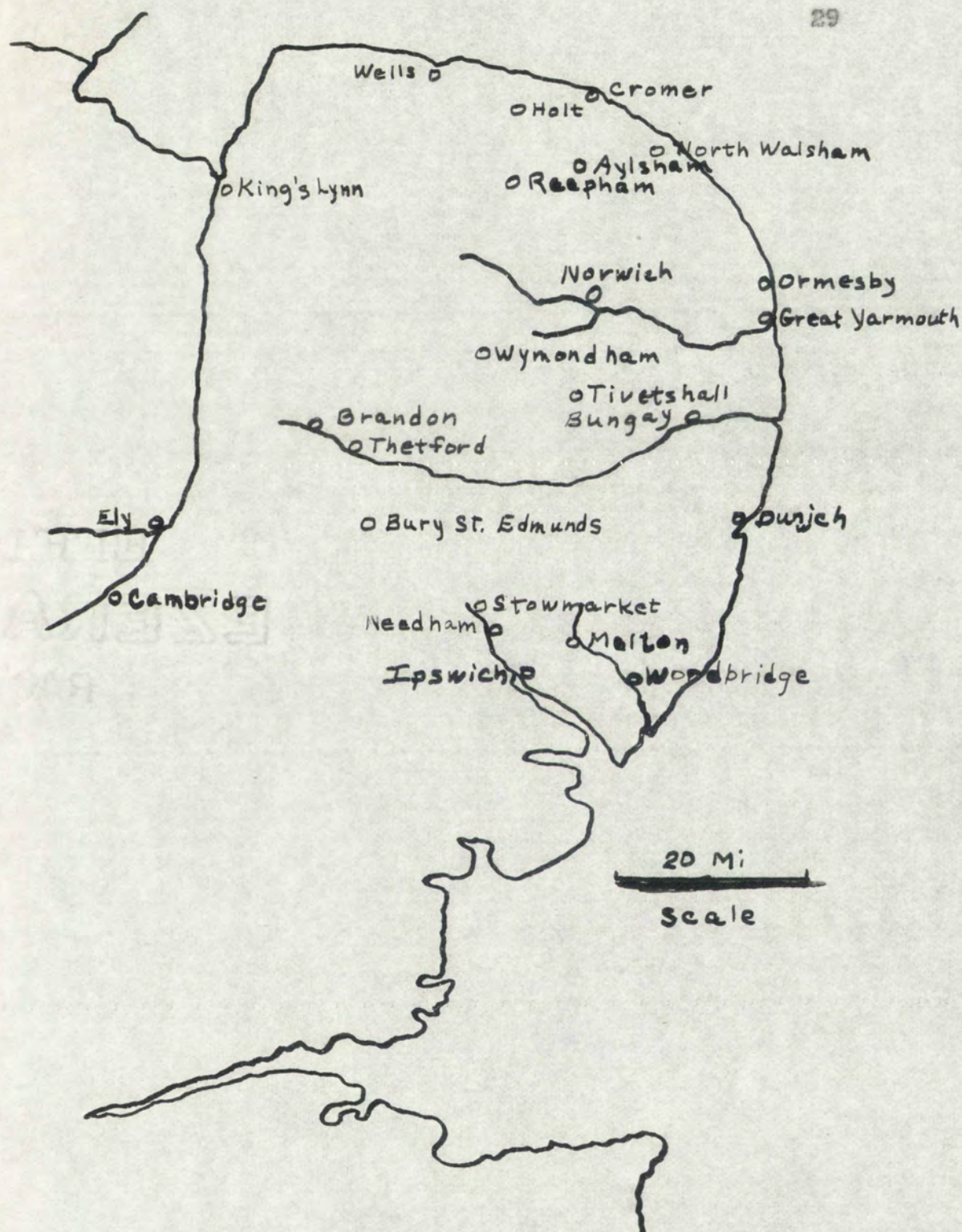


Notes: Unidentified  
 names are placed  
 where other boys  
 were reported to  
 have been killed  
 by Jews



Geographical names in the text  
 of this volume are in italics





LOCALITIES MENTIONED IN EAST ANGLIA







The localities of William's fame naturally cluster most thickly in the vicinity of Norwich. The more distant places tend to be along the coast and rivers. Next we shall consider how the legend may have been carried from place to place.

Spread of information. Information in the twelfth century would have spread chiefly by word of mouth. Increased commercial activity, wandering of pilgrims from shrine to shrine, gatherings of groups such as church officials at Synod, the king's court moving about the country, anything which took people from place to place would supply a means for news to travel. We shall see how some of these must have provided opportunity for the story of William and his miracles to become known in other parts of England.

The first time the case seems to have been mentioned before a large group including ones outside Norwich was at the Synod which met a few weeks after William's death. There the priest, Godwin, uncle of the boy, brought up the case but apparently got little notice. The accused Jews retreated to the castle where the sheriff refused to turn them over to the bishop for trial. However, the prior of St. Pancras spoke up and asked leave to take away with him



The location of William's home is generally located most thickly in the vicinity of Norwich. The more distant places tend to be along the coast and rivers. Next we shall consider how the legend may have been carried from place to place.

#### Spread of Information. Information in the twelfth

century would have spread chiefly by word of mouth. Increased commercial activity, wandering of pilgrims from shrine to shrine, gatherings of groups such as church officials at synods, the king's court moving about the country, anything which took people from place to place would supply a means for news to travel. We shall see how some of these must have provided opportunity for the story of William and his miracle to become known in other parts of England.

The first time the case seems to have been mentioned before a large group including some outside Norwich was at the synod which met a few weeks after William's death. There the priest, Geowin, uncle of the boy, brought up the case but apparently got little notice. The accused Jews retreated to the castle where the sheriff refused to turn them over to the bishop for trial. However, the prior of St. Benedict spoke up and asked leave to take away with him



the body of the Holy Martyr.<sup>66</sup> It was probably at this time that the parish priest from near Ely heard the story which he connected with the vision of the man Lewin.<sup>67</sup>

Later the court of King Stephen met in Norwich and the case of William was brought up as a counter-charge when a Christian was accused of killing a Jew. The king postponed a decision and it is doubtful if anyone was much impressed except perhaps by the Bishop's oratory.<sup>68</sup> However, many of those connected with the rambling royal household may have heard of the case. At that time most of the government traveled with the king.<sup>69</sup>

The monks themselves traveled occasionally. Thomas and Dom Richard de Ferrariis who later became Prior were gone several days on "important business" to Ely.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., pp. 43 ff.

<sup>67</sup>See above, pp. 22-23.

<sup>68</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., pp. 99 ff.

<sup>69</sup>Dorothy M. Broome, "Exchequer Migrations to York in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," Essays in Medieval History (A. G. Little and F. M. Powicke, editors; Manchester, 1925), p. 291. The supreme financial department, first public office to break away and live in quarters of its own, was not completely separated until the end of the twelfth century.

<sup>70</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., pp. 142-43.



the body of the Holy Martyr, 66. It was probably at this time that the parish priest from Westbury heard the story which he connected with the vision of the war tower. 67

Later the court of King Richard and the council and the case of William was brought up as a court-martial case. A Christian was accused of killing a Jew. The king postponed a decision and it is doubtful if anyone was ever imprisoned except perhaps by the bishop's order. 68 However, many of those connected with the trading town of Bristol may have heard of the case. At this time one of the government traveled with the king. 69

The monks themselves traveled occasionally. 70 and Ben Richard de Bury was the first to see the king. 71 Some several days on "important business" to him. 72

---

66 Jenyngh and James, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

67 See above, pp. 43-44.

68 Jenyngh and James, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

69 Dorothy M. Broome, "Angevin Relations to the East in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," *Journal of Medieval History* (L. G. Little and T. L. Thomas, editors; London, 1932), p. 201. The emperor himself remained in the public office to break away and live in the town of the king, was not completely separated until the end of the twelfth century.

70 Jenyngh and James, op. cit., pp. 43-44.



The sacrist of Holy Trinity Church, Canterbury, came into Norfolk on family business. While there his palfrey and clerk fell ill; desiring to start on the next day he obtained a quick cure from St. William. Doubtless, he returned home full of the amazing story.<sup>71</sup>

From the villages near Norwich the people would have been carrying their produce to market and taking home goods from the markets, traveling usually by packhorses, carts, and wagons unless a stream provided opportunity to use boats. In general, tenants' duties included some carriage work. Sometimes buyers would go around to buy the grain and take it to the ports. A traveler would get a vivid impression of the large amount of movement along the roads and streams and with it the lack of isolation of mediaeval towns and villages.<sup>72</sup>

East Anglia contained the most densely populated counties according to Domesday figures.<sup>73</sup> The land was fertile and had probably been despoiled less than other parts of England. That would have meant more buying and

---

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>72</sup>J. F. Willard, "Inland Transportation in England during the Fourteenth Century," pp. 361-374. Speculum, Vol. I, 1926.

<sup>73</sup>J. C. Russell, British Medieval Population (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1948), p. 53.



The arrival of Holy Trinity Church, Canterbury, came into Norfolk on family business. While there his railway and clock fell ill; desiring to start on the next day he obtained a quick cure from St. William. Nonetheless, he returned home full of the amazing story.<sup>VI</sup>

From the villages near Norwich the people would have been carrying their produce to market and taking home goods from the markets, traveling usually by packhorse, cart, and wagon unless a stream provided opportunity to use boats. In general, duties included some carriage work. Sometimes buyers would go around to buy the grain and take it to the port. A traveler would get a vivid impression of the large amount of movement about the roads and streets and with it the lack of isolation of medieval towns and villages.<sup>VII</sup>

Just Anglia contained the most densely populated counties according to Domesday figures.<sup>VIII</sup> The land was fertile and had probably been occupied less than other parts of England. That would have meant more paying and

<sup>VI</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>VII</sup> J. A. Walford, "Viking Transportation in England during the Tenth Century," pp. 361-374, *Speculum*, vol. 1, 1926.

<sup>VIII</sup> J. C. Russell, *British Medieval Population* (London: University of New Mexico Press, 1948), p. 53.



selling and hence more social intercourse as well. Moreover, the Normans had made it possible to travel over the roads in greater peace and safety. The growth of markets and the rise of fairs registered the protective influence of the monarchy.<sup>74</sup>

The Romans had built some good roads but others also had been developed. A map of fourteenth century roads shows a main one from Norwich to Bury St. Edmunds, thence to Cambridge, Ware, and London.<sup>75</sup> Along this road must have gone word about the marvelous happenings at the sepulchre of St. William.

Water transportation was cheaper and probably used wherever there was a navigable stream. Also coastwise transportation between ports was easier than overland. Between Yarmouth, at the mouth of the river, and Norwich, a few miles upstream there grew a close association, the commercial operations of one complementing the industrial activity of the other.<sup>76</sup>

Four times we find ships coming into Yarmouth saved from a tempest when those on board called upon St. William. In one instance Botilda, for whom a former miracle had

---

<sup>74</sup>H. C. Darby, op. cit., p. 224.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 300.



selling and hence more social intercourse as well. Moreover, the Romans had made it possible to travel over the roads in greater peace and safety. The growth of markets and the rise of towns registered the progressive influence of the monarchy.<sup>74</sup>

The Romans had built some good roads but others also had been developed. A map of fourteenth century roads shows a main one from Norwich to York & London, thence to Cambridge, Ware, and London.<sup>75</sup> Along this road must have gone word about the numerous happenings at the court of St. William.

Water transportation was cheaper and probably used whenever there was a navigable stream. The connection between ports was rather thin compared to the mouth of the river, and Norwich, a few miles upstream there grew a close association, the commercial operations of one complementing the industrial activity of the other.<sup>76</sup>

Four times we find ships coming into Yarmouth Haven from a port when those on board called upon St. William. In one instance Botolph, for whom a former miracle had

<sup>74</sup> H. G. Kelly, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.



been performed was on board with other pilgrims returning from visiting shrines and she instigated the prayers. Another time a priest of Aylsham, near Norwich, and others of the county of Norfolk had voyaged by sea to the further parts of England and were returning home. Again it was a priest of Thetford, in Norfolk, who led the prayers and got the sailors to promise part of their cargo to William. One time it seems to have been the sailors themselves who called on the holy name of the martyr and made vows to him. Another instance is given of a ship which sank in the harbor of Scarborough and only one man was saved because he had been the only one to invoke the martyr.<sup>77</sup>

Sailors seem to be notoriously subject to superstition, and tales of miraculous happenings no doubt constituted some of their gossip when in port. Since many of the places named in the chronicle are clustered along the coast and rivers, we must assume that in most cases the news came by boat.

Pilgrims appeared at St. William's shrine from time to time who had previously visited the shrines of others and they probably went on to still more places. Some experienced miracles at Norwich. Philip de Bella Arbore was

---

<sup>77</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., pp. 178, 254, 276-78, 152, 278.



been performed was on board with other pilgrims returning from visiting shrines and she investigated the process. Another time a priest of Aylesham, near Norwich, and others of the county of Norfolk had voyaged by sea to the further parts of England and were returning home. Again it was a priest of Thetford, in Norfolk, who led the prayers and got the sailors to promise part of their cargo to William. One time it seems to have been the sailors themselves who called on the holy name of the martyr and made vows to him. Another instance is given of a ship which sank in the harbor of Seerborough and only one man was saved because he had seen the only one to invoke the martyr. 77

William seems to be notoriously subject to superstition, and tales of miraculous happenings no doubt contributed some of their gossip when in port. Since many of the places named in the chronicle are situated along the coast and rivers, we must assume that in most cases the news came by boat.

Pilgrims appeared at St. William's shrine from time to time who had previously visited the shrines of others and they probably went on to still more places. Some experienced miracles at Norwich. Philip de Bello reports was



undergoing a ten year exile and penance for a crime committed in France where his home was. He had been to Jerusalem and Ireland and many places but it was at the tomb of St. William where an iron ring worn on his right arm broke. Another from the province of Lincoln had murdered his brother with a pitchfork and then made an iron ring from the fork to wear on his arm as a part of his penance. At St. Edmund's tomb the ring broke and pierced his flesh; at Norwich, William removed it entirely. One woman had consulted saints and visited their shrines to obtain relief from her ailment but it was at Norwich where she was cured. Then, she went to Rome to tell the Pope all about it.<sup>78</sup>

News traveled in the literature of the period as can be seen by mention of William in various chronicles written outside Norwich.<sup>79</sup> However, this would have gone very slowly as it took a long time to write a book and they did not circulate freely. Knowledge of the saints undoubtedly reached the people by word of mouth rather than written records and we have seen that there were plenty of opportunities for the stories to spread.

---

<sup>78</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., pp. 232 ff, 236 ff, 246 ff.

<sup>79</sup>See above, pp. 7-9.



undergoing a ten year exile and penance for a crime committed in France where his home was. He had been to Jerusalem and Ireland and many places but it was at the tomb of St. William where an iron ring worn on his right arm broke. Another from the province of Lincoln had murdered his brother with a battle-axe and when made an iron ring from the tomb he wore on his arm as a sign of his penance. At St. William's tomb the ring broke and pierced his flesh; at Norwich, William removed it entirely. One woman had consulted saints and visited their shrines to obtain relief from her ailment but it was at Norwich where she was cured. Then she went to Rome to tell the Pope all about it.<sup>78</sup>

How traveled in the literature of the period as can be seen by mention of William in various chronicles written outside Norwich.<sup>79</sup> However, this would have come very slowly as it took a long time to write a book and they did not circulate freely. Knowledge of the saints undoubtedly reached the people by word of mouth rather than written records and we have seen that there were plenty of opportunities for the stories to spread.

<sup>78</sup> See above, pp. 7-9.  
<sup>79</sup> See above, pp. 7-9.



## CHAPTER V

### SOCIAL CLASSES

In propounding the glories of the holy martyr, William, Thomas describes the diseases and cures of approximately a hundred people. Besides these there were others for whom different kinds of miracles were performed. In about two-thirds of the cases Thomas gives a little information about the person. Sometimes this is rather vague but perhaps, taking them as a whole, we can get a picture of the kinds of people seeking religious aid from the boy saint.<sup>80</sup>

Classes of people mentioned in the chronicle. Thomas leaves unidentified about a third of the people whom he tells of having experienced miracles. In all probability these were principally common folk, peasants or perhaps trades people of the town.

Of the people who have been identified there were several monks who had visions or were cured of ailments. There were others who came that were identified only as being some kin of one of the monks, and there were some who

---

<sup>80</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., These cases have been extracted from all books of the chronicle and are summarized here. No page references will be given in the footnotes.



## SOCIAL CLASSES

In propounding the question of the help which, William, Thomas described the diseases and causes of sporadic cases of a hundred people. Besides these there were others for whom different kinds of diseases were performed. In about two-thirds of the cases Thomas gives a little information about the person. Sometimes this is rather vague but perhaps, taking them as a whole, we can get a picture of the kinds of people seeking religious aid from the boy.

Classes of people mentioned in the records.

Leaves unidentified about a third of the people whom he tells of having experienced miracles. In all probability there were principally common folk, peasants or perhaps trades people of the town.

Of the people who have been identified there were several monks who had visions or were cured of ailments. There were others who came that were identified only as being some kin of one of the monks, and there were some who

---

20 Leach and James, op. cit. These cases have been extracted from all books of the records and are summarized here. No page references will be given in the footnotes.



were their servants. Then there were a number of the secular clergy, parish priests and their families, a dean of Lincoln, a wife of a dean of Bedingham, a servant of a Norwich Dean, a sacrist of Holy Trinity Church, Canterbury. Altogether this group, more or less closely connected with the church, accounts for more than a fourth of those who are described in some way. Of course within this group there are several levels of society. The servants were no better than any servants. The parish priests would certainly not rank among the aristocracy. Often they were of humble birth and poorly educated. On week days they worked in the fields like other peasants.<sup>81</sup> However, we will leave these church people and those associated closely with them in their own group.

The knights and members of noble families account for eleven cases in the list of miracles. Considering that there were probably only about 6,000 knights in the twelfth century, this would be an extremely large proportion in a population of around two million. Thus about .3% of the people make about 10% of the cases.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup>Austin Lane Poole, Obligations of Society in the XII and XIII Centuries. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1946) p. 29.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 36. The population estimate as given by J. C. Russell, op. cit., p. 280, Figure 10.4, "Trends of Gross Population, 1086-1545," is given here.



were their servants. Then there were a number of the poor-  
 low clergy, parish priests and their families, a dean or  
 Lincoln, a wife of a dean of Hereford, a countess of a bar-  
 with dean, a sister of Holy Trinity Church, Canterbury.  
 Altogether this group, more or less closely associated with  
 the church, accounts for not more than a fourth of those who  
 are described in some way. Of course within this group  
 there are several levels of society. The servants were no  
 better than any servants. The parish priests would certainly  
 ly not rank among the aristocracy. Other facts were of  
 humble birth and poorly educated. On week days they worked  
 in the fields like other peasants. However, we will leave  
 those central people and those associated closely with them to  
 their own group.

The knights and members of noble families account for  
 eleven cases in the list of witnesses. Considering that there  
 were probably only about 6,000 knights in the twelfth century,  
 this would be an extremely large proportion in a population  
 of around two million. Thus about 1% of the people make  
 about 10% of the cases.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Statuta inane Poole, Collationes of Poole in the  
XII and XIII Centuries. (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press,  
 1906), p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> Statuta, p. 261. The population estimates are given by  
 J. G. Kinnally, op. cit., p. 280. Murray, op. cit., p. 100, of  
 Gross Population, 1086-1286, is given here.



The moneyers, money changers, and others whom Thomas called "wealthy," number ten. Again this is a rather large number considering how few there must have been who were wealthy.

There were six people who worked at trades in Norwich or members of their families that are mentioned together with the trade. There was a tanner, chandler, baker, carpenter, and two smiths. There were also several clerks, fishermen and herdsmen named as such. There were eight people described simply as being poor.

We are told that about 70% of the population recorded in Domesday Book were peasantry and that the next twenty years increased this.<sup>83</sup> If we took all the people in the chronicle not definitely designated and added them to the poor and common people we should run only slightly over half of the total. Thus, we find a distinctly large number from the upper classes in proportion to their number in the population who were among those worshipping at the tomb of this boy saint.

Reasons for distribution among classes. The large number of church people, the ecclesiastics and those related to them or connected with them in some way, can be

---

<sup>83</sup>Poole, op. cit., p. 12.



The majority, money makers, and others who have  
 called "wealthy," number ten. Again this is a rather large  
 number considering how few have been seen who are  
 wealthy.

There were six people who were not in the  
 or members of their families that are mentioned together  
 with the trade. There was a teacher, a minister, a  
 pastor, and two others. There were also several others,  
 fishermen and others, and so on. These were all  
 people generally living in the town.  
 We are told that about 10% of the population were  
 in the town. The town was a small one, and the people  
 were not very numerous. In the town, there were  
 churches, not only of the different denominations, but  
 poor and common people. The town was a small one,  
 of the town. There were a few people who were  
 the upper classes in proportion to their number in the  
 population who were living there. The town was a  
 this day.

Reasons for distinction among classes. The large  
 number of church people, the education and those re-  
 lated to them or connected with them in some way, and so



accounted for by their devoutness and the fact that they had greater opportunity to know of the work of the saint.

There was probably little difference in the proportion of people in various social classes who experienced physical ailments, unless we count ailments which people develop when they become able to afford them.<sup>84</sup> At least, the life expectation among the higher classes seems to have been no greater.<sup>85</sup> Hence, we must look for some other explanation for the proportionately greater number of them.

Thomas, in writing his book, was trying to exalt his patron, Saint William. He may have thought that it would make a greater impression on the reader if a large number of those worshipping the saint were prominent people. Therefore, he probably made it a point to emphasize the social class of a person of wealth or noble family. Even so, there still seems to be a proportionately larger number of them.

The Middle Ages glorified poverty and illness, looked upon them as meritorious conditions helping the people toward salvation.<sup>86</sup> St. William's mother when suffering from the

---

<sup>84</sup>See below, p. 47.

<sup>85</sup>J. C. Russell, op. cit., p. 174.

<sup>86</sup>Henry E. Sigerist, Civilization and Disease (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1945), p. 198.



accounted for by their goodness and the fact that they had  
 greater opportunity to know of the work of the saint.  
 There was probably little difference in the propor-  
 tion of people in various social classes who experienced  
 physical ailments, unless we count ailments which people  
 develop when they become able to afford them.<sup>84</sup> At least  
 the life expectation among the higher classes seems to have  
 been no greater.<sup>85</sup> Hence, we must look for some other ex-  
 planation for the proportionately greater number of them.  
 Thomas, in writing his book, was trying to explain his  
 patron, Saint William. He may have thought that it would  
 make a greater impression on the reader if a large number of  
 these worshipping the saint were prominent people. There-  
 fore, he probably made it a point to emphasize the social  
 class of a person of wealth or noble family. Even so, there  
 still seems to be a proportionately larger number of them.  
 The Middle Ages glorified poverty and illness, looked  
 upon them as meritorious conditions helping the people toward  
 salvation.<sup>86</sup> St. William's mother when suffering from the

<sup>84</sup> See below, p. 47.

<sup>85</sup> J. C. Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

<sup>86</sup> Henry E. Sigerist, *Hygiene and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1945, p. 196.



illness of which she died was admonished to endure it bravely because every spot of sin was being wiped away by the pain and when it should be purely purged she would go to heaven.<sup>87</sup> Perhaps the common people could accept this doctrine more readily than the upper classes. If they had nothing worldly, the hope of salvation would make it more endurable. The more well-to-do people may have been willing to try anything which would improve their physical well-being rather than be content to wait for heaven.

The poor people could not always start out on a pilgrimage to a shrine to obtain relief from their ills and trouble even if they wished to do so. The upper classes could do this much more easily. Also, they probably had more contact with travellers and sources which might carry the story of a saint able to work miracles.

These factors may be a partial explanation for the fact that the number of people who were well off comprised a larger number of the people appealing to St. William for help than was proportionate to the number of them in the total population.

---

<sup>87</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., p. 215.



illness of which the bird was abandoned to endure its share-  
 ly because every spot of skin was being wiped away by the rain  
 and when it should be purely purged she would go to heaven, 87  
 Perhaps the common people could accept this doctrine more  
 readily than the upper classes. If they had nothing wrong,  
 the hope of salvation would make it more endurable. The  
 more well-to-do people may have been willing to try anything  
 which would improve their physical well-being rather than be  
 content to wait for heaven.  
 The poor people could not always start out on a pil-  
 grimage to a shrine to obtain relief from their ills and  
 people even if they wished to do so. The upper classes  
 could do this much more easily. Also, they probably had  
 more contact with travellers and sources which might carry  
 the story of a saint able to work miracles.  
 These factors may be a partial explanation for the  
 fact that the number of people who were well off comprised  
 a larger number of the people appealing to St. William for  
 help than was proportionate to the number of poor in the  
 total population.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE MIRACLES OF SAINT WILLIAM

Diseases and cures. Since ancient times miracles had held an important place in religion. At the time of Christ the healing of the sick played such an important part in all cults that the new religion could not have competed with them unless it had also held the promise of miraculous healing. The Gospels relate a great number of cures. They are the miracles most frequently performed by Christ. He healed demoniacs, the blind, lepers, paralytics, people suffering from various other chronic diseases or infirmities, and even resuscitated the dead. He cured by virtue of the divine power that was in Him. Sometimes a profession of faith was required of the sick. The Gospels set a pattern that determined the forms of religious medicine in the Christian world for many centuries. The apostles also had the faculty of performing cures. "Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick."<sup>88</sup> All saints performed miracles. They repeat each other in endless monotony. When a man was sick he made offerings and prayed for healing,

---

<sup>88</sup>Luke 9: 1-2.



## THE MIRACLES OF SAINT WILLIAM

Diseases and cures. Since ancient times miracles had held an important place in religion. At the time of Christ the healing of the sick played such an important part in all religions that the new religion could not have competed with them unless it had also held the promise of miraculous healing. The Gospels relate a great number of cures. They are the miracles most frequently performed by Christ. He healed demoniacs, the blind, lepers, paralytics, people suffering from various other chronic diseases or infirmities, and even resurrected the dead. He cured by virtue of the divine power that was in Him. Sometimes a profession of faith was required of the sick. The Gospels set a pattern that determined the forms of religious medicine in the Christian world for many centuries. The apostles also had the faculty of performing cures. "Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all evils, and to cure diseases, and he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." All saints performed miracles. They repeat each other in endless monotony. When a man was sick he made offerings and prayed for healing.



addressing himself, not to God directly, but to the Virgin Mary and to the saints, asking them for their intercession. They all had the power to pray and intercede with God for a sick man.<sup>89</sup>

Thomas had no interest in describing the ailing person's symptoms meticulously and in a detached way such as a medical historian would appreciate. Rather, he exclaimed over the great suffering and dire condition of the sick ones. The form of cure in such cases is as vague as the disease, a feeling of wholeness or health being felt where the pain and weakness were before. Even in cases where he gave a name to the disorder which is still used in medicine today we can not be sure of his diagnosis.

By far the largest class of sufferers were in the class of vague symptoms. They were described as being sick, weak, in great pain, or having a fever. About twenty-five of the miracle cures were of such illnesses.<sup>90</sup>

Another group of fourteen were those whose pain made them lame, crippled, or caused the limbs to appear deformed. They came to the shrine on crutches, hand trestles, carried

---

<sup>89</sup>Sigerist, op. cit., pp. 138-141.

<sup>90</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., the miracle cures discussed here are summarized from the whole chronicle. No page references are given except where an individual case is described.



addressing himself, not to the patient, but to the family  
and to the patient, asking them to be interested  
They all had the power to pay and interest with their  
rich man. 92

Thomas had no interest in observing the patient  
and his symptoms seriously and in a detached way, as a  
medical historian would appreciate. Rather, he explained  
over the great suffering and also condition of the patient  
the form of cure in each case is as a rule on the basis  
a feeling of wholeness or health being left when the patient  
and weakness were before. Even in cases where he gave a  
new to the disorder which is still used in medicine today  
we can not be sure of his diagnosis.

By the first class of patients were in the  
class of vague symptoms. They were described as being  
weak, in great pain, or having a fever. About twenty-five of  
the twelve cases were of such illnesses. 93

Another group of fourteen were those whose pain was  
then more, enlarged, or caused the hands to become inflamed.  
They came to the clinic on various, some trivial, some

92 Sigurd, op. cit., pp. 128-129.  
93 Jensen and Jensen, op. cit., pp. 128-129. The patients were  
described here as having had the same symptoms. In  
page references are given where the patients were  
described.



in litters on wheels, or assisted in some other way but were able to return normally by their own strength. In addition to these there were two who seem to have been actually paralyzed.

There were nine described from time to time whose whole bodies or some part had been badly swollen. This might be the throat, eye, knees, face, or head. One of those whose whole body was swollen was a woman who had drunk toad poison. Another was a man on whom a viper had breathed "a fearful sulphurous vapour."<sup>91</sup>

There were eleven who were blind, deaf, dumb, or a combination of these. Some were children who were reported to have been so from birth. Sometimes the person simply acquired the use of these powers in the midst of their prayers. Occasionally, it is more spectacular as in the case of the blind girl whose eyes were covered with a film like the skin of an egg which parted, and blood spurted from her eyes falling at a distance on the pavement, and then she was able to see.<sup>92</sup>

The cure of madness or driving out of devils was another fairly common occurrence at the sepulchre. Eight cases are recorded and they must often have provided quite

---

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., pp. 247; 251.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 208.



in letters on wheels, or assisted in some other way but were able to retain normally by their own strength. In addition to these there were two who seem to have been entirely paralyzed.

There were nine described from time to time whose whole bodies or some parts had been badly swollen. This might be the throat, eye, knee, face, or hand. One of these whose whole body was swollen was a woman who had drunk food poison. Another was a man on whom a viper had pressed "a fearful poisonous venom." 21

There were eleven who were blind, deaf, dumb, or a combination of these. Some were children who were reported to have been so from birth. Sometimes the person simply acquired the use of these powers in the midst of their progress. Occasionally, it is more questionable as in the case of the blind girl whose eyes were covered with a film like the skin of an egg which puffed, and blood spurted from her eyes falling at a distance on the pavement, and then she was able to see. 22

The cure of madness or driving out of devils was another fairly common occurrence at the sanatoria. Light cases are recorded and they must often have provided quite



a spectacle for the onlookers. The victim would often be quite violent and be brought bound to the tomb where he would become completely sane after a little while.

There is a wide variety of other ailments. Some are comparatively minor such as toothaches which subside and a man suffering from sleeplessness made able to sleep. Parents of an infant whom they fear is about to die come asking that it be saved and return home to find it well. Cases of dysentery and bloody flux are reported stopped. A woman is helped in the delivery of a child by a relic of the saint. One man had swallowed a viper when he fell asleep while herding his flocks; this and two young ones were caused to be vomited. A goitre is removed and a cancer cured. We find two cases of gout mentioned, one a woman and the other a little girl. Since gout as we know it today usually attacks adult males this may have been misnamed. Two cures for epilepsy are described.<sup>93</sup> Epilepsy is a disease characterized by fits which has been known since ancient times and was one of the first to be recognized and described.<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., pp. 134; 78; 189; 250; 266; 154; 273; 228.

<sup>94</sup>F. M. R. Walshe, Diseases of the Nervous System (Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1944), p. 114.



trophy is mentioned several times. William's mother  
suffered from this disease, following a winter, and so  
sister improved for a while but later the disease returned  
and she died of it.  
The list of names returned to in general that  
some would not have returned, though for the time being  
in being made well. The recovery of others was not  
hastened. This some may have said, but it was not  
not necessarily so. However, it might be suggested  
emphasizing the story of patients in a very similar  
resisting treatment for the time being by other means.  
One sister in speaking of having received medical attention  
says, "The situation of the mother of William of New York  
is connected with his time and health. When much progress  
found and they never found for this explanation, a group  
natural intervention. The situation with one of the  
other intervention, and as treatment, for a long time  
to treatment, such as treatment, or treatment, between dis-  
orders, in the case of which there have to be a part.  
Modern research has revealed a great deal about the  
and nervous system, and the latest in the field of research

842 COMEAL

ESBVEE BOARD  
of the National Association of  
Electricity



likely that many of the cases were some manifestation of the disorder known as hysteria. The hysterical reaction is essentially one in which the subject responds to difficulties by the development of a loss of bodily function which is completely disabling. It may be paralysis, sensory loss, mutism or aphonia, deafness, or blindness. These disturbances of the nervous system show a superficial resemblance to the results of organic disease. The pain experienced is genuine though the physiological mechanism underlying the appreciation of pain is not involved.<sup>97</sup> One writer says that hysteria may simulate anything.<sup>98</sup>

A variety of things may cause the disorder in any one case but taken as a whole any great social disturbance may have an aggravating effect. "In any community there are constantly a considerable number of people who are at best unstable. . . Many of these get along without any serious outbreak or conspicuous disturbance so long as the general social situation remains steady. But let the general social situation be disturbed and the strain then becomes too great for these poorly conditioned to bear. The result is a temporary and conspicuous increase in the number of hysterical

---

<sup>97</sup>Walshe, op. cit., pp. 320-329.

<sup>98</sup>Edmund S. Conklin, Principles of Abnormal Psychology (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927) p. 139.



likely that many of the cases were some manifestation of the disorder known as hysteria. The hysterical reaction is essentially one in which the subject responds to stimuli by the development of a loss of bodily function which is completely disabling. It may be paralytic, sensory loss, mutism or aphasia, deafness, or blindness. These disorders of the nervous system show a superficial resemblance to the results of organic disease. The pain experienced is genuine though the physiological mechanism underlying the appreciation of pain is not involved.<sup>27</sup> One writer says that hysteria may simulate anything.<sup>28</sup>

A variety of things may cause the disorder in any one case but taken as a whole any great social disturbance may have an aggravating effect. "In any community there are constantly a considerable number of people who are at best unstable. . . . Many of these get along without any serious outbreak or conspicuous disturbance so long as the general social situation remains steady. But let the general social situation be disturbed and the strain then becomes too great for these poorly constituted to bear. The result is a temporary and conspicuous increase in the number of hysterical

<sup>27</sup>Walshe, *op. cit.*, pp. 320-322.

<sup>28</sup>Edward S. Conklin, *Psychology of Abnormality*, 2d ed. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927) p. 122.



cases."<sup>99</sup> Another writer observes that "many people develop neuroses only when they become able to afford them."<sup>100</sup>

In regard to a cure of these symptoms there "is a need for providing a dignified occasion for their recovery. . . . Forms of incapacity incurable in the patient's home town are often relieved by a visit to some famous health resort, to a fabulous shrine, an advertised spring, or a widely heralded healer. Paralyzes, contractures, aphonias, incurable by ordinary medical means, yield to some bizarre and publicly esteemed therapy."<sup>101</sup>

A cure at the sepulchre of St. William was usually procured by prayer, and an offering, nearly always candles or wax. Sometimes the size of the candle was significant as when it was made the same length and breadth as a child. Sometimes the wax was shaped to show what part of the body was healed as in the case of the man cured of dropsy of feet and legs who brought wax boots, made by surrounding the swollen parts.<sup>102</sup> It is remarkable that nearly everyone, even the poor, was able to afford candles or wax, a rather

---

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>100</sup>H. L. Hollingworth, Abnormal Psychology (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1930), p. 235.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., pp. 239-40.

<sup>102</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., pp. 134; 196.



cases.<sup>99</sup> Another writer observes that "many people develop neurones only when they become able to afford them."<sup>100</sup>

In regard to a cure of these systems there is a need for providing a dignified occasion for their recovery. . . . Forms of hypnosis in the patient's home form are often relieved by a visit to some famous health resort, to a famous mine, an artificial spring, or a widely heralded healer. Tantaluses, composites, splinters, inevitable by ordinary medical means, yield to some elixir and finally entered therapy."<sup>101</sup>

A cure of the symptoms of St. William's usually procured by prayer, and an offering, nearly always candles or wax. Sometimes the size of the candle was significant as when it was made the same length and breadth as a child. Sometimes the wax was shaped to show what part of the body was healed as in the case of the ear of the boy at last and legs who brought wax boots, made by surrounding the swollen parts.<sup>102</sup> It is remarkable that nearly everyone, even the poor, was able to afford candles or wax, a rather

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>100</sup> E. L. Hollingworth, Abnormal Psychology (New York: The World Press Co., 1920), p. 333.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp. 232-40.

<sup>102</sup> Tassop and Jones, op. cit., pp. 134; 135.



expensive item in those days.<sup>103</sup> Often, also, the supplicant brought a coin.

A common practice was to wash relics in holy water and then drink the water as medicine. Scrapings of cement at the sepulchre were often dissolved in the water. One woman, the Lady Mabel de Bec took home a piece of the cement to have on hand for herself and her family to use in case of any need. This simple first-aid kit was reported to be adequate to care for all her needs.<sup>104</sup>

Other miracles and visions. While most of the miracles performed by the boy saint were in connection with curing physical ailments there were others which reflect much homely human nature a Thomas of Monmouth relates them.

A priest tried to traffic in the saint's holiness and obtain gain for himself. He dipped one of the relics in holy water and sold the water; he was fitly punished for his greed--his chickens all died when he demanded a hen of a poor woman.<sup>105</sup>

Thomas himself figured in some of the visions. It took a series of three visions of Herbert before he could

---

<sup>103</sup>"Candle," Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. V, p. 178.

<sup>104</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., p. 135.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., p. 192.



expensive item in those days. 103 Often, also, the surplus-

could brought a coin.

A common practice was to wash relics in holy water and then drink the water as medicine. Scrappings of cement at the apothecary were often dissolved in the water. One woman, the lady Mabel de Bee took home a piece of the cement to have on hand for herself and her family to use in case of any need. This single first-aid kit was reported to be adequate to care for all her needs. 104

#### Other miracles and visions. While most of the

miracles performed by the boy saint were in connection with curing physical ailments there were others which reflected much homely human nature. Thomas of Newburgh relates that a priest tried to traffic in the saint's holiness and obtain gain for himself. He dipped one of the relics in holy water and sold the water; he was vividly punished for his greed--his chickens all died when he demanded a hen of a poor woman. 105

Thomas himself figured in some of the visions. It took a series of three visions of Herbert before he could

103 Danville, F. H. "The Vision of Herbert," Vol. V, p. 170.

104 Tessie and James, op. cit., p. 183.

105 Ibid., p. 183.



persuade the Prior that the body of the saint, for whom Thomas was sacrist, should be moved to the Chapter House. Another time Thomas recovered his lost psalter through William's assistance.<sup>106</sup>

A monk had a vision wherein William ordered him to offer candles which he had been saving. This he did not do and so he died and after his death Thomas got the candles.<sup>107</sup>

In another case a change of scenery stopped some bad dreams. A maiden was freed of persecution of a devilish Incubus by a vision of Bishop Herbert and a trip to Norwich.<sup>108</sup>

William's power to quiet storms at sea has been mentioned before.<sup>109</sup>

The removal of iron fetters was another thing credited to the saint. At the weaning feast for William a man doing penance was relieved and later another brought his fetters to the tomb of his liberator, William. Others had iron rings removed from their arms.<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., pp. 116 ff; 201.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., pp. 136 ff.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., pp. 79 ff.

<sup>109</sup>See above, p. 31.

<sup>110</sup>Jessopp and James, op. cit., pp. 12-13; 198-200; 256-58; 231 ff; 236 ff.



permeated the prior that the body of the saint, for when  
Thomas was carried, should be taken to the church.  
Another time Thomas recovered his last breath. Thomas  
William's assistance. 100

A monk had a vision wherein William carried him to  
other candles which he had been taking. This he did not  
do and so he died and after his death Thomas was the  
candle. 101

In another case a charge of heresy against some-  
body. A woman was found of possession of a devilish  
incubus by a vision of a monk. Thomas was a part of the  
with. 102

William's power to fight against the devil was seen  
famed before. 103

The removal of from Thomas was a miracle. Thomas was  
ited to the saint. At the morning meal for William a man  
being because was relaxed and later another brought his  
return to the tomb of his liberator, William. Other  
from rings removed from their arms. 104

105  
106  
107  
108  
109  
110  
111  
112  
113  
114  
115  
116  
117  
118  
119  
120  
121  
122  
123  
124  
125  
126  
127  
128  
129  
130  
131  
132  
133  
134  
135  
136  
137  
138  
139  
140  
141  
142  
143  
144  
145  
146  
147  
148  
149  
150  
151  
152  
153  
154  
155  
156  
157  
158  
159  
160  
161  
162  
163  
164  
165  
166  
167  
168  
169  
170  
171  
172  
173  
174  
175  
176  
177  
178  
179  
180  
181  
182  
183  
184  
185  
186  
187  
188  
189  
190  
191  
192  
193  
194  
195  
196  
197  
198  
199  
200



Sometimes animals were cured. A poor woman gave thanks with prayer, tears, and a candle when her hog was cured. Some oxen were saved when a thread long enough to surround the group was made into a candle. The prayers of a boy brought cure for his falcon to the wonder of the adults.<sup>111</sup>

Some of the visions were of heavenly places where William held an honored place. A monk had a vision of the Mother of God and others doing William honor. There were two cases of persons finding themselves taken up and conducted through various regions to see William in heaven.<sup>112</sup>

William at times appeared in visions to make requests. He asked a maiden to send word that the cross was to be placed at the foot of his sepulchre so he would not tire so much in facing it. He requested the wife of a knight to bring her gold ring as an offering. There were requests for candles and once when an attempt was made to offer a candle that William wanted to another, it appeared stained with blood.<sup>113</sup>

Sometimes punishment was administered. Sheriff John, who protected the Jews from punishment became ill

---

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., pp. 152-53; 153-54; 258-59.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., pp. 129 ff; 67 ff.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., pp. 213; 195; 267-68.







and died within two or three years. A blasphemer was chastised in a dream with a very realistic beating for disparaging the holiness and miracles of blessed William the martyr. A sorceress of impure life was repelled from the holy place of the altar at the newly dedicated chapel in the wood.<sup>114</sup>

The body of William itself was a supernatural thing. A light appeared over it as it lay in the wood. Ravens trying to devour it were prevented from so doing by an invisible force. After 32 days it was uncorrupted and there was no bad smell but a fragrant perfume was noticed.<sup>115</sup>

To show his high standing among the saints the spirits of the Archbishop Thomas and the king and martyr Edmund accompanied a pilgrim from Canterbury on his way to offer a candle to William at Norwich.<sup>116</sup>

---

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., pp. 112; 272-73; 279 ff.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., pp. 31; 33; 37-39.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., pp. 291 ff.







## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study of the legend and cult of St. William of Norwich we have attempted to bring together all available references to him and material pertinent to an understanding of life in England, especially East Anglia, in the middle of the twelfth century. The most lasting part of the legend seems to be the manner in which he was supposed to have died, crucified by the Jews in a ritual murder. However, the significance to the whole story does not lie in hatred of the Jews but in love and reverence for an ideal of child-life, a poor boy, pure and simple, but holy with his love and trust of God.

In the middle ages the towns and monasteries were havens of refuge from the disorders without as the nobles and king fought among themselves. There in the town of Norwich, in care of the Cathedral Priory, was the tomb of a boy martyr. The saints were the heroes of the middle ages, and so it is not difficult to understand the people flocking there. Also, the science of medicine was so crude it is likely that faith and prayer cured more people than did the average doctor.

The story spread, first along the market roads to nearby villages, down the rivers with traders and travelers,



SECRET  
CONFIDENTIAL  
REFUGEE BOARD  
In this study of the Jewish and Christian  
of Herwich we have observed the same together all  
reference to his and spiritual relationship to the  
of life in England, especially with regard to the  
of the Jewish community. The next finding part of the  
seems to be the manner in which it is suggested to  
died, crucified by the Jews in a Jewish manner.  
the significance to the Jewish story was not  
of the Jews but in love and reverence for the Jewish  
life, a poor boy, poor and simple, and poor with his love  
and sense of God.  
In the middle ages the Jewish and Christian story  
havens of refuge from the Christian Church as the Jewish  
and King fought among themselves. There in the town of  
Herwich, in case of the Christian Church, was the town of  
a boy martyr. The statue was the statue of the statue  
eyes, and so it is not difficult to understand the Jewish  
looking there. Also, the statue of the statue was a statue  
it is likely that the statue was a statue of the statue  
did the average donor.  
The story opened, after about the statue of the statue  
nearly village, and the statue with the statue and statue.



out along the coast as the sailors heard the story and invoked the power of William to quiet storms. The people heard the story at markets and fairs, the priests carried it home from Synod, the king's court heard the case and perhaps carried it on, or a traveler related seeing a storm at sea become quiet. Pilgrims at the shrine saw or experienced miraculous healing. The story grew, reaching in time to the port of Scarborough to the north, as far south as Canterbury, and west to Worcester and other west coast ports of England. Of course, William was always best known and most popular with the people in Norwich and from the nearby villages.

It is interesting to note that the patrons of the boy saint were often from the higher classes. There were many church people, a few of the nobility and many tradespeople. Perhaps they were better able to bring offerings and less reluctant about requesting divine aid for their needs. Probably, however, their ills were often those types of emotional and functional disorders which respond more readily to faith healing. It seems to be true even today that the poorer, hard working people are less able and inclined to "doctor" their ills, are less likely to have nervous disorders in the cure of which faith plays so large a part, and are more humble and patient about enduring their afflictions.



out along the coast as the water level rose and  
involved the power of William to gain power. The  
heard the story of William and his, the water level  
it home from home, the story's end, the water level  
perhaps carried it on, or a traveler related to a  
at the same time, William at the same time, the  
perceived himself as a man. The story's end, the  
time to the part of the story, the water level, the  
as William, and was a traveler and other water level  
parts of the story, the water level, the water level  
and most of the story, the water level, the water level  
ready will be, the water level, the water level  
It is interesting to note that the water level of the  
boy came into the water level, the water level, the  
many other people, a row of the water level, the water level  
people, perhaps they were not as being water level  
and less reluctant about the water level, the water level  
needs, probably, that the water level, the water level  
types of emotional and intellectual water level, the water level  
more ready to be water level, the water level, the water level  
today that the water level, the water level, the water level  
and inclined to "be water level, the water level, the water level  
have never known in the water level, the water level, the water level  
large a part, and the water level, the water level, the water level  
during their water level.



This legend of St. William, like all legends of the people, reflects something of the conditions of its time and something of universal human nature. The Normans had brought a steady advance in good government and in economic conditions except for the reign of Stephen, but the minds of the people were still absorbed with the ideas of the middle ages.



This legend of St. William, like all legends of the people, reflects something of the conditions of its time and something of universal human nature. The woman has brought a steady advance in good government and in economic conditions except for the reign of Stephen, but the minds of the people were still absorbed with the ideas of the middle ages.

EFFICIENCY  
USE BOND  
CONTENTS



BIBLIOGRAPHY



EFFICIENCY

UNRELIABLE

ZERASE ONE

PRO CONTENT



## BOOKS

- Arnold-Forster, Frances, Studies in Church Dedications. London: Skeffington & Son, Piccadilly, 1899. 3 vols.
- Baring-Gould, S., The Lives of the Saints. Edinburgh: John Grant, 1914. 16 vols.
- Benedictine Monks, compilers, The Book of Saints. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1944. 328 pp.
- Conklin, Edmund S., Principles of Abnormal Psychology. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927. 457 pp.
- Darby, H. C., editor, An Historical Geography of England before A.D. 1800. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1936. 566 pp.
- Hollingworth, H. L., Abnormal Psychology. New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1930. 590 pp.
- Hutton, William H., The Lives and Legends of the English Saints. London: Wells, Gardner, Darton & Co., Ltd., 1903. 385 pp.
- Jacobs, Joseph, The Jews of Angevin England. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1893. 425 pp.
- Jessopp, Augustus and Montague Rhodes James, editors, The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich, by Thomas of Monmouth. Cambridge: The University Press, 1896. 303 pp. Introduction xc pp.
- Lunt, W. E., History of England. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945. 954 pp.
- Poole, Austin Lane, Obligations of Society in the XII and XIII Centuries. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1946. 115 pp.
- Roth, Cecil, A History of the Jews in England. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941. 306 pp.
- Russell, J. C., British Medieval Population. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1948. 389 pp.



Arnold-Barnes, Thomas, Thomas in the ...  
London: ... 1931. 1 vol.

Baring-Gould, A., The lives of the saints  
New York, 1911. 12 vols.

Baxendale, Henry, corollary, the Book of ...  
The Macmillan Company, 1941. 312 p.

Bentley, Edward S., History of ...  
New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931. 1 vol.

Berry, E. C., editor, An historical account of ...  
before ... 1880. ...  
1931. 122 p.

Billingham, A. J., History of ...  
New York: ... 1931. 122 p.

Bishop, William, The lives of ...  
New York: ... 1931. 122 p.

Jacob, Joseph, The lives of ...  
New York: ... 1931. 122 p.

Jessop, ... The life and ...  
by ... 1931. 122 p.

Jung, W. H., History of ...  
New York: ... 1931. 122 p.

Keble, ... History of ...  
New York: ... 1931. 122 p.

Koch, ... History of ...  
New York: ... 1931. 122 p.

Kussell, A. C., History of ...  
University of ... 1931. 122 p.



- Sigerist, Henry E., Civilization and Disease. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1945. 255 pp.
- Taylor, Henry Osborne, The Mediaeval Mind. London: The Macmillan Company, 1927. 2 vols.
- Walsh, F. M. R., Diseases of the Nervous System. Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company, 1944. 350 pp.

#### PERIODICAL ARTICLES

- Haskins, C. H., "The Spread of Ideas in the Middle Ages," Speculum, 1: 19-30. 1926.
- Willard, J. F., "Inland Transportation in England during the Fourteenth Century," Speculum, 1: 361-374. 1926.

#### ESSAYS

- Broome, Dorothy M., "Exchequer Migrations to York in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," Essays in Medieval History. A. G. Little and F. M. Powicke, editors; Manchester, 1925. Pp. 291-300.
- Guibert de Nogent, "Popular Canonization," Life in the Middle Ages. G. G. Coulton, editor; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931. Pp. 16-17.
- Smith, A. L., "The Anarchy," Social England. H. D. Traill, editor; New York: Putnam's Sons, 1909. 6 vols., 2 parts each. Vol. I, Part II, pp. 367-398.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Trade and Industry," Social England. H. D. Traill, editor; New York: Putnam's Sons, 1909. 6 vols., 2 parts each. Vol. I, Part II, pp. 512-525.

#### ENCYCLOPEDIA ARTICLES

- Jacobs, Joseph, "William of Norwich," The Jewish Encyclopedia. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1902. 12 vols., Vol. XII, p. 524.
- Pallen, Conde B. and John J. Wynne, editors, The New Catholic Dictionary. New York: The Universal Knowledge Foundation, 1939. "William of Norwich," p. 1020.



Director, Bureau of Investigation  
Washington, D.C.  
Dear Sir:  
Enclosed for you are two copies of a letterhead memorandum  
dated and captioned as above.  
Very truly yours,  
J. Edgar Hoover

Enclosed for the Bureau are two copies of a letterhead memorandum  
dated and captioned as above.  
Very truly yours,  
J. Edgar Hoover

Enclosed for the Bureau are two copies of a letterhead memorandum  
dated and captioned as above.  
Very truly yours,  
J. Edgar Hoover

Enclosed for the Bureau are two copies of a letterhead memorandum  
dated and captioned as above.  
Very truly yours,  
J. Edgar Hoover

Enclosed for the Bureau are two copies of a letterhead memorandum  
dated and captioned as above.  
Very truly yours,  
J. Edgar Hoover



Strack, Hermann L., "Blood Accusation," The Jewish Encyclopedia. Vol. III, pp. 260-67.

Webster, Raymond, "William of Norwich," The Catholic Encyclopedia. New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1913. Vol. XV, pp. 685-86.

"Candle," Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. V, p. 178.

#### PARTS OF A SERIES

Bartholomaei de Cotton, Historia Anglicana. Henry Richards Luard, editor, The Rolls Series; London, 1859.

Bond, Edward A., Chronica Monasterii de Melis, 3 vols. The Rolls Series; London, 1866. Vol. I.

Capgrave, John, Chronicle of England. Francis Charles Hingeston, editor, The Rolls Series; London, 1858.

Haydon, Frank Scott, editor, Eulogium, 3 vols. The Rolls Series; London, 1880. Vol. III.

Luard, Henry Richards, editor, "Annales Monasterii de Ber-  
mundescia," Vol. III, Annales Monastici. The Rolls Series; London, 1866.

\_\_\_\_\_, editor, "Annales Monasterii de Waverleia," in Vol. II Annales Monastici. The Rolls Series; London, 1865.

\_\_\_\_\_, editor, "Annales Prioratus de Wigornia," in Vol. IV Annales Monastici. The Rolls Series; London, 1869.

\_\_\_\_\_, editor, Flores Historiarum. The Rolls Series; London, 1890.

Paris, Mathew, Historia Anglorum. Sir Frederic Madden, editor. The Rolls Series; London, 1866-69. 3 vols.

Radulphi de Coggeshall, Chronicon Anglicanum. Josephus Stevenson, editor. The Rolls Series; London, 1875.

Thorpe, Benjamin, editor, Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The Rolls Series; London, 1861. 2 vols.





Public Health, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.  
The University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.

"Public Health, Chicago, Illinois, 1911."  
The University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.

Public Health, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.  
The University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.

Public Health, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.  
The University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.

Public Health, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.  
The University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.

Public Health, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.  
The University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.

Public Health, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.  
The University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.

Public Health, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.  
The University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.

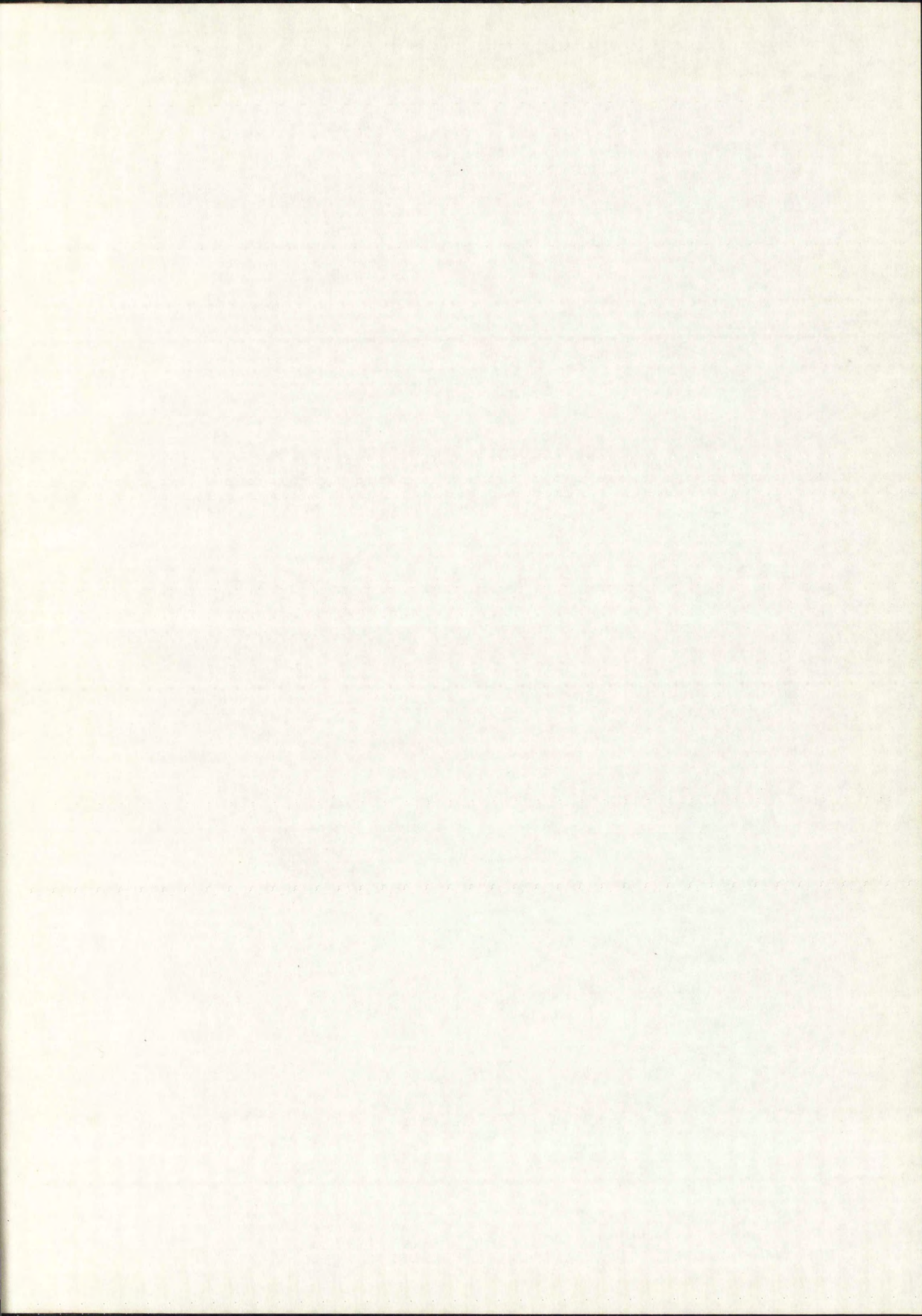
Public Health, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.  
The University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.

Public Health, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.  
The University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.

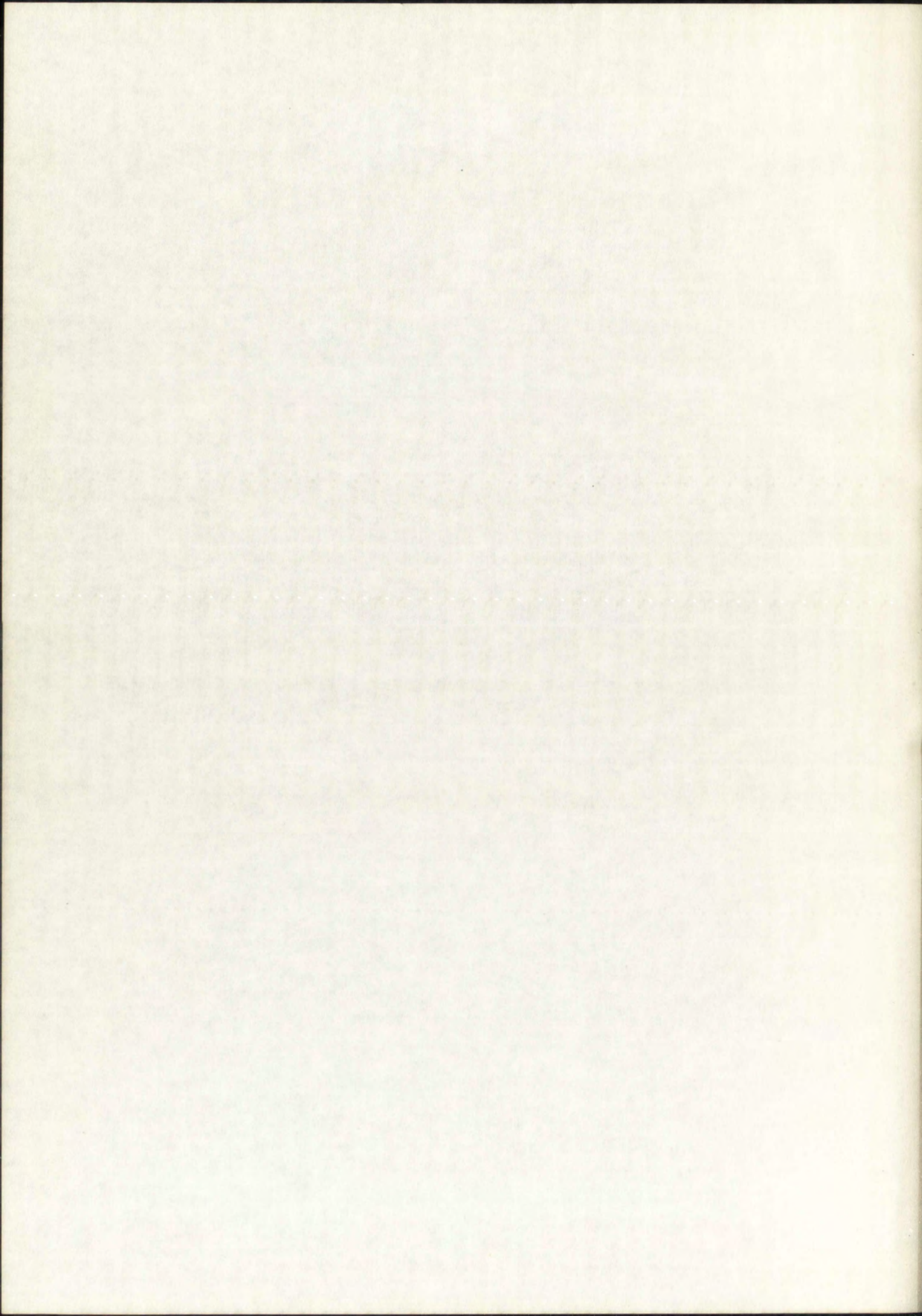
Public Health, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.  
The University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.

Public Health, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.  
The University of Illinois, Chicago, Illinois, 1911.

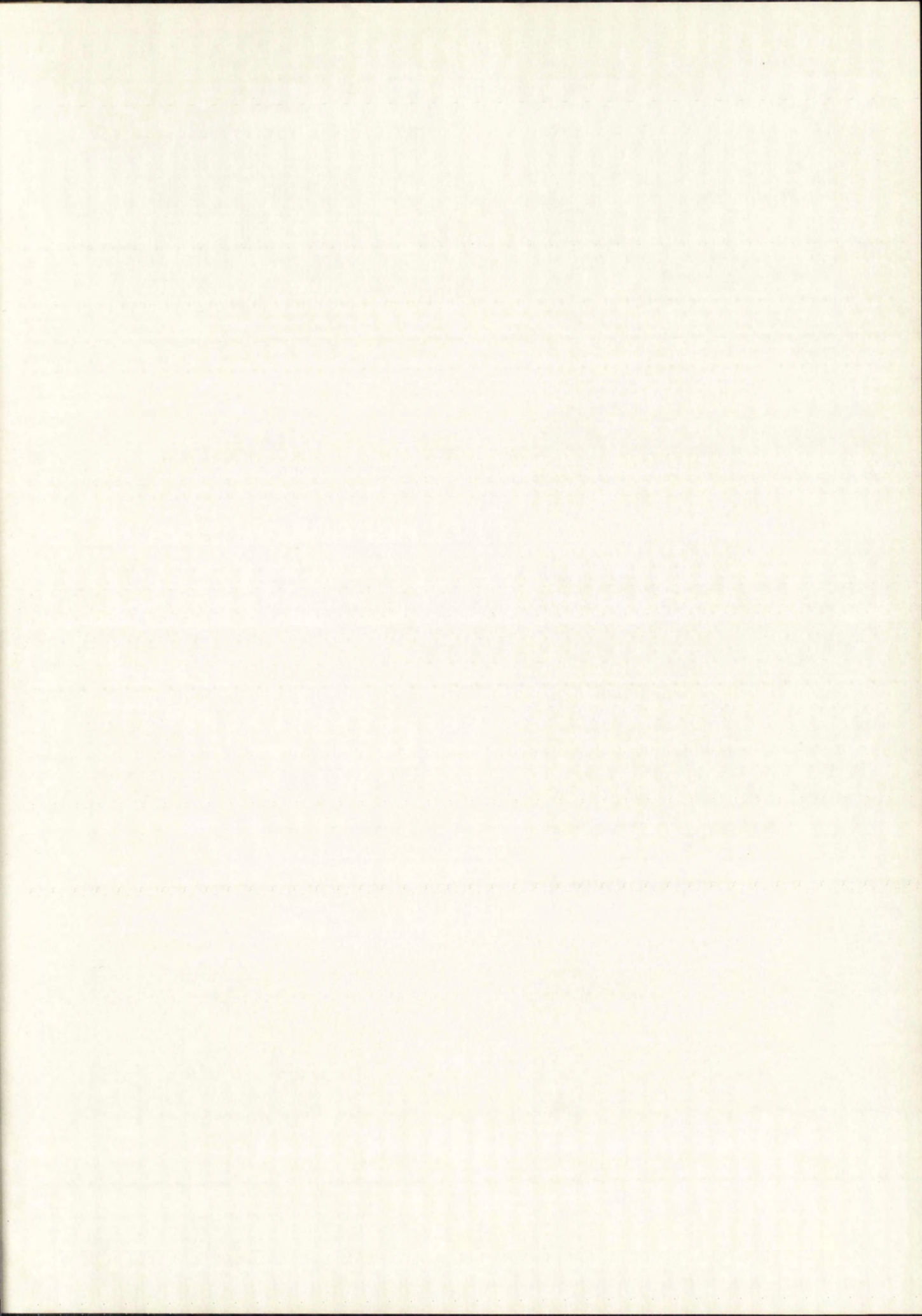




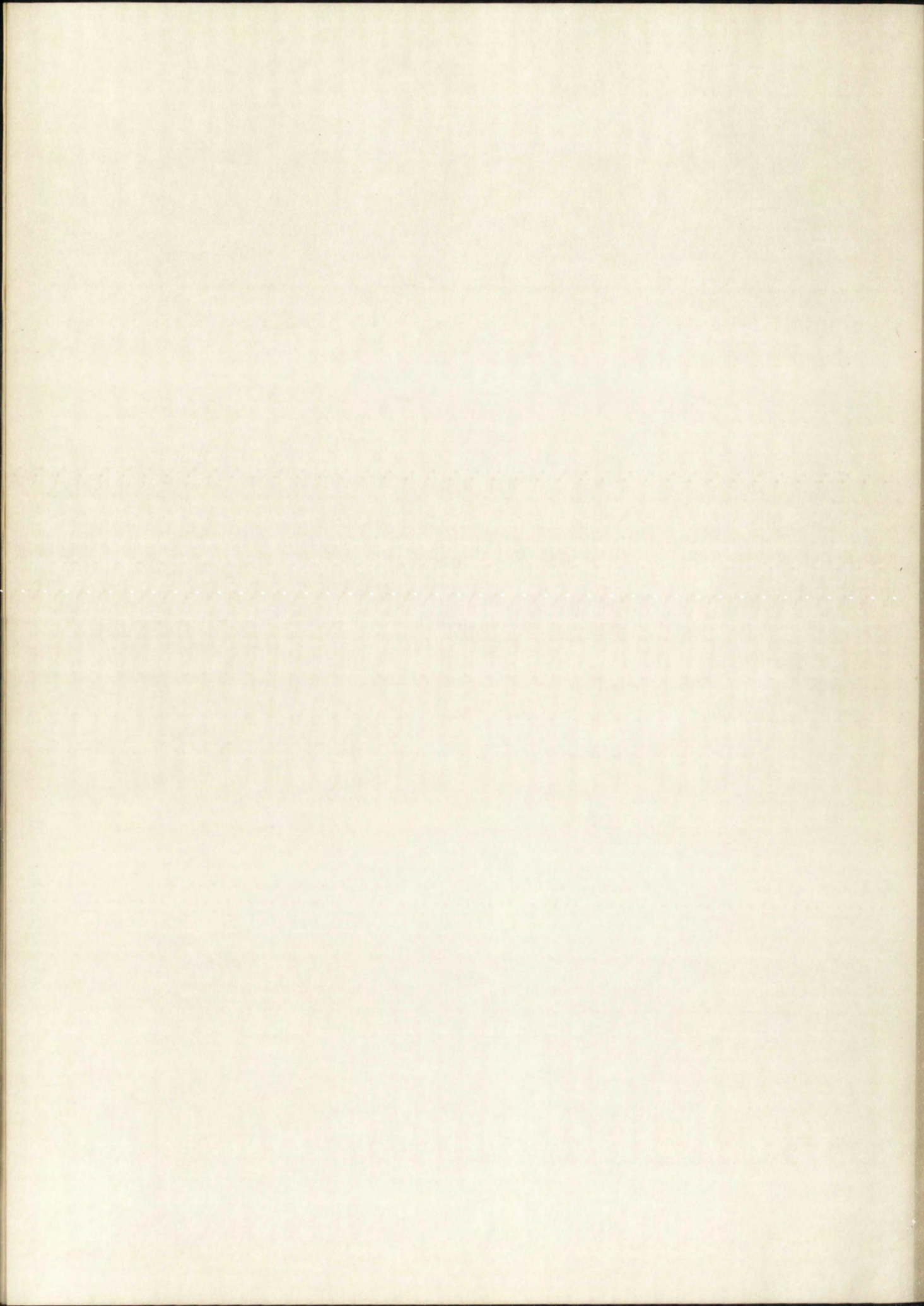




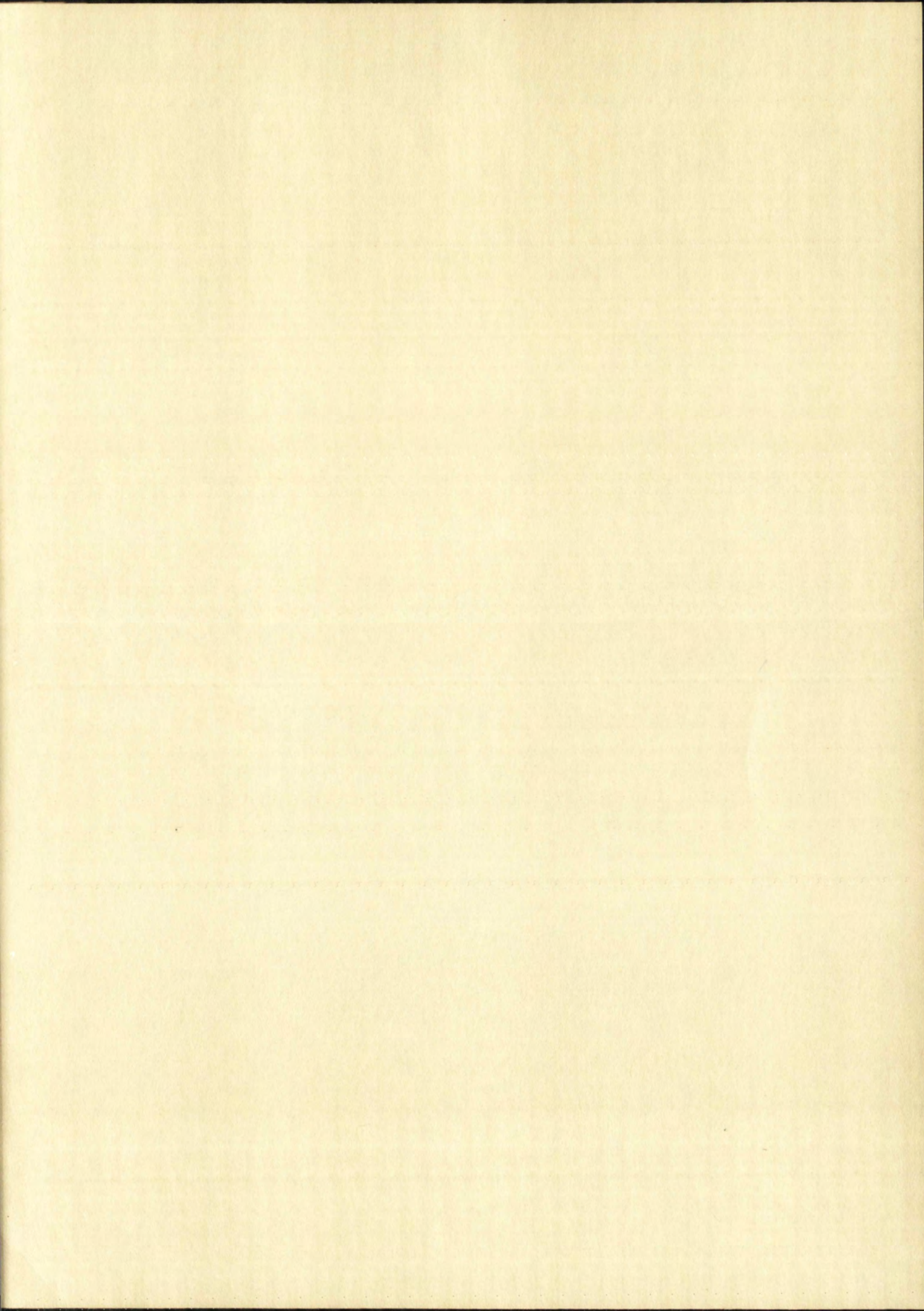














[illegible]

Special care should be taken to prevent loss or damage of this volume. If lost or damaged, it must be paid for at the current rate of typing.

Special care should be taken to prevent loss or damage of this volume. If lost or damaged, it must be paid for at the current rate of typing.







