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Lives of Edward the Confessor

Published for the Rolls Series in 1858, this collection includes three of the most important sources for the life of Edward the Confessor. The *Vita Ædwardi* was written c.1067 and was used as a source by notable chroniclers such as William of Malmesbury and Ailred of Rievaulx. The author declares his purpose in honouring Queen Edith, and the Godwin family are given prominence alongside Edward. Ailred completed a life of Edward for the translation of his relics in 1163, and the *Vita Beati* is 'a sort of abridged versification', produced for Henry VI c.1440. The Anglo-Norman poem *La Estoire de Seint Aedward*, now attributed to Matthew Paris, was written c.1245 and editor Henry Richards Luard (1825–91) includes a translation, glossary and descriptions of the numerous illustrations at the head of the manuscript. These three sources remain vital to our understanding of the final years of the Anglo-Saxon period.

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Lives of Edward the Confessor

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He proposed that each chronicle or historical document to be edited should be treated in the same way as if the editor were engaged on an *Editio Princeps*; and for this purpose the most correct text should be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

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.

In compliance with the order of the Treasury, the Master of the Rolls has selected for publication for the present year such works as he considered best calculated to fill up the chasms existing in the printed materials of English history; and of these works the present is one.

Rolls House,
December 1857.

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LIVES
OF
EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.



12 apres lu roi aedllard: f. a replem de la saunt
 f. urent t'roi suant: baldard e est un e regnos eitur
 h. araud ne wylgame: dyot: e lunt e gur charre dune:
 h. urent: f. urent dunt: p. ar tut. e un solal e lunt
 h. e willame le secund: dunt: o. re finte roi. ore sunt bati:
 p. ar real de ceite: dunt: e regne: dun sanc gnum. o. a deu gent 7 un ann:
 e. loigne fupar arpen troyt: d. engleceyre e normendie. o. a rene best: ma miller
 o. aut heurif f. fu quar e: f. iofis en uant meuz la compagne. i. beuf ne pu par cimeter:
 a. pres aedllard: ben remerdy. p. i meuz seic la p. hie. p. i ma este iuer e amie:
 a. u. p. remer cep f. i re uert. p. e spundre: e menz la die. p. ortez h. teauz campaine
 o. abard espua. f. i pleue: a. oclarec losaur esert. f. alle mad este e espuse.
 d. e ducur e de fu bunte: u. uoit aedllard a la f. uret. h. onurez la. cum a si bone:
 d. e franchise e de beute: f. est. mis f. i dolur gut ne estal pent. e haute matrone
 f. alle la rice roi aedllard: f. a char hest ia dem morte. d. uare eic plenement
 a. la racine out dunt regard sa gent reapele ere cuforte. e. lu maneez e sa gent
 e. a. a neez tacine a ert. e. sed efforce de par let. s. oient engleis soient normant
 f. lunt. frunt fist en apert: e. lur addit: laus auus chet. h. onurez let t'it lur iudic:
 e. f. uret lemperec ma hand natiq. f. oie est ma mox deplem. e. n. la igite seint pere: ah:
 e. frunt: quanc li tertz heur: e. ut den le uout ne puoc re. f. if ia uun: seie en seueh

MS. BIBL. PUB. CANTAB. F. e. iii. 59 p. 53.

The illustrations represent the death of S. Edward the Confessor, and his presentation to the Saviour.

floreat ut cauis nullo candore uenissi. Virtuti speculii grā multa dei
 || p̄t̄ hincel aēi depingit unipali. Que locuta uiget hec tua spet̄ opes
 a ita pars hōiū. species eade p̄bitat. Ma' ingenū cālitq; cāi
 O ntiencit nulq̄ terrariū par sibi q̄equit. Corpore nā gemmo un' habere hō
 h anc lucet assēci languentis posse relinq̄t. Dies p̄merito nobiliore stilo
 || p̄t̄ inde patre fidei pietate cluente. Scribes Godwini iura beasse dūcē
 A c uelut elisi font uirgā irrigat orbe. P̄genti exē fluminib; q̄tior
 f eab; ut uariis fecundat uiscera t̄re. Ac foueant p̄pō cāta plura simi
 S ustruet angloz pietas sic celtica regnū. hoc dūcē p̄genti pignorb; q̄tior
 q uoz tū cordis tū corporis iclita uirt. Diuersis opib; sufficit unipum
 h oz discreta serie dies p̄bitate. Quos acū p̄pō p̄stiterit titulo s
 O armine germano germanos pleni acc. Athenas. op̄s ordine pone modā
 X no cānuo leat̄ musica cursu. In cātu p̄sō carmina uerē gradu
 P agma q̄ uario reparat̄ fella relatu. Clari z pateat̄ historie series
N il in gū: . hoz quā dice laudes. Aquib; s̄ p̄mū p̄regor a dñā
 f e accengam̄: nobiliore cōt̄no. Utq; mones. p̄sō t̄m̄ce p̄go uiaq;
U iuga equitatis dei ubi qd̄ sibi displicuerat in populo dec̄st̄
 p̄p̄stura danoz. regnūq; celsit̄ cūcto regi uario euentu
 belloz. inēnouos adepti regni p̄ncipes regio ascetos lateri
 hic Godwinū uā sup̄ meminim' cū cōsilio cautissim'. tū bellicaf
 reb; ab ip̄sō rege p̄bat̄ z strenuissim'. Erat q̄q; inoz equalitate
 tā cunctis quā ipsi regi ḡt̄ssim'. assiduo laboris accinctu i cōpa
 rabuit. iocunda z pura affabilitate oib; affabilis; Vocantib; aut̄
 q̄b; idā regni cōpetentib; negotiis regē igentē suā. absentē em̄ rebella
 re parauerant collo effreni ei abicentes potentā. ad hesit comes
 iduuduu p̄ omēin uā. hic ei prudenciā. hic laborz estancia. hic
 uirt' multia hic attent' expe est idē rex tā p̄ncipis ualentiam.
 quā p̄fund' eloq̄o. ysi eū sibi artā asstringeret quis decenti beneficio:
 q̄t̄re cōmoditatis sibi foret inouiter acquisito angloz regno. Tātē
 s̄ dūcē p̄bat̄. ponit eū sibi a secretis dāns illi iēugē sorore suam
 Yn cū repatriaret sangūā felicit' acti hominib; totā pene regni ab
 ip̄sō cōstituit dux̄ bāuit. Adepta tanta honous p̄mācū n̄se extai
 ut; s̄ oib' bonis se p̄ posse patre p̄bit. quāquā apuero addidit̄

MS. HARL. 526. p 2.

Wap & Son, Litho to the Queen.



MS. BIBL. BODL. OXON. Seld. 55. p. 2.

Dag & Son, Lith. to the Queen.

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LIVES OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.

- I.—LA ESTOIRE DE SEINT AEDWARD LE REI.
II.—VITA BEATI EDVARDI REGIS ET CONFESSORIS.
III.—VITA ÆDUUARDI REGIS QUI APUD WESTMONASTERIUM
REQUIESCIT.

EDITED BY

HENRY RICHARDS LUARD, M.A.,
FELLOW AND ASSISTANT TUTOR OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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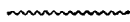
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**P R E F A C E.**  
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PREFACE.



THE historical matter contained in the present volume is entirely relating to the reign and times of Edward the Confessor, and those immediately preceding and following. It will be seen that the authors of the works now for the first time printed (the names of whom are all unknown), lived at times very distinct each from the other, and took very different views of the leading characters of the times of which they wrote.

The beautiful MS. from which the French poem, which occupies the greater part of the volume, is printed, is preserved in the publick library of the University of Cambridge, to which it was presented by George I., with the other volumes of Bishop Moore's library.¹ It consists of thirty-three parchment leaves, in triple columns, containing, for the most part, twenty-three lines in each, the upper portion of each page (with the exception of page 1) being occupied with a coloured illustration of the events described in it,—usually, though not always, divided into two compartments. In the centre of these, and thus in the middle of the three columns, is a description in verse of the illustration, written in rubrick. Occasionally

¹ On the first page is written the name "Laurens Nowell, 1563," probably the same person as the Dean of Lichfield of that date: and the

lines—

"Au Mons. Cope son tres chur amy
 Envoia Guill. Lambard cest poesie."

The initial A is illuminated.

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Description of the Cambridge MS.
 MS. Bibl. Publ.
 Ee. iii. 59.

there are two or three of these descriptions, and sometimes the picture is smaller, so as to extend only over two-thirds of the page, in which case the first or last column of text runs up to the top, alongside of the illustration.¹ As these descriptions interrupt the text, it has been thought advisable to print them separately at the beginning of the poem, and short descriptions of each of the illustrations have been added. These are, as may be judged from the fac-simile,² of a very high order of merit, and, to say nothing of the excellence of the *motif* of many of them, they give very interesting examples of the dress, architecture, and armour of the time of their execution. The MS., both text and illustrations, is not unknown to the publick. Of the former, a specimen is given (but with a considerable number of erroneous readings) in Michel's *Chroniques Anglo-Normandes*, Rouen, 1836, Tom. I., pp. 119–126, where the passage vv. 4511–4638 is extracted: of the illustrations several outline engravings are given in Taylor's Translation of *Wace's Chronicle of the Norman Conquest*, Lond. 1837,³ and a carefully executed copy of one will be found in Shaw's *Dresses and Decorations of the Middle Ages*, Lond. 1843, Vol. I.

Dedication of the Poem.

The poem is dedicated to "Alianore, riche Reine d'Engleterre," *i.e.* Eleanor of Provence, Queen of Henry III. The author gives us very few hints as to who he was, or what was his condition; but from the very fact of King Edward being his subject, from the

¹ Besides the principal illustrations, there are occasionally some very well executed representations of vines and vine leaves at the foot of the pages. At the foot of p. 24 a human face is very curiously drawn in the centre of a bundle of vine leaves and grapes.

² The page selected for facsimile

is p. 53 of the MS. (vv. 3821–3892.) The illustration is the Death of the King, and his soul being conducted by S. Peter and S. John to the Saviour. No. LII.

³ These are Illustrations XI, XII, LI, LIII, LXIV. The one given by Shaw is LIII.

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elaborate manner in which he has enlarged everything respecting Westminster that falls in his way, and especially from his interesting and full description of the church itself, we may perhaps think it most probable that he was connected with Westminster. And with this agrees the only hint he gives of himself, where he speaks of how King Edward (vv. 2020-2)—

Dedication
of the
Poem.

“De quor verai e tendre,
 Ama Seint Pere le apostre,
 Le suen seigneur e le nostre,”

thus apparently claiming S. Peter as his lord, as being under his especial patronage, as an ecclesiastick of Westminster would of course be. The only other allusion to himself is that contained in vv. 3969, 3970, where he speaks of his poverty.

Of the date of the MS.¹ we can form a tolerably correct estimate. Judging from the beauty and care with which the volume is executed, we may conclude that it was most probably the copy intended for the Queen, to whom it was dedicated, and was thus, in all probability, written and presented on the occasion of one of the chief events connected with Westminster in Henry III.'s reign. These seem to be the King's marriage and second coronation at Westminster, his restoration of the church, and lastly, the removal of the body of S. Edward. The first of these events took place in 1236, the second in 1245, and the third in 1269. Of these, the second date is, perhaps, more probable than the others, as such a passage as vv. 3849, 3850 could hardly have been written after the battle of Lewes (1264); and the whole of the Dedication seems to imply that the King and Queen had been married some time. This gives us 1245 as the date, from internal evidence, and this

Its date.

¹ Of course the possible limits are | of the marriage, the latter of the
 1236 and 1272, the former the year | death, of Henry III.

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Date of the Poem. agrees very well with the handwriting, and the style of the armour, and the architecture (which is early English or first Pointed) in the illustrations.¹

That the illustrations were executed by the author's own hand appears from what he tells us himself, in the passage in which he mentions his object in giving them (vv. 3961–3966) :—

“Pur lais ki de lettrure
 Ne sevent, en purtraiture
 Figurée apertement
 L'ai en cest livret present ;
 Par co ke desir e voil
 Ke oraille ot, voient li oil.”

Language. The language in which the poem is written is that branch of the langue d'Oil which is usually called Norman-French, and the style is very similar to that of Geoffrey Gaimar, whose *Estoire des Engles* is printed in the *Monumenta Historica Britannica*; and Benoit de Sainte-More, a portion of whose *Estoire e Généalogie des Dux qui unt esté par ordre en Normendie* will be found in Michel's *Croniques Anglo-Normandes*. The text has been printed, it is believed, with accuracy, the few occasions on which the editor has ventured to alter the MS. reading being always indicated.² The MS. has been written, if not by the author himself, by a very careful scribe.

The Translation. In making the translation, which is printed so as to correspond line by line with the original text, my wish has been to be as literal as possible. It would have been easy to have smoothed away harshness of

¹ All the architectural details, such as lancets, windows, door-hinges, and capitals of pillars, are of the purest period of Early English—(that which is usually supposed to have lasted from 1189 to 1272)—the forms of the crowns and helmets, the stunted

mitres, the chain armour, and the bearings on the shields, which all are executed with very great care, belong also to the same period.

² These alterations consist chiefly in the occasional insertion of an omitted letter in brackets.

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diction, and to have veiled difficulties by going round ^{The Trans} the meaning instead of directly at it; but it seemed ^{lation.} to me that the object of such a translation is to have, as clearly as possible, a representation of the original, —and thus that ruggedness and inelegancies of language or style in the French ought to be reproduced in the English. In two points this has been attended with considerable difficulty,—the perpetual change from the narrative present to the perfect tense, which often seem indiscriminately used, and the variations between the second person singular and the second person plural in addresses, which are also constantly interchanged. In both these points I have, in spite of the resulting inelegance, in almost all instances followed the original. I may at least lay claim to the character of an honest translator, as each passage is given according to the meaning which I believe the words will bear; and I have never, by a smooth-sounding paraphrase, avoided grappling with the difficulties, which are neither few nor slight, of my author.¹

In compiling the Glossary, my object has been to ^{The Glos-} enable the poem to be read with as little trouble as ^{sary.} possible, and it will be found to be very full (some may consider too much so) of grammatical explanations of the verbs which occur; for I believe, that to a person not familiar with this language, his chief difficulties will arise from ignorance of the tense and person of the verbs. It should be recollected that the Glossary is strictly what its name implies, and that its only object is to illustrate this poem, not to give a complete account of the words which it contains; and in giving the meanings of a word, I mean that it is used with these in this MS., not that it has

¹ I take this opportunity of acknowledging much kind assistance in the interpretation of many of the more difficult passages of the MS. | from the Rev. J. Stevenson, Vicar of Leighton Buzzard, and the Rev. J. Glover, Chaplain of Trinity College, Cambridge.

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The Glossary. no others. It would have been easy to have given it a learned appearance by extracting examples of the words from other poems and dictionaries; but this seemed to me very different from what is desired in such a publication as the present.¹ The books which I have chiefly used in this compilation are Kelham's *Dictionary of the Norman or Old French Language*, Lond. 1779; Roquefort's *Glossaire de la Langue Romane*, Par. 1808; the *Glossaire Français* in the seventh volume of Henschel's edition of Du Cange, Par. 1850; and Burguy's *Grammaire de la Langue d'Oil*, Berlin, 1853, a most invaluable work for all students of this language, and to which I must express my especial obligations.²

Sketch of the Period of History embraced in the Cambridge MS.

The period of history embraced in this MS. extends over the whole life of Edward the Confessor, the author (or rather translator) giving a sketch of the condition or history of England during the earlier years of this king's life, before he was called to the throne, and carrying his narration on to the battle of Hastings and the death of Harold, in order to show the fulfilment of Edward's dying prophecy. He is at the same time careful to point out that it is only as thus concerning Edward that he gives the history of these later events.

¹ It is very difficult to draw the line accurately as to what words should be admitted into, and what excluded from, such a glossary. My wish has been to insert all that are not found in the ordinary French dictionaries, and to err on the side of inserting rather too much, than too little. References to the lines of the Poem where the words occur have been added when the word is found only in one place, or where the line referred to gives a good example of its use. In two or three instances

ordinary French words have been inserted, when these might have been mistaken for other words, spelt in the same way, which occur in the MS.

² I have also consulted, among other glossaries, Michel's Glossary appended to the *Chronique des Ducs de Normandie*, Par. 1844. But M. Burguy has made so much use of this poem in collecting his examples as almost to supersede the use of M. Michel's Glossary.

He begins, after his dedication and discussion of his materials and objects, by tracing the descent of Edward from Alfred, and the history may be said actually to commence with the reign of Ethelred, the birth of Edward, and the Danish invasion under Sweyn.

Sketch of
 the Period
 of History
 embraced
 in the
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On the flight of Ethelred to Normandy, Sweyn styled himself king, and a vivid picture is given of the misery of the country from the Danish invaders. (No hint is given of the massacre of S. Brice's day.) On Sweyn's death (of which the usual legendary account is given) a fresh band of Danish invaders (according to our author) landed, and the condition of England became worse than ever. The Queen (Emma) and her two sons were sent to their uncle, the Duke of Normandy; of Ethelred we hear no more. The author then takes up the fortunes of Edmund Ironside, and gives an account of his victories over Cnut, and finally an elaborate description of the single fight of the two sovereigns, and consequent partition of the country. On the murder of Edmund Ironside, Cnut remained sole king, married Ethelred's widow, Emma, and exiling the two sons of Edmund Ironside and all the relations of Ethelred, secured to himself a peaceful reign for the rest of his life. Harold Harefoot, his son by Algiva, succeeded him, as being on the spot at the time of his death, both Ethelred's sons remaining in Normandy: the elder of them, Alfred, apparently with a design on the throne,¹ sailed to England with a considerable force, and landed at Sandwich. He was received with open arms by Godwin Earl of Kent, who styled him his rightful lord; but at night he, with all his followers, was treacherously seized and brought before Harold, who sent him to the isle of Ely, where

¹ v. 419-421,—

Aelfred fu dreit eir de nessance,
 E s'en vent de Normendie
 A grant force de navie.

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his eyes were put out, and he soon after died. The condition of the English is described as being very wretched in this king's reign, as the Danes were universally preferred and the English ill treated; and the queen, although Cnut's widow, was in continual danger from her step-son. On his death after a short reign, Hardecnut, the remaining son of Cnut, was the unanimous choice of the whole country. His first action was to have the body of Harold disinterred and thrown into the Thames; it was, however, found and re-buried by the Danes. This king is described as being especially unpopular among the Danes, and, according to our author, actually at war with them. He supported the war by means of a heavy tribute from the English, and the condition of the country is represented as worse than ever, no one seeing to which side safely to hold, and fortune declaring alternately for Hardecnut and the Danes. On his sudden death at Lambeth, the ills of the country reached their climax. We have next the legend of Bishop Britte-wold or Brihtwold's vision of the coronation of the young Edward, and the promise of peace and prosperity in his reign; and the description of the sorrowful condition of the young prince in his solitude in Normandy. On Hardecnut's death he was at once elected king, and immediately sent for from Normandy, and anointed and crowned king by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. The king on his coronation found not only the whole of England well affected to him, but all the neighbouring sovereigns; the Emperor of Germany and the King of France sent embassies, the only sovereign that held aloof being the King of Denmark. His first act was to abolish the Danegelt, in consequence of having (according to the legend) seen a demon sitting on the heaps of gold.

The story of his pardoning the thief who stole his treasure follows, and then, at considerable length, is

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given the history of the king's marriage with Edith, the daughter of Godwin, who is spoken of as the most powerful noble in the country. He is represented as desiring to accomplish this marriage partly for the advantage it would be to himself, and partly that by this means the death of Alfred and his other murders (for besides Alfred's, Edmund Ironside's murder is laid by our author at Godwin's door) and treasons would be hushed up. Soon after the marriage, the intended invasion of the Danes was defeated by the death of their king on embarking, of which King Edward's vision is given at length. And now that he was firmly seated on the throne, with peace at home and abroad, he bethought him of his vow of pilgrimage to Rome, which, while in solitude and distress in Normandy, he had made to S. Peter. The barons were summoned, and he demanded leave of absence from the country for this purpose. His speech on the occasion, and also the arguments by which he was induced to remain and apply for a dispensation to the Pope, are given at great length; the dangers of the journey, the harm to the country by the absence of the sovereign, are forcibly dwelt upon; and the archbishop and barons finally refuse their consent to his going. Two bishops were sent in consequence to Rome, and obtained the requisite dispensation from the Pope (Leo IX.), on condition that a monastery be built in honour of S. Peter. A legendary story of S. Peter's appearing to a hermit, and giving him the same account that the bishops brought from Rome, accompanies the history of their journey and return. The king then began the restoration of Westminster, in order to be freed by this means from his vow, and a very elaborate account of Westminster is given;—the history of its foundation soon after Ethelbert's conversion, the legend of its dedication by S. Peter, and a description of the church as restored by Edward.

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bassy was then sent to Rome to obtain a confirmation of its privileges, which was fully granted by (Nicholas II.), who was then Pope. The popularity and excellence of King Edward's government is next described; and the accounts of various miracles, the chief being the well-known one of the cure of the scrofulous woman, which has been supposed to have been the origin of the custom of touching for the king's evil, continued by English Sovereigns till a comparatively recent period. These are followed by the story of the quarrel of the queen's brothers, Harold and Tostin (who are now for the first time introduced) in the presence of the king and their father Godwin: the king is represented prophesying their future fate, as foreshadowed by this quarrel, and the author interrupts the course of his narrative to show how this was accomplished. Soon after occurred the death of Godwin at table, which is treated here as a Divine judgment for the murder of Alfred. He is described as taking up a morsel of bread, and stating that his eating this should be a proof of his innocence in the matter. The king blessed it, and the earl was immediately choked. The strange legend of the seven sleepers of Ephesus follows, and then that of S. John appearing to two palmers in Palestine, and giving them King Edward's ring, which he had obtained from him under the guise of a beggar; it is this legend which has been the origin of the customary representation of King Edward in this country. The king's death within six months was foretold, and on hearing this he summoned his barons to Westminster for the dedication of the church, which soon after took place, though the king was prevented by illness from being present. He is then described as asking Harold of his intentions respecting the crown, and Harold as taking an oath that he had no idea of the crown;—that William of Normandy, to whom Edward had granted