

he gave a conclusive answer to the accusation of desiring to deal unfairly with Becket: one was Reginald, Earl of Cornwall, the king's uncle, who as long as Becket lived was the best friend that he had at the court; the other was the remarkable Robert, Earl of Leicester, named Bossu (the Hunchback). This Robert was a monk of Leicester Abbey, though he had a dispensation to remain at the court, and so bitter a Papist was he that when the schismatic Archbishop of Cologne came afterwards to London he publicly insulted him and tore down the altar at which he said mass. Such envoys would not have been selected with a sinister purpose. They found that the archbishop could attend if he wished, and they warned him of the danger of trying the king too far. He pleaded for one more day. On the Tuesday morning he undertook to be present.

His knights had withdrawn from the monastery, not daring or not choosing to stand by a prelate who appeared to be defying his sovereign. Their place had been taken by a swarm of mendicants, such as the archbishop had gathered about him at Canterbury. He prepared for the scene in which he was to play a part with the art of which he was so accomplished a master. He professed to expect to