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978-1-108-04876-7 - *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatis The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I A.D. 1169-1192: Volume 2*

Edited by William Stubbs

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### 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.

### **The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I, A.D. 1169-1192**

This chronicle begins in 1169: it covers the accession of Richard I in 1189 and ends in the spring of 1192. It is a crucial source of information on the reign of Henry II and consists of annals and a wide variety of documents, presented here in the original Latin. The chronicle was originally attributed to Benedict of Peterborough (c.1135–93), who kept the manuscript in his library. This was disputed by the scholar William Stubbs (1825–1901), who edited this two-volume work for the Rolls Series in 1867. It is now widely accepted that the author was Roger of Hoveden (d. 1201/2), clerk to Henry II and present during Richard I's journey to take part in the Third Crusade. Volume 2 includes extensive commentary on the governance of Henry II.

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Frontmatter

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi  
Benedicti Abbatis  
The Chronicle of the  
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and Richard I  
A.D. 1169-1192

VOLUME 2

EDITED BY WILLIAM STUBBS



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Frontmatter  
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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

RERUM BRITANNICARUM MEDII ÆVI  
SCRIPTORES,

OR

CHRONICLES AND MEMORIALS OF GREAT BRITAIN  
AND IRELAND

DURING

THE MIDDLE AGES.

14593.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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.

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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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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

4

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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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

GESTA REGIS HENRICI SECUNDI BENEDICTI  
ABBATIS.

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THE CHRONICLE

OF THE

REIGNS OF HENRY II. AND RICHARD I.

A.D. 1169—1192 ;

KNOWN COMMONLY UNDER THE NAME OF

BENEDICT OF PETERBOROUGH.

EDITED, FROM THE COTTON. MSS.,

BY

WILLIAM STUBBS, M.A.,

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,  
AND LIBRARIAN TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

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of Henry II and Richard I A.D. 1169-1192: Volume 2

Edited by William Stubbs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page
PREFACE - - - - -	vii
APPENDICES TO PREFACE—	
1. ITINERARY OF HENRY II. - - -	cxxxvii
2. ASSIZE OF CLARENDON - - -	cxlix
3. INQUEST OF SHERIFFS - - -	clv
4. FOREST ASSIZE OF WOODSTOCK - -	clix
GESTA REGIS HENRICI SECUNDI - - -	3
GESTA REGIS RICARDI - - -	72
GLOSSARY - - - - -	253
GEOGRAPHICAL INDEX AND GLOSSARY - -	261
GENERAL INDEX - - - - -	285
COLLATION OF THE PAGINATION OF THIS EDITION WITH THAT OF HEARNE AND BOUQUET - - -	379

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-04876-7 - Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatis The Chronicle of the Reigns  
of Henry II and Richard I A.D. 1169-1192: Volume 2

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

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

[More information](#)

---

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## P R E F A C E.

HAVING devoted the Preface to the first volume to the discussion of the literary history of this book, I will now proceed to sketch the character and position of the great prince whose reign forms the subject of far the largest portion of its contents.

It is almost a matter of necessity for the student of history to work out for himself some definite idea of the characters of the great men of the period he is employed upon. History cannot be well read as a chess problem, and the man who tries to read it so is not worthy to read it at all. Its scenes cannot be realized, its lessons cannot be learned, if the actors are looked on merely as puppets. A living interest must invest those who played a part in making the world what it is : those whose very existence has left indelible traces on its history, must have had characteristics worthy of the most careful investigation.

Such a judgment as may be formed in the nineteenth century, of a king of the twelfth, may well seem unsatisfactory. With the utmost pains it is hard to persuade ourselves that a true view is obtained, or is even obtainable. We know too little of his personal actions to be able in many cases to distinguish between them and those of his advisers ; or to say whether he was a man of weak will or of strong ; whether his good deeds proceeded from fear or from virtue, or from the love of praise ; whether his bad ones were the workings of hasty impulse, or the breaking out of concealed habit, or the

Some realization of character necessary for the student of history.

Such realization only approximate at best,

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii

PREFACE.

result of a long struggle between good motives and evil passions.

Opinions of contemporary writers as to character are not to be depended upon.

Neither can we accept the delineations of contemporary writers without carefully testing them at every step. They are almost always superficial, but if that were the only fault we might be content to accept them as the verdict of ordinary judges, and it is always satisfactory to know what a man's contemporaries thought of him, even if they were neither close observers nor judicious critics. But their descriptions are seldom to be trusted even in this respect, for they betray almost universally a bias for or against the hero. The one in a thousand who is so far removed from personal feeling as to wish to take a philosophical or consistent view, is probably too far removed from acquaintance to be able to distinguish the truth from falsehood. The contemporary historian cannot view the career of his leading character as a whole; he sees it too closely, or else he sees it through a distorting medium. Hence the unsearchableness of the king's heart is so often given by mediæval writers as the reason for measures the bent of which they do not see, and as to which, for the want of acquaintance with other acts of the same kind, they cannot generalize.

Kings must be judged by their acts, and that judgment tested by their reputation in their own days.

The heart of kings is unsearchable; but on the other hand their freedom of action is, or rather was, in the middle ages, uncontrolled by external restraints. In them, as in no other men, can the outward conduct be safely assumed to be the unrestrained expression of the inward character. It is from observing the general current of the life, from the examination of the recorded acts of it, that the only reasonable view of the character can be obtained. Standing too far off in time and mode of thought to be in much danger of imputing modern principles and motives, we can generalize somewhat as to the inward life of a man if we know what his outward life was; and then we can compare our conclusion with



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Edited by William Stubbs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE.

ix

the judgment of contemporaries, and see whether such men as they were would be likely to think as they have done of such a man as we have described to ourselves.

If we know enough of the facts of a man's life we can draw such a picture. Character that is not shown in act is not strong enough to be worthy of the name. The man whose character is worth study must be one whose acts bear the marks of character. In the view of a long life, some generalizations can almost always be drawn, from the repetition of acts, from the uniformity or uncertainty of policy. A king who lets his advisers act for him in one case will show the like weakness in others: will act in different ways under different personal influences. But one who all his life chooses his counsellors on one principle, and follows with them a uniform line of policy, chooses them because he approves their policy, or rather because they will carry out his own. And that policy, if such be traceable, is the expression of the strongest principles of his own character; it may be confused or perplexed by his minor traits, but it cannot be suppressed by them, and if it exists it will be seen in operation.

A careful reading of the history of the three centuries of Angevin kings might almost tempt one to think that the legend of their diabolical origin and hereditary curse was not a mere fairy tale, but the mythical expression of some political foresight or of a strong historical instinct. But in truth, no such theory is needed; the vices of kings, like those of other men, carry with them their present punishment; whilst with them, even more signally than with other men, the accumulation of subsequent misery is distinctly conspicuous, and is seen to fall with a weight more overwhelming the longer their strength or their position has kept it poised.

It was not that their wickedness was of a monstrous kind; such wickedness indeed was not a prominent feature in the character of the mediæval devil; nor was

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

## PREFACE.

it mere capricious cruelty or wanton mischief. Neither were their misfortunes of the appalling sort wrought out by the Furies of Attic tragedy. Of such misery there were not wanting instances, but not enough to give more than an occasional luridness to the picture. Nor was it as in the case of the Stewarts, that the momentum of inherited misfortune and misery had become a conscious influence under which no knightly or kingly qualities could maintain hope, and a meaner nature sought a refuge in recklessness. All the Plantagenet kings were high-hearted men, rather rebellious against circumstances than subservient to them. But the long pageant shows us uniformly under so great a variety of individual character, such signs of great gifts and opportunities thrown away, such unscrupulousness in action, such uncontrolled passion, such vast energy and strength wasted on unworthy aims, such constant failure and final disappointment, in spite of constant successes and brilliant achievements, as remind us of the conduct and luck of those unhappy spirits who, throughout the middle ages, were continually spending superhuman strength in building in a night inaccessible bridges and uninhabitable castles, or purchasing with untold treasures souls that might have been had for nothing, and invariably cheated of their reward.

Common characteristics of the race.

Exceptions in the cases of Edward I. and Henry VI.

Only two in the whole list strike us as free from the hereditary sins; Edward I. and Henry VI., the noblest and the unhappiest of the race; and of these the former owes his real greatness in history, not to the success of his personal ambition, but to the brilliant qualities brought out by the exigencies of his affairs; whilst on the latter, both as a man and as a king, fell the heaviest crash of accumulated misery. None of the others seem to have had a wish to carry out the true grand conception of kingship. And thus it is with the extinction of the male line of Plantagenet that the social happiness of the English people begins. Even Henry VII., though, per-

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE.

xi

haps, as selfish a man as any of his predecessors, and certainly less cared for or beloved, seems to open an era, during which the vices of the monarchs have been less disastrous to their subjects than before, and the prosperity of the state has increased in no proportion to the ability of the kings.

And yet no two of these princes were alike in the constituent proportions of their temperament. The leading feature of one was falsehood, of another cruelty, of another licentiousness, of another unscrupulous ambition: one was the slave of women, another of unworthy favourites, one a raiser of taxes, another a shedder of the blood of his people. Yet there was not one thoroughly contemptible person in the list. Many had redeeming qualities, some had great ones; all had a certain lion-like nobility, some had a portion of the real elements of greatness. Some were wise; all were brave; some were pure in life, some gentle as well as strong; but is it too hard to say that all were thoroughly selfish, all were in the main unfortunate?

Varieties of individual character among the Plantagenets.

In the character of Henry II. are found all the characteristics of his race. Not the greatest, nor the wisest, nor the worst, nor the most unfortunate, he still unites all these in their greatest relative proportions. Not so impetuous as Richard, or Edward III., or Henry V; not so wise as Edward I.; not so luxurious<sup>1</sup> as John or Edward IV.; not so false as Henry III., nor so greedy as Henry IV., nor so cruel as the princes of the house of York; he was still eminently wise and brave, eminently cruel, lascivious, greedy, and false, and eminently unfortunate also, if the ruin of all the selfish aims of his sagacious plans, the disappointment of his affections, and the sense of having lost his soul for nothing, can be called misfortune.

Henry II. combined most of these.

<sup>1</sup> William of Newburgh compares him with his grandfather to the disadvantage of the latter: "In libidinem prouior, conjugalem | " modum excessit, formam quidem | " in hoc tenens avitam, sed tamen | " avo hujus intemperantiæ palman | " reliquit." Hist. Angl. iii. 26.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Apparent  
anomalies in  
the charac-  
ter of Henry  
II.

It would be a great mistake to view the personal and political character of Henry as one of unmingled vice. It was a strange compound of inconsistent qualities rather than a balance of opposing ones, yet the inconsistencies were so compounded as to make him restless rather than purposeless, and the opposing qualities were balanced sufficiently to suffer him to carry out a consistent policy. His fortunes, therefore, bear the impress of the man. He was a brave and consummate warrior, yet he never carried on war on a large scale, or hesitated to accept the first overtures of peace.<sup>1</sup> He was impetuous and unscrupulous, yet he never tempted fortune. He was violent in hatred, yet moderate in revenge;<sup>2</sup> a lover of good men, a corrupter of innocent women; at once religious and profane, lawless and scrupulous of right; a maker of good laws, and a seller of justice;<sup>3</sup> the most patient and provoking of husbands; the most indulgent and exacting of fathers; playing with the children, whose ingratitude was breaking his heart, the great game of statecraft as if they had been pawns. He was tyrannical in mood without being a tyrant either in principle or in the exigencies of policy. In power and character, by position and alliances, the arbiter of Western Europe in both war and peace,<sup>4</sup> he never waged a great war or enjoyed a sound peace; he never until his last year made an unsatisfactory peace or fought an unsuccessful battle. The most able and successful politician of his time, and thoroughly unscrupulous about using his power for his own ends, he yet died in a position less personally important than any that he had occupied during the thirty-five years of his reign, and, on the whole, less powerful

<sup>1</sup> "Pacis publicæ studiosissimus." W. Newb. iii. 26.

<sup>2</sup> "Inter ipsos triumphales eventus summam clementiam . . . conservavit." Gir. Camb. De Inst. Pr. ii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> "Justitiæ venditor et dilator."

Giraldus, De Inst. Pr. ii. 3. Yet it was justice that he sold.

<sup>4</sup> It was no mere flattery when the author of the *Dialogus de Scaccario* called him "Rex illustris munitiorum principum maxime," p. 2 (ed. 1711).

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE.

xiii

than he began. Yet if we could distinguish between the man and the king, between personal selfishness and official or political statesmanship, between the ruin of his personal aims and the real success of his administrative conceptions, we might conclude by saying that altogether he was great and wise and successful.

Contrast between his personal and administrative successes.

In so mixed a character it would be strange if partial judges could not find much to praise and much to blame. In the eyes of a friend the abilities of Henry excuse his vices, and the veriest experiments of political sagacity wear the aspect of inventions of profound philanthropic devotion. To the enemy the same measures are the transparent disguise of a crafty and greedy spirit anxious only for selfish aggrandizement. The constitutional historian cannot help looking with reverence on one under whose hand the foundations of liberty and national independence were so clearly marked and so deeply laid that in the course of one generation the fabric was safe for ever from tyrants or conquerors. The partizan of ecclesiastical immunities or monastic discipline can see in him only the apostate and the persecutor. The pure moralist inclines to scrutinize personal vices and to give too little credit to political merit. It is by such that the character of Henry has for the most part been written. Whilst we accept the particulars in which they agree, we may, without pretending to be free from prejudice, attempt to draw from our own survey of his acts a more probable theory of the man and of his work on the age and nation.

Variety of judgments upon the character of Henry II. by the constitutionalist,

the ecclesiastic, and the moralist.

Interpreted by the history of his acts, the main purpose of Henry's life is clear. That was the consolidation of the kingly power in his own hands. Putting aside the disproportioned estimate of his ambition formed by contemporary writers, and encouraged perhaps by some careless or ostentatious words of his own,<sup>1</sup> we see in that

His character as interpreted by history.

<sup>1</sup> " Solet quippe, quoniam ex | " animosum pariter et ambitiosum  
" abundantia cordis os loquitur, | " coram privatis suis nonnunquam

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Ambition  
not his ruling  
passion; but  
rather the desire  
of consolidating  
his power.

purpose no very towering idea of conquest, or short-sighted appetite for tyranny. If ambition were ever really his ruling passion, it was one which he concealed so well that its definite object cannot be guessed, which at an early period of his reign he must have dismissed as impracticable, and which never led him to forego by precipitate ardour one of the advantages that might be secured by delay and moderation. He may have had such an aim, he may have thought of the empire,<sup>1</sup> or that the deliverance of Spain or Palestine was reserved for his arms; but that he really did so we have not the most shadowy evidence. We know that he was a powerful, unscrupulous man, a man of vast energy and industry, of great determination, the last man in the world to be charged with infirmity of purpose; but we also know that he knew mankind and had read history, and we see that as the actual results of his plans were of no immoderate dimensions, so also the details of his designs were carried out with a care and minuteness only credible on the supposition that they were ends in themselves. We need not suppose gratuitously that he intended to base on the foundation of consolidated power a fabric of conquest that would demand half a dozen lives to complete.

Such a theory as I have stated at once gives him a

“ verbum emittere ‘ totum videlicet  
“ ‘ mundum uni probo potentique  
“ ‘ viro parum esse.’ ” Gir. Camb.  
De Inst. Prin. ii. 1.

<sup>1</sup> “ Verum ad Romanorum imperium, occasione werræ diutinæ et inexorabilis discordiæ inter imperatorem Fredericum et suos obortæ, tam ab Italia tota quam urbe Romulea sæpius invitatus, comparata quidem sibi ad hoc Morianæ vallis et Alpium via, sed non efficaciter obtenta, animositate sua ambitum extendit.”

Gir. Camb. De Inst. Pr. ii. 1. This is a curious passage taken in connexion with the statement of Peter of Blois, Ep. 113. “ Vidimus et præsentem fuimus, ubi regnum Palæstinæ, regnum etiam Italiæ, patri vestro aut uni filiorum suorum, quem ad hoc eligeret ab utriusque regni magnatibus et populis est oblatum.” A design of seizing Aix-la-Chapelle and the empire itself had been at one time ascribed to the Conqueror, in 1074. Lambert Hersf., ed. Pistorius, p. 377.

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE.

XV

fitting aim for a moderate sensible ambition, and explains the relation between the influences of passion and policy by which he was actually swayed. His moral character, his self-will and self-indulgence, his licentious habits, his paroxysms of rage, his covetousness, faithlessness, and cruelty, did not come into any violent collision with his political schemes, or if they threatened to do so were kept (except perhaps in the single exception of the forest laws) in abeyance until the pressing necessity of policy was satisfied. That they were so restrained proves that this leading purpose is not to be regarded as imaginary. That they did sway him on almost every recorded occasion of his life in which they did not clash with his purpose is so certain as to prevent us from listening for a moment to any theory which would represent him as a beneficent, unselfish ruler. His ambition may not have been the one which his moral character and circumstances might lead us to expect; but to say this is merely to repeat that that character was rather a compound of inconsistent qualities than a balance of opposing forces.

This great purpose not liable to be thwarted by his passions.

Where this purpose did not interfere he was ruled very much by passion.

Take for example his relations with France, the conquest of which is the only conceivable and was the most feasible object of the ambition with which he may be credited. In such a purpose his passions and his unscrupulous policy would have run in the utmost harmony—pride, passion, revenge, the lust of dominion, the love of power. He hated Lewis the Seventh, he had every right to hate him, both as injurer and as injured. He was more or less at variance with him as long as he lived; he knew him to be weak and contemptible, and yet to be the source of all his own deepest unhappiness. At many periods of his reign Lewis and France lay at his mercy. The net of alliances was spread all around him. Italy, Spain, Flanders, were in close alliance with Henry. From 1168 to 1180 the position of Henry the Lion in Germany was such as must have prevented Lewis from looking for any help from the house of Hohenstaufen, even if he and

He cannot have wished to conquer France.

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Edited by William Stubbs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xvi

PREFACE.

His  
ambition  
more  
moderate  
than that of  
Edward III.  
or Henry V.

the emperor had not been the champions of rival popes. If the king of England and ruler of half of France abstained from taking what a man of vulgar ambition would have taken, what Edward III. and Henry V. nearly succeeded in taking, we are not indeed to ignore other possible reasons for his forbearance, but the most probable reason is that he did not want it.

Possible  
reasons for  
restraining  
such  
ambition in  
the case of  
France.

Such possible reasons may be suggested, but for the most part they are much too weak to stand before a resolute passionate ambition, and the certainty that they must have occurred to so clear-headed a man as Henry tells that the ambition they served to restrain could not have been of such a nature, if it existed at all; but it is needless to speculate upon them. Unscrupulous as men were, the idea of unrighteous conquest from a Christian prince did not enter into the ordinary morality of the age. They fought for the settlement of quarrels, or for the decision of doubtful claims, or for rivalry, or for the love of war, but not for illegal conquest. In Henry's own wars this fact is clear, he never waged a war but on the ground of a legal claim. Further than this, his own feudal superstition, if it is not worthy of a higher name, with regard to the person of Lewis, was so strong as to exercise a visible restraint on his actual hatred. His political common sense might well have told him that the force which was enough to crush Lewis was not strong enough to hold France. The difficulties he experienced in ruling the dominions which he already possessed, and the variety of nationalities already crowded under one sceptre, were considerations that could not have escaped him, and they were just the considerations which, powerless before the lust of dominion, would commend themselves most forcibly to his characteristic caution.

Henry's  
external  
aims.

The real object of Henry's external ambition was the consolidation of his dominions. To effect this but a moderate extension was necessary. These dominions on



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Edited by William Stubbs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE.

xvii

the continent were a long territory of varying breadth, the cohesion of which was of course weakest at its narrowest part. The reduction of Brittany from the condition of nominal to that of real dependence, and the extinction of any formidable power in Angoumois, la Marche, Saintonge, and Limousin, were necessary for the maintenance of the desired unity of estates. Second in importance was the enforcement of feudal claims over Toulouse and Auvergne, which might be more useful as independent allies than as unwilling vassals. The recovery of the Vexin and the establishment of Eleanor's rights over Berry gave a strength to the frontier and an apparent compactness to the mass; but these, like Brittany, Henry chose to secure by marriages rather than by arms; and in the same way the only considerable acquisition which he contemplated was attempted in the abortive proposal for the marriage of John with the heiress of Savoy and Maurienne.

In the pursuit of his object Henry went to work very much in the way in which a rich man in the eighteenth century created an estate and founded a family.<sup>1</sup> He was anxious to increase the mass of his inheritance and his local influence by advantageous marriages and judicious purchases. He was scarcely less anxious to extinguish copyholds and buy up small interloping freeholders. In the choice of his acquisitions, that stood first in his consideration which could be brought within a ring fence. If Henry II. occasionally had recourse to chicanery<sup>2</sup> and oppression, he has not wanted followers on both a large and a small scale whom his moderation even in these points might put to shame.

The character of his insular acquisitions was determined on a similar principle. Wales, Ireland, and Scot-

<sup>1</sup> For instance, his purchase of the county of La Marche in 1177. R. de Monte ad ann., and vol. i. p. 197. R. de Diceto, 600.

<sup>2</sup> "Omne jus poli jure fori demuttavit. Scripta authentica omnium enervavit." "Hæreditates retinuit aut vendidit." R. Niger. 169.

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Edited by William Stubbs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xviii

PREFACE.

The legal  
pretexts for  
aggression.

land were all desirable conquests, but no great cost should be spent on them. If internal divisions could be turned to profit, or if the scheme of aggression could be made available for the diversion of uneasy spirits from home, Henry was ready to take advantage of the circumstances, but would not waste much treasure or many men. In each of these cases he had a legal claim; to Ireland by the gift of pope Adrian IV.; to Scotland and Wales by his inheritance of the ancient supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon kings, and the simple application of feudal principles to that inheritance. The case with regard to Ireland was even stronger, if we consider him as succeeding to the like ancient claim to supremacy, and as at once the nominee of the sovereign of all islands<sup>1</sup> and the invited arbiter of domestic quarrels. Yet according to Robert de Monte, the original design upon Ireland was formed for the purpose of finding a kingdom for William Longespee of Anjou, and the final conquest was carried out in order to provide a suitable settlement for John.<sup>2</sup> William the Lion and David of North Wales were reconciled by a royal or quasi-royal marriage.<sup>3</sup> Galloway was not attacked until a like bond had proved too slight or too frail to hold it.

Henry's division of his dominions among his sons was

<sup>1</sup> See the Bull "Laudabiliter," Gir. Camb. De Inst. Pr. ii. 19. "Sane Hiberniam et omnes insulas quibus sol justitiæ Christus illuxit, . . . ad jus beati Petri et sacrosanctæ Romanæ ecclesiæ . . . non est dubium pertinere." By a misinterpretation of the forged donation of Constantine.

<sup>2</sup> Ad. an. 1155. "Circa festum Sancti Michaelis Henricus rex Anglorum habito concilio apud Wincestum de conquiendo regno Hiberniæ et Guillelmo fratri suo dando, cum optimatibus suis tractavit. Quod quia matri ejus im-

peratrici non placuit intermissa "est ad tempus illa expeditio." Cf. Cont. Anselm of Gemblours ad 1156: "Exercitum . . . quem pro-  
"posuerat ducere in Hiberniam ut  
"eam suo dominio subjugaret et  
"fratremque suum concilio episco-  
"porum et religiosorum virorum  
"illi insulæ regem constitueret."  
See also Alberic of Trois Fontaines, ad 1156, ed. Leibnitz, p. 329.

<sup>3</sup> Emma, the bastard daughter of Geoffrey Plantagenet, was married to David, prince of North Wales, in 1174. R. de Diceto, 585.

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Edited by William Stubbs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE.

xix

a measure which, as his own age did not understand it, later ones may be excused for mistaking; but the object of it was, as may be inferred from his own recorded words, to strengthen and equalize the pressure of the ruling hand in different provinces of various laws and nationalities.<sup>1</sup> The sons were to be the substitutes, not the successors of their father; the eldest as the accepted or elected sharer of the royal name, as feudal superior to his brothers, and first in the royal councils, stood in the same relation to his father as the king of the Romans to the emperor; he might rule with a full delegated power, or perhaps with inchoate independence, but the father's hand was to guide the helm of state. Unhappily the young brood of the eagle of the broken covenant were the worst possible instruments for the working of a large and complex policy; the last creatures in the world to be made useful in carrying on a form of government which the experience of all ages has tried and found wanting.

His distribution of his dominions, how to be explained.

Yet how grand a scheme of western confederation might be deduced from the consideration of the position of Henry's children, how great a dream of conquest may after all have been broken by the machinations of Lewis and Eleanor! What might not a crusade have effected headed by Henry II., with his valiant sons, the first warriors of the age, with his sons-in-law Henry the Lion, William of Sicily, and Alfonso of Castile; with Philip of France, the brother-in-law of his sons, Frederick Barbarossa, his distant kinsman and close ally, the princes of Champagne and Flanders, his cousins? In it the grand majestic chivalry of the emperor, the wealth of Sicily, the hardy valour and practical skill of Spain, the hereditary crusading ardour of the land of Godfrey of Bouillon and Stephen of Blois, the statesmanlike vigour

His grand position in Europe.

<sup>1</sup> "Addens etiam in illo mandato  
" quod quando ipse solus erat in  
" regimine regni nihil de jure amit-  
" tebat, et modo dedecus esset cum

" sint plures in regenda terra ali-  
" quid inde perdere." See below,  
i. 130.

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Edited by William Stubbs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xx

PREFACE.

What a  
crusade he  
might have  
led.

and simple piety of the great Saxon hero, under the guidance of the craft and sagacity, the mingled impetuosity and caution of Henry II., might have presented Europe to Asia in a guise which she has never yet assumed. Yet all the splendour of the family confederation, all the close-woven widespread web that fortune and sagacity had joined to weave, end in the cruel desertion, the baffled rage, the futile curses of the chained leopard in the last scene at Chinon. The lawful sons, the offspring, the victims, and the avengers of a heartless policy,<sup>1</sup> the loveless children of a loveless mother, have left the last duties of an affection they did not feel to the hands of a bastard, the child of an early, obscure, misplaced, degrading, but not a mercenary love.

His home  
policy deter-  
mined by  
the same  
ruling  
principle.

The same idea of consolidating the kingly power is apparent in the legal and social measures of Henry II. His position was in these respects, indeed, more fortunate than in his foreign relations. He had not here to originate a policy which was to unite heterogeneous provinces, but inherited the experience of a century, the able ministers of his grandfather, and the plans which had been initiated in the reigns of William the Conqueror and William Rufus. But it certainly is not in the power of an ordinary administrator to adapt and develop the ideas of others, and embody them in a policy of his own. What credit Henry loses for originality he more than recovers when we consider the energy, skill, and industry with which he pursued his main object.

The exact  
aim of this  
policy.

The bent of his internal policy may be described as the substitution of the king's government for the state of things which had prevailed more or less ever since the conquest, which was partly coeval with the existence of the Norman race, partly owing to the incrustation of feudal institutions; against which the conqueror had

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<sup>1</sup> See Giraldus Camb. De Inst. Pr. ii. 3; and William of Newburgh iii. 26.

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Edited by William Stubbs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE.

xxi

had to struggle, which William Rufus had to repress by the strong hand, which Henry I. by dint of time and skill had but in a degree weakened, and which had regained in the anarchy of Stephen's reign all the power that it had lost under his predecessor.

The creation of a strong central government.

The idea of a kingly government administered by the king's servants, in which the action of the feudal nobility where it existed was simply ministerial, and was not, so far as the executive was concerned, even necessary to the maintenance of the plan, was the true remedy for the evils of anarchy inherent in the Norman state. Such a system could not be devised by a weak or ambitious head, or worked by feeble or indolent hands. Nor could it be brought to maturity or to easy action in one man's lifetime. The elements of discord were not extinguished in Henry's reign; they broke out whenever any other trouble distracted the king's energy or divided his power. Still he was in the main successful, and left to his successors the germ of a uniform administration of justice and system of revenue. His ministers, who at the beginning of his reign were little more than officers of his household, at the end of it were the administrators of the country.<sup>1</sup> The position of England in the affairs of Europe was, from this time, owing not to the foreign possessions of the sovereign, but to the compactness of her organization, and the facility with which the national strength and resources could be handled.

The government to be by the king and his ministers eliminating the feudal element.

It does not matter much whether we consider the

<sup>1</sup> This great extension of the power and importance of the king's ministers during the reign has frequently been remarked in the case of the chancellor. Yet the difference of the position of Henry I.'s chancellors as compared with that of Becket and Longchamp is trifling compared with the position of the marshal at the beginning and end-

ing of Henry II.'s reign. With regard to the lay official, the contrast is more significant, because the aggrandizement is personal rather than official. The constable, on the other hand, seems to have retained some of the prestige of the position of the Stallere from earlier times.

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Edited by William Stubbs

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Character of the details of Henry's system of government: philosophical or experimental?

several measures of Henry's administrative reforms as parts of a matured definite scheme, or as the expedients and experiments of an adroit manager. The more carefully we study the remaining monuments of the earlier reigns, or the character of Henry's ministers, the more we may be convinced that his genius was rather adaptive and digestive than originative. When on the other hand we examine the actual results of his reforms as exemplified in the succeeding reigns, the more certainly we see the difference between the earlier fragmentary attempts at legislation and the definite system which Henry left behind him ; but on any view the industry, energy, and readiness of his working were qualities of the man himself.

Two opposite views of his character drawn from the examination of his system.  
(1) Was he a tyrant?

It is obvious that Henry's great design as well as the subordinate parts of it may, taken apart from the general tenour of his character, be read in two ways, or rather that two opposing views of his character may be drawn from the bare consideration of his objects and measures. It may seem that he wished to create a tyranny, to overthrow every vestige of independence among the clergy and nobles, and to provide himself from the proceeds of taxation with means of carrying out personal selfish designs. He might be a man who could endure no opposition, and to whom it was enough to make a thing intolerable that it should be originated by any other than himself. Such a reading would explain much of his avarice, cruelty, and greediness in acquiring territory.

(2) Was he a benefactor?

Or it might be argued that as so many of his schemes did actually result in the amelioration of the condition of his subjects, as his judicial reforms were the basis on which the next generation was enabled to raise the earlier stages of civil liberty ; and as his ecclesiastical measures have in nearly every particular been sanctioned and adopted by the practice of later ages, he is therefore entitled to the praise of a well intentioned, benevolent ruler, as well as to the credit of a far-sighted statesman.

or (3) a far-sighted statesman?