

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-04251-2 - Munimenta Gildhallae Londoniensis, Volume 1: Liber Albus

Compiled A.D. 1419

Edited by Henry Thomas Riley

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Books of enduring scholarly value

Rolls Series

Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores, or The Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages, usually referred to as the 'Rolls Series', was an ambitious project first proposed to the British Treasury in 1857 by Sir John Romilly, the Master of the Rolls, and quickly approved for public funding. Its purpose was to publish historical source material covering the period from the arrival of the Romans to the reign of Henry VIII, 'without mutilation or abridgement', starting with the 'most scarce and valuable' texts. A 'correct text' of each work would be established by collating 'the best manuscripts', and information was to be included in every case about the manuscripts used, the life and times of the author, and the work's 'historical credibility', but there would be no additional annotation. The first books were published in 1858, and by the time it was completed in 1896 the series contained 99 titles and 255 volumes. Although many of the works have since been re-edited by modern scholars, the enterprise as a whole stands as a testament to the Victorian revival of interest in the middle ages.

Munimenta Gildhallae Londoniensis

The Corporation of London has an extensive collection of medieval records which can be used to trace the development of the City, and provide much information on all aspects of civic life – social, economic, political, ecclesiastical, legal and military. H.T. Riley (1816–78) spent many years editing and translating some of the most significant documents, and thereby establishing his scholarly reputation. Volume 1 of this three-volume work, published in 1859, contains one of the most important collections of documents, the four books of the *Liber Albus*. This was compiled in 1419 by the Town Clerk, John Carpenter, and is considered one of the first books of English common law. It records the laws and civic regulations relating to the City of London, beginning in 1067 but concentrating on the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It is written mostly in Latin, with parts in French.

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RERUM BRITANNICARUM MEDII ÆVI
SCRIPTORES,

OR

CHRONICLES AND MEMORIALS OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND

DURING

THE MIDDLE AGES.

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THE CHRONICLES AND MEMORIALS
OF
GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND
DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY OF HER MAJESTY'S TREASURY, UNDER THE
DIRECTION OF THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS.

ON the 26th of January 1857, the Master of the Rolls submitted to the Treasury a proposal for the publication of materials for the History of this Country from the Invasion of the Romans to the Reign of Henry VIII.

The Master of the Rolls suggested that these materials should be selected for publication under competent editors without reference to periodical or chronological arrangement, without mutilation or abridgment, preference being given, in the first instance, to such materials as were most scarce and valuable.

He proposed that each chronicle or historical document to be edited should be treated in the same way as if the editor were engaged on an *Editio Princeps*; and for this purpose the most correct text should be formed from an accurate collation of the best MSS.

To render the work more generally useful, the Master of the Rolls suggested that the editor should give an account of the MSS. employed by him, of their age and their peculiarities; that he should add to the work a brief account of the life and times of the author, and any remarks necessary to explain the chronology; but no other note or comment was to be allowed, except what might be necessary to establish the correctness of the text.

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The works to be published in octavo, separately, as they were finished; the whole responsibility of the task resting upon the editors, who were to be chosen by the Master of the Rolls with the sanction of the Treasury.

The Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury, after a careful consideration of the subject, expressed their opinion in a Treasury Minute, dated February 9, 1857, that the plan recommended by the Master of the Rolls "was well calculated for the accomplishment of this important national object, in an effectual and satisfactory manner, within a reasonable time, and provided proper attention be paid to economy, in making the detailed arrangements, without unnecessary expense."

They expressed their approbation of the proposal that each chronicle and historical document should be edited in such a manner as to represent with all possible correctness the text of each writer, derived from a collation of the best MSS., and that no notes should be added, except such as were illustrative of the various readings. They suggested, however, that the preface to each work should contain, in addition to the particulars proposed by the Master of the Rolls, a biographical account of the author, so far as authentic materials existed for that purpose, and an estimate of his historical credibility and value.

*Rolls House,
December 1857.*

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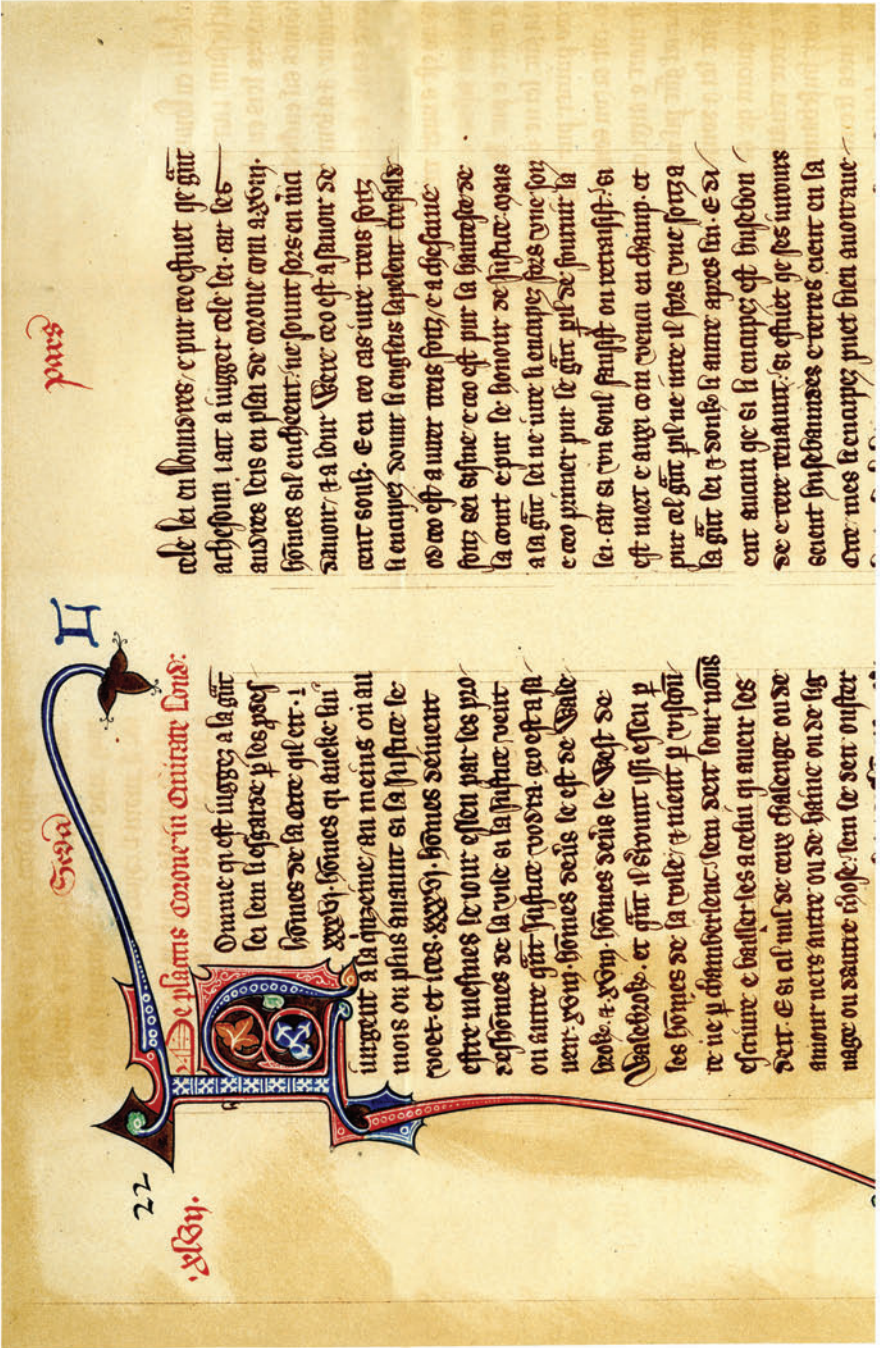
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(See Page 110.)



(Fol. 25 v.)

brobe. ⁊ xij. homes deus le Vest de
 Valeshols. et q̄nt il s'vourit isti esteu p
 les homes de la tonte. ⁊ meurt p vison.
 re ne y d'ambuler. sem deit lour nous
 estuire e bailler les a celui q̄ auer les
 deit. E si al nul de roys chalenge ou de
 amour vers autre ou de haine ou de sig
 nage ou d'autre chose. sem le den ouster
 e mettre un autre p les p̄ssones. ⁊ as
 pour sui iour. q̄l les est a la quinzeme.
 ou plus long. au p̄sist des justices.
 E est auent qe al a eoum iour auer ues
 p̄isse. il lui couient qe netz iour deuant
 son iour moustrer au viscount. e au iour
 moustrer ues meines deuant justices.
 e qe viscount le resigne. e d'ors p
 tele moustrance. e p le resigni del vis
 counte si lui deit sem esgarer le su ⁊ e.
 Il est a sauoir qe sem ne deit mettre
 nul home a la ḡnt lei fors pur la gre
 igne. archiepsun qe p̄uisse. estre si come de
 mort de home. ⁊ ues aucte s̄ntre ⁊ aucte
 aucte resigne. ou haup̄sbauc. a
 parissante. ⁊ h̄ys depestez e decomez
 e s̄ntre. e places apres ⁊ aparissantes
 e ouckes semblables choses car nul lei

Q̄ nullus ponat
 ad magnā legem
 n̄ pro morte hoīs.
 xlvij.

lei. car si un soul faust ou retrast. si
 est mort e auyi com venu en champ. et
 pur cel ḡnt q̄l ne ure. il fors vne soit a
 la ḡnt lei ⁊ donke si autre apres lui. e de
 ent auant qe si li enape. est h̄ydeon
 se e tere reuaut. si estuet qe ses iours
 soient h̄ydeonnes e tere c̄ent en la
 cre. mes si enapez puet bien auoir aue
 be sei bachetiers ou visuers. mais q̄l son
 ent long homes. e amiel la comise. *xlviij.*
Q̄ rectat in p̄tis exone possit se defendere.
S le Roi sicut uers aucun home. plain usus
 de corone seu d'auis. e die. qe celui Rege
 blame. e le Roi le mesuoir. sem sui deit
 agarder q̄l seu defense. sei desine. et septuā
 sil enghet. si est a auant om il s̄st
 si il eust eu d'auis encouure sui. eo est
 a sauoir qe si il enghast uers le d'auis en
 meri sauoir. si s̄st auel a e a la Vete
 se cent souz. et sil enghast a uie ou m̄
 be. s̄st auel a. *Si aliquis sit occisus in curia.*
S quis est occisus in curia. uicomes
 debet atredere ⁊ inquirere p̄ visuel
 quis illum occidit. et si aliquis sit terra
 nus p̄ visuel. uicomes debet retram
 artachiare doner. sciamur si quis coram s̄st

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 amour vers autre ou de hate ou de sig
 nage ou d'autre chose. sem le den ouster
 e mettre un autre p les p̄ssomes. ⁊ as
 pour sui iour. q̄l les est a la quinzeme.
 ou plus long. au p̄sist des s'ufices.
 E est auent qe al a eoum iour auer ues
 puisse. il lui couent qe net iour deuant
 son iour moustrer au visouire. e au iour
 moustrer ues mesmes deuant s'ufices.
 e qe visouire le resnoigne. e d'ors p
 tele moustrare. e p le resnoign del vis
 couire si lui det sem esgarer le su ⁊ e.
 ⁊ est a sauoir qe sem ne det mettre
 nul home a la ḡnt lei fors pur la gre
 igne. arbespim qe yuisse. estre si come de
 mort de home. ⁊ ues auecs s'inte ⁊ auecs
 auecs resnoigne ou hampstac. a
 parsaunte. ⁊ huds depestac e decomez
 e s'inte. e placs apres ⁊ aparissantes
 e oueces semblables choses car nulle lei

⁊ nullus ponat
 ad magna legem
 n̄ pro morte hoīs.
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lei. car si un soul faust ou retrast. si
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 ent auant qe si li enape. est husebon
 se e ter reuaut. si estuet qe ses iours
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⁊ rectat in p̄tas exone possit se defendere.
S le roi sicut uers aucun home. plai usus
 de corone seu d'auis. e die qe celui rege
 blame. e le roi le mesuoir. sem sui det
 agarder q̄l seu defense. sei desfine. et septua
 sil enghet. si est a autaut com il s'ust
 si il eust eu d'auis encouire sui. eo est
 a sauoir qe si il enghast uers le d'auis en
 meri sauoir. si s'ust auel a e a la uere
 se cent souz. et sil enghast a uer ou me
 be. s'ust auel a. *Si aliquis sit occisus in curia.*
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 debet atredere ⁊ inquirere p visuel
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 nus p visuel. uicomes debet retrahi
 artachiare doner. sciamur si quis coram sus

*Qz nullus ponat
ad magna legem
n pro morte hois.
xlviij.*

Nest a sauoir qe tenu ne deit mettre
nul hoine ala gir lez foiz pur la gre-
igno: a cheisun qe puiße estre si come de
mort de hoine a ceo auels sure: a auels
arie: a auels refoingne ou hampsoine: a
parissauite: a huys de pesfaz e decoupez
e sure: e plues apres a aparissauites
e oueles semblables choses car nul lez
ne met hoine a mort ne a tucembe: foiz

meri sauoir: si fust ainel a e a sa veire
de rent souz: et sil enchaist a vie ou me-
bre fust au tel d. *Si aliqis sit occisus in curiam:*
N quis est occisus in curiam: vinctus
debet accedere a iudicare: vinctus
quis illum occidit: et si aliquis sit vinctus
p vinctu: vinctus debet reddam
atragiare donec sciamur si quis coram ius-
ticiis p morte omni sequi voluerit.

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MUNIMENTA GILDHALLÆ LONDONIENSIS;

LIBER ALBUS, LIBER CUSTUMARUM,

ET

LIBER HORN.

EDITED

BY

HENRY THOMAS RILEY, M.A.,

CLARE HALL, CAMBRIDGE;
OF THE INNER TEMPLE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

VOL. I.

CONTAINING

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LONDON :

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS, AND ROBERTS.

1859.

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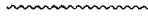
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INTRODUCTION.



THE pages of the poets, the dramatists, and the historians, and the more formal details of the commentators, the scholiasts, and the lexicographers, of the Greek and Roman periods, afford us a singularly accurate insight, the intervening lapse of time considered, into the ways and usages of contemporary social life; so much so in fact, that, though for a moment it may appear almost paradoxical to say so, the great majority of the educated classes of this country possess a tenfold better acquaintance with life and manners in Greece and Italy, two thousand years ago, than with the habits and usages of their own forefathers, only removed from them by the comparatively short period that has elapsed since the invention of the press.

The educated classes better acquainted with the social life of classical times than of their own forefathers.

This state of things, however, is easily explained. Invaluable as our Chroniclers undoubtedly are in many points of view, the middle ages—so far as this country is concerned—have no literature at all resembling that of the ancients to call their own; and as to the literature which we must of necessity be content to take as a substitute for it, in giving us an insight into the contemporary features of social life, the items of which it is composed are lamentably deficient. The Chronicler, for example, is mostly too intent upon the deeds or aspirations of the great, the successful, or the ambitious, to bestow a passing notice even upon the multitude which is ever and

Inferiority of our mediæval literature to classical literature in this respect.

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anon called upon to supply the victims of their caprice, the agents of their success, or the instruments of their will. The Legendist, again, the Romancer, and the Poet, are too busily engaged with the doings or sayings of their saints, their heroes, and their lovers, to descend from their elevation to any less holy, less stirring, or less captivating details. And as to the great majority of the other mediæval writers, who may not admit of being ranged under any of the above appellations, equally little, from the singleness of purpose by which they are mostly characterized, may we expect to learn about the obscure million from them.

Mediæval archives and other business documents the only sources from which this knowledge may be plentifully derived.

The result is, that we must either rest contented with the few and transient glimpses of light fitfully thrown upon this interesting subject from the pages of our early Glossarists and Vocabularists, with what little we may glean incidentally from the Chroniclers; or we must look, of necessity, to other and far different sources for the materials of our social history in mediæval days; to documents, in fact, which their compilers little dreamt of ever being turned to such an account, but which atone by their truthfulness and authenticity for their want of embellishment and their meagreness of diction; and which, fortunately for those whose wish it is that our past social history may not be wholly swept away into oblivion, still lie scattered in comparatively great abundance over the length and breadth of the land. It is to our early Laws, Statutes, and enactments, to Registers, Chartularies, Rentals, Domesday-books, and Rolls, under their legion of technical appellations, that we must mainly have recourse, if we would gain the moderate credit of knowing at least as much about our own forefathers as about the populace that thronged the streets of ancient Athens or Rome.

Collection of mediæval archives at Guildhall.

Foremost among the repositories where information of this nature may be abundantly obtained, though known

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as such, it is believed, to comparatively few, in the antiquarian world even, stands the Record-room of the Corporation of London, at Guildhall. "There is no city "in the world," it has been¹ remarked, and that too by one eminently well qualified to form an opinion on the subject, "that possesses a collection of archives so "ancient and so complete as the collection at Guildhall;" and it is the fact, that its shelves are laden with documents embodying the contemporary history of this country, under almost every feature, from nearly six centuries ago down to comparatively recent times; Nature of these records. ranging under the various heads of original charters and deeds, rolls of wills, chartularies, and, more important than all, registers, and laborious compilations from registers and other sources of a kindred nature.

When we call to mind the close connexion that *A priori* probabilities as to their contents existed between the Metropolis and our earlier Kings, the leading and influential position of its officials and dignitaries, the comparative opulence of its inhabitants, the immunities, liberties, and privileges enjoyed by its citizens, and the communications that were continually interchanged on all matters, of even the most trifling public importance, between the Court and the City, we can hardly do otherwise than conclude that in its contemporary annals and records would, not improbably, be reflected many of the leading and more prominent facts that go towards constituting the history of English national progress and of English social life. And a Varying features of their contents. comparatively cursory examination of these documents will show that such really is the case; that, in fact, it is hardly possible to mention any feature as a component of our mediæval history, whether viewed under the phase of social, political, ecclesiastical, legal, municipal, military, or naval, that is here unrepresented; for, not

¹ By M. Delpit, *Collection Générale des Documents Français—en Angleterre*, p. lxi.

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Nature of
the informa-
tion to be
derived from
them.

only are we authentically informed, through the medium of numerous contemporary copies of writs and letters, addressed by successive Sovereigns to the Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonalty of the City, as to the then existing state of politics and diplomacy, as to laws and enactments of every shade of variety and importance, as to alliances with foreign potentates contracted or dissolved, as to events and incidents connected with the royal progresses and journeys, as to losses sustained or successes gained in war, whether upon English soil or upon that of France, Scotland, Flanders, Ireland, or Wales ; but, even more than this, we are supplied incidentally, from the self-same sources, with a very large amount of material for statistical knowledge as to this country's resources at those periods, in reference to men, money, shipping, arms, and the various other munitions of war.

From these same records too—seeing that there was hardly a dealing between man and man, however trivial, that was not interfered with by sumptuary laws (many of them of absurd, almost grotesque, form and shape) ; hardly a transaction or existing relation in private life that was not the subject of legal enactment and civic surveillance—we may become more intimately acquainted with the early form and subsequent development of our municipal institutions ; the principles and growth of taxation in this country ; the mediæval relations of prices and labour ; the remote history of trades, guilds and mysteries ; the progress of arts, manufactures, and commerce ; the gradual expansion of our national wealth ; and the history of the manners, usages, habits, and opinions, of our impulsive forefathers. A very considerable amount of information may also be gathered from these documents in reference to our genealogical history, and certain indications may be derived from them, perhaps incidentally rather than otherwise, relative to various points connected with the progress of religious opinion and belief.

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It has already been remarked that the City records are known probably to comparatively few, even among those whose business or whose pleasure is centred in the investigation of our national antiquities. Proportionally small too—owing in a considerable degree, no doubt, to the jealous carefulness with which, until recent times, they were withheld from the scrutiny of the public—is the use that has been hitherto made of them by the writers upon our mediæval history and antiquities.

Hitherto comparatively little known or used.

John Stow, the author of the *Survey of London* (1598), was probably the first to bring the existence of these records to the notice of the public; and, even at his comparatively early day, they seem to have been looked upon by him as at once venerable for their antiquity and curious for the information which he found them to contain. It is possible that he may have used these documents, in the compilation of his *Survey*, to a somewhat greater extent than he has acknowledged—some eight or ten instances in all—but there can be hardly a doubt that, owing to his limited knowledge and his defective education, he was but indifferently qualified for dealing with their contents. The next writer probably who was indebted for any of his matter to the Letter-Books and other compilations at Guildhall was the indefatigable Rymer; who has extracted from them a considerable number of articles, in reference to our early treaties and transactions with other countries, which appear in different volumes of the *Fœdera*. Strype, the venerable historian and ecclesiologist, in preparing his elaborate edition of Stow's *Survey* (1720), was evidently at considerable pains to¹ consult the City archives, with the view of improving upon Stow's scanty

John Stow the first to make use of them.

Rymer.

Strype.

¹ He gives a curious account in his Preface, pp. iii., iv., v., of the annoyances which he had to endure, in consequence of the detention of his transcripts for examination, by certain of the City officials of the day.

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information as to the early history of various of its institutions and localities.

Sir F. Palgrave.

Coming to the present century—Sir Francis Palgrave has, on more occasions, it is believed, than one, invited the public attention to these important, but comparatively unused, materials for our early history; and, in the volumes of his *Parliamentary Writs and Writs of Military Summons* (1827–1830), he has given a considerable number of extracts, at once valuable and interesting, from their pages. M. Augustin Thierry

M. Thierry.

also, in the First Volume of his *Monumens inédits de l'histoire du tiers état*, has availed himself (through the agency of M. Delpit) of a few extracts from the Letter-Books, in reference to certain treaties of commerce entered into during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries between the citizens of London and the merchants of Amiens.

M. Jules Delpit.

It is another native of France, however, M. Jules Delpit, that has devoted more time and thought, probably, to the examination of the City records, in their entirety, than any other person since the first moments of their existence.

His examination of the Guildhall records.

M. Delpit visited this country, he tells us, in 1843, and, after an assiduous attendance at Guildhall for three months, succeeded in collecting from the City Archives copies of more than one hundred and fifty documents bearing reference to the early relations of this country with France, the existence of the great majority of which had until then been unknown. Most of these he has published in his *Collection Générale des Documents Français qui se trouvent en Angleterre* (Paris, 1847); in addition to which, he has occupied forty-eight (quarto) pages of his Preface with an elaborate analysis of the Letter-Books in reference to certain of the more prominent features of their contents.

His analysis of the Letter-Books.

The limits of an introduction forbid, of course, any detailed notice of the results of the labours of this

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zealous and learned mediævalist ; indeed, a transcript of even his commendations of the City archives would occupy more pages, perhaps, in number than the lines that could conveniently be here devoted to the subject. A few, therefore, of his more general remarks must suffice.

Speaking (p. lx.) of “ the vast number of things novel or curious ” that met his view when examining the manuscripts at Guildhall, M. Delpit enlarges upon the abundance of the riches they contain, and the unhopèd-for resources that a vigorous and learned analysis might derive therefrom.” (P. lxxiv.) “ It seems to me,” he says, “ that the pages of a Register like this have all the interest of a chronicle, in addition to the advantage of an authenticity quite incontestable.” (P. lxxxii.) “ The Registers of Guildhall contain, in reference to the Corporations of the various trades, a multitude of documents unknown to the Corporations themselves to which they relate.” (P. xciii.) “ An attentive examination of these documents might reveal facts unknown or unanticipated, and lead to the discovery of curious revelations as to the then state of manners, and the form assumed by civil or commercial transactions.” He concludes his analysis with the following remarks (p. cii.) :—“ It is undoubtedly a great glory for the community of London not only to possess archives more complete than those of any other city, but to possess archives which contain, so to say, the title-deeds (*titres*) of the nation itself; and those, not merely in the form of incorrect, partial, or incidental copies, but, on the contrary, regular, authentic, and more complete than those in any of the repositories from which the published copies have been taken. The interest arising from the facts that have come under my notice has induced me, perhaps, to extend this analysis to too great a length; but still, I do not at all pretend to have given a complete description of

His commendations
of the
Guildhall
records.

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“ these archives, still less to have made myself acquainted with all the various facts which are there to be found; my only aim has been to point out the riches and abundance of the materials they are able to furnish.”

General description of the Guildhall records.

A brief description of the items which compose the City archives will hardly be out of place. In addition to the early Registers, or Letter-Books, from A to K inclusive (the respective dates of which are given at the conclusion of this Volume), the Record-room at Guildhall contains the following compilations:—*Journals* and *Repertories* of the Courts of Aldermen and Common Council from A.D. 1417 down to the present time. *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, a Latin Chronicle of the City transactions from A.D. 1178 to 1274, the only one of the records hitherto ¹ published. ² *Liber Horn*, a miscellaneous collection, date 1311, and compiled probably by its original owner, Andrew Horn. *Liber Custumarum*, a compilation of a similar nature, date about 1320, and put together probably under the supervision of the same Andrew Horn. *Liber Albus*. *Liber Dunthorn*, a compilation in Latin, Anglo-French, and English, prepared between A.D. 1461 and 1490. *Liber Legum*, a collection of laws from A.D. 1342 to 1590. *Liber Ordinationum de Itinere*, compiled temp. Edward I: in addition to which, there are the *Assisa Panis*, commencing in 1284; *Liber Memorandorum*, date 1298, and several other manuscript volumes of inferior note and value.

Books formerly belonging to the City, now lost.

Among the books which are known to have formerly belonged to the Corporation of London, but are now lost, are the following:—*Liber Niger Major*, and *Liber*

¹ Edited for the Camden Society, by Mr. T. Stapleton, in 1846.

² This and *Liber Custumarum* will

be fully described in the Introductory pages of the next Volume.