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Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (1815–81), Dean of Westminster, modelled this 1868 work, of which the third, revised edition of 1869 is reissued here, on his 1854 *Historical Memorials of Canterbury* (also available in this series). It was conceived as part of the celebration of the eight-hundredth anniversary of the consecration of the abbey in 1065, and consists of essays on aspects of the abbey's central role in English history, particularly as the coronation place of monarchs of England, and the location of many royal tombs. Stanley draws on both the manuscript archives of the abbey and on the work of earlier historians to consider its foundation, the coronations, the royal tombs, the other monuments to distinguished men and women, and the history of the abbey before and after the Reformation. This highly readable account will be of interest to anyone wanting to know more about one of England's greatest buildings.

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# Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey

ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY



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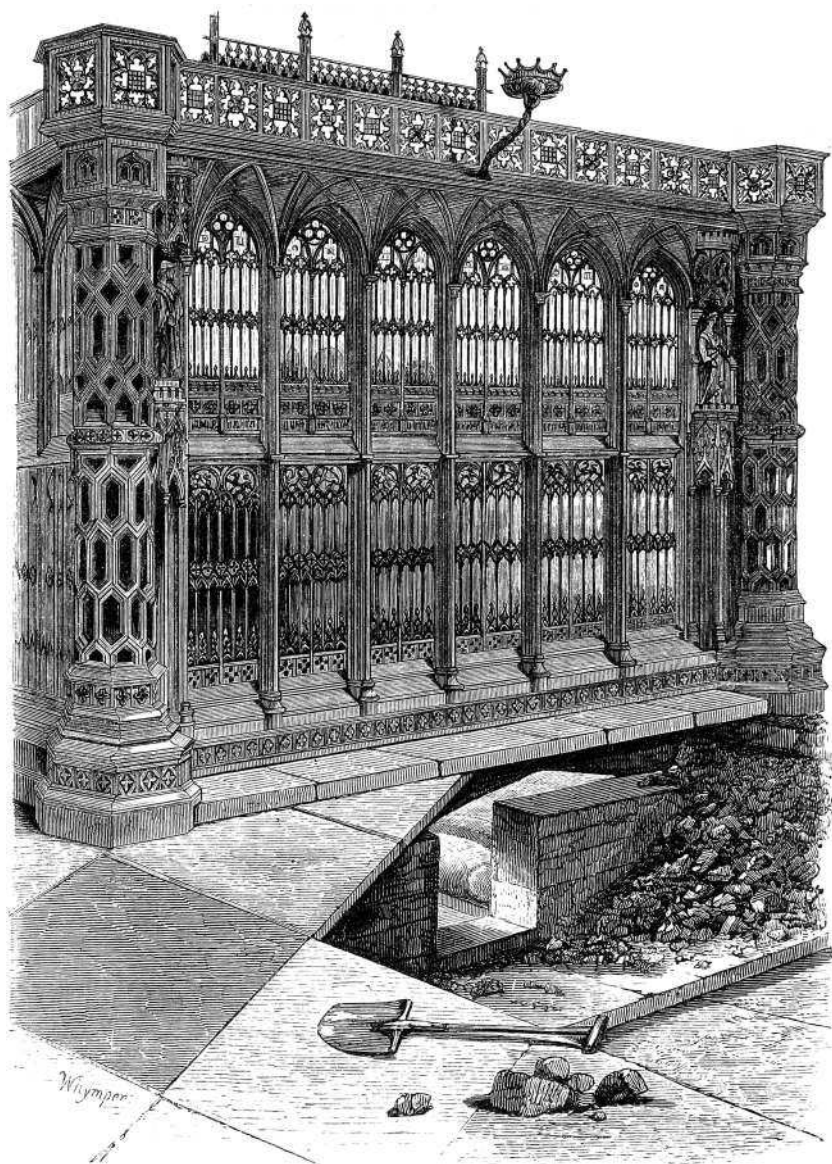
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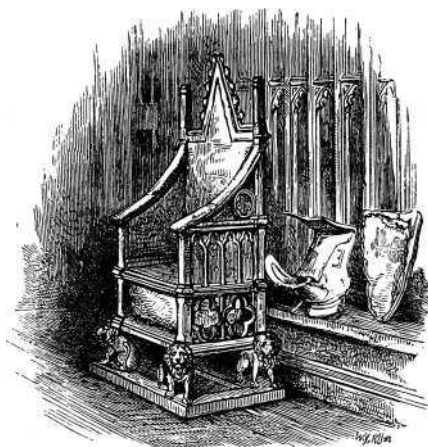
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OF  
WESTMINSTER ABBEY

By ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY, D.D.

DEAN OF WESTMINSTER

CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE



THE CORONATION CHAIR

*THIRD AND REVISED EDITION*

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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*‘The Abbey of Westminster hath been always held the greatest sanctuary  
and randevouze of devotion of the whole island: whereunto the situation  
of the very place seems to contribute much, and to strike a holy kind of  
reverence and sweetness of melting piety in the hearts of the beholders’*

HOWELL's Perlustration of London (1657), p. 346

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TO  
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY  
QUEEN VICTORIA  
WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF LOYAL AND RESPECTFUL GRATITUDE  
OF  
THIS HUMBLE RECORD  
OF THE ROYAL AND NATIONAL SANCTUARY  
WHICH HAS FOR CENTURIES ENSHRINED  
THE VARIED MEMORIES OF HER AUGUST ANCESTORS  
AND THE MANIFOLD GLORIES OF HER FREE AND FAMOUS KINGDOM  
AND WHICH WITNESSED THE SOLEMN CONSECRATION  
OF HER OWN AUSPICIOUS REIGN  
TO ALL HIGH AND HOLY PURPOSES

## PREFACE.

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THE FOLLOWING WORK was undertaken, in great measure, in consequence of the kind desire expressed by many friends, chiefly by my honoured colleagues in the Chapter of Westminster, on occasion of the Eight Hundredth Anniversary of the Dedication of the Abbey, that I would attempt to illustrate its history by Memorials similar to those which, in former years, I had published in connexion with Canterbury Cathedral. Such a proposal was in entire consonance with my own previous inclinations ; but I have undertaken it not without much misgiving.

The task was one which involved considerable research, such as, amidst the constant pressure of other and more important occupations, I was conscious that I could ill afford to make. This difficulty has been in part met by the valuable co-operation which I have received from persons the best qualified to give it. Besides the facilities rendered to me by the members and officers of our own Capitular and Collegiate Body, to whom I here tender my grateful thanks, I may especially name Mr. Joseph Burt, of the Public Record

Office, whose careful arrangement of our Archives during the last three years has given him ample opportunities for bringing any new light to bear on the subject; the lamented Joseph Robertson, of the Register House, Edinburgh, who was always ready to supply, from his copious stores, any knowledge bearing on the Northern Kingdom; the Rev. John Stoughton, of Hammersmith, who has afforded me much useful information on the Nonconformist antiquities of the Abbey; Colonel Chester, a laborious antiquarian of the United States, who has undertaken to edit and illustrate the Burial Registers, and who has lent me his kind help in making use of them; Mr. Thoms, the learned Editor of 'Notes and Queries,' and Sub-Librarian of the House of Lords; Mr. George Scharf, Keeper of the National Portrait Gallery; Mr. Doyme C. Bell, of the Privy Purse, Buckingham Palace; and my valued friend Mr. Grove, who has assisted me in compiling the Index.<sup>1</sup>

For such inaccuracies as must be inevitable in a work covering so large a field, I must crave, not only the indulgence, but the corrections of those whose longer experience of Westminster and whose deeper acquaintance with English history and literature will enable them to point out errors which have doubtless escaped my notice in this rapid survey.

<sup>1</sup> For the verification of statements and references in the earlier Chapters, I am in a great measure indebted to Mr. Frank Scott Haydon and Mr.

Edward Rhodes, of the Public Record Office; and for the Index and references in this edition, to Mr. Henry F. Turle.

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After all that has been written on the Abbey, it would be absurd for any modern work to make pretensions to more than a rearrangement of already existing materials. It may be as well briefly to enumerate the authorities from which I have drawn.

I. The original sources, some of which have been hardly accessible to former explorers, are :—

1. The ARCHIVES preserved in the Muniment Chamber of the Abbey. These reach back to the Charters of the Saxon Kings. They were roughly classified, by Widmore, in the last century, and are now undergoing a thorough examination under the able and skilful care of Mr. Burt.

2. The CHAPTER BOOKS, which reach from 1542 to the present time, with the exception of two important blanks—from 1554 to 1558, under the restored Benedictines of Queen Mary; and from 1642 to 1662, under the Commissioners of the Commonwealth.

3. The 'CONSUETUDINES' of Abbot WARE, described p. 382.

4. The BURIAL REGISTERS, described p. 116.

5. The PRECENTOR'S BOOK, containing a partial record of customs during the last century.

6. The MS. HISTORY OF THE ABBEY by FLETE, described p. 382.

7. The MSS. in the Heralds' and Lord Chamberlain's Offices.

II. The chief printed authorities are :—

1. *Reges, Reginæ et Nobiles in Ecclesiâ Beati Petri.*

*Westmonasteriensis Sepulti*, by WILLIAM CAMDEN (1600, 1603, and 1606).

2. *Monumenta Westmonasteriensia*, by HENRY KEEPE (usually signed H. K.), 1683.

3. *Antiquities of St. Peter's*, by J. CRULL (usually signed J. C., sometimes H. S.). [These three works relate chiefly to the Monuments.]

4. *History and Antiquities of the Abbey Church of Westminster*, by JOHN DART (2 vols. folio, 1723).

5. *History of the Church of St. Peter, and Inquiry into the Time of its First Foundation*, by RICHARD WIDMORE, Librarian to the Chapter and Minor Canon of Westminster, 1750 (carefully based on the original Archives).

6. *History of the Abbey*, by R. AKERMANN (2 vols. royal 4to, 1812).

7. *History and Antiquities of the Abbey Church of St. Peter, Westminster*, by JOHN NEALE and EDWARD BRAYLEY (2 vols. folio, 1818). [This is the most complete work.]

8. *Gleanings from Westminster Abbey*, under the supervision of GEORGE GILBERT SCOTT (2nd edit. 1863), by various contributors (chiefly architectural).

To these must be added the smaller but exceedingly useful works—PETER CUNNINGHAM'S *Handbook of Westminster Abbey*, and Mr. RIDGWAY'S *Gem of Thorney Island*; and the elaborate treatises of STOW, MALCOLM, and MAITLAND, on London; of SMITH, BRAYLEY, and WALCOTT, on Westminster; and of CARTER, GOUGH, and WEEVER, on sepulchral monuments in general.

## PREFACE.

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III. In turning from the sources of information to the use made of them, a serious difficulty occurred. Here, as in the case of Canterbury Cathedral, it was my intention to confine myself strictly to the *historical* memorials of the place, leaving the architectural and purely antiquarian details to those who have treated them in the works to which I have already referred.<sup>1</sup> But the History of Westminster Abbey differs essentially from that of Canterbury Cathedral, or, indeed, of any other ecclesiastical edifice in England. In Canterbury I had the advantage of four marked events, or series of events, of which one especially—the murder of Becket—whilst it was inseparably entwined with the whole structure of the building, was capable of being reproduced, in all its parts, as a separate incident. In Westminster no such single act has occurred. The interest of the place depends (as I have pointed out in Chapter I.) on the connexion of the different parts with the whole, and of the whole with the general History of England. These ‘HISTORICAL MEMORIALS’ ought to be, in fact, ‘The History of England in Westminster Abbey.’ Those who are acquainted with M. Ampère’s delightful book, *L’Histoire Romaine à Rome*, will appreciate at once the charm and the difficulty of such an undertaking. In order to accomplish it, I was compelled, on the one hand, to observe as far as possible a chronological arrangement, such as is lost in works like Neale’s or Cunningham’s, which necessarily follow the course of the topography. But, on the other hand, the lines

<sup>1</sup> Any documents of this kind, either accessible, are printed in the Appendix.  
 not before published, or not generally

of interest are so various and so divergent, that to blend them in one indiscriminate series would have confused relations which can only be made perspicuous by being kept distinct. At the cost therefore of some repetition, and probably of some misplacements, I have treated each of these subjects by itself, though arranging them in the sequence which was engendered by the historical order of the events.

The Foundation of the Abbey,<sup>1</sup> growing out of the physical features of the locality, the legendary traditions, and the motives and character of Edward the Confessor, naturally forms the groundwork of all that succeeds.

From the Burial of the Confessor, and the peculiar circumstances attendant upon it, sprang the Coronation of William the Conqueror, which carries with it the Coronations of all future Sovereigns. These scenes were, perhaps, too slightly connected with the Abbey to justify even the summary description which I have given. But the subject, viewed as a whole, is so curious, that I may be pardoned for having endeavoured to concentrate in one focus these periodical pageants, which certainly have been regarded as amongst the chief glories of the place.<sup>2</sup>

The Tombs of the Kings, as taking their rise from the Burial of Henry III. by the Shrine of the Confessor, followed next; and their connexion with the

<sup>1</sup> Chapter I.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter II.

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structure of the Church is so intimate, that this seemed the most fitting point at which to introduce such notices of the architectural changes as were compatible with the plan of the work. This Chapter,<sup>1</sup> accordingly, contains the key of the whole.

From the Burials of the Kings followed, in continuous order, the interments of eminent men. These I have endeavoured to track in the successive groups of Courtiers, Warriors, and Statesmen, through the marked epochs of Richard II., of Elizabeth, and of the Commonwealth, ending with the Statesmen's Corners in the North Transept and the Nave. In like manner the Men of Letters, and of Arts and Sciences, are carried through the various links which, starting from the Grave of Chaucer in Poets' Corner, include the South Transept, and the other Chapels whither by degrees they have penetrated. I have also added to these such Graves or Monuments as, without falling under any of the foregoing heads, yet deserve a passing notice.<sup>2</sup>

There still remained the outlying edifices of the Abbey, which necessitated a brief sketch of the history of the events and personages (chiefly ecclesiastical) that have figured within the Precincts before and since the Reformation. For these two Chapters, as a general rule, I have reserved the burialplaces of the Abbots and Deans. In the first division,<sup>3</sup> I have thought it best

<sup>1</sup> Chapter III.<sup>2</sup> Chapter IV.<sup>3</sup> Chapter V.

to include the whole history of such buildings as the Chapter House, the Treasury, and the Gatehouse, although in so doing it was necessary to anticipate what properly belongs to the second period. Again I have, in the period since the Reformation,<sup>1</sup> reserved for a single summary all that related to the local reminiscences of the Convocations that have been held within the Precincts. The History of Westminster School, which opened a larger field than could be conveniently included within the limits of this work, I have noticed only so far as was necessary to give a general survey of the destination of the whole of the Conventual buildings, and to form a united representation of the whole Collegiate Body during some of the most eventful periods of its annals.

In treating subjects of this wide and varied interest, I have endeavoured to confine myself to such events and such remarks as were essentially connected with the localities. In so doing I have, on the one hand, felt bound to compress the notices of personages or incidents that were too generally known to need detailed descriptions; and, on the other hand, to enlarge on some of the less familiar names, which, without some such explanation, would lose their significance. I have also not scrupled to quote at length many passages—sometimes celebrated, sometimes, perhaps, comparatively unknown—which, from their intrinsic beauty, have themselves become part of the History of the

<sup>1</sup> Chapter VI.

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Abbey. This must be the excuse, if any be needed, for the numerous citations from Shakspeare, Fuller, Clarendon, Addison, Gray, Walpole, Macaulay, Irving, and Froude. The details of the pageants, unless when necessary for the historical bearing of the events, I have left to be examined in the authorities to which I have referred.

IV. I cannot bring this survey of the History of the Abbey to a conclusion, without recurring for a moment to various suggestions which were made, by those interested in the subject, at the time of the celebration of the Eighth Centenary of the Foundation. Some—the most important—have, happily, been carried out. The liberality of Parliament, under the auspices of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Cowper, has undertaken the restoration of the ancient Chapter House. By the aid of the Ecclesiastical Commission, a material security for the preservation of the Fabric and of the Monuments, as well as for the convenience of Public Worship, has been gained, in the extensive and successful apparatus for warming the whole edifice. The erection of a new Reredos, more worthy of so august a sanctuary, has at length been completed, under the care of the Subdean, Lord John Thynne, to whose long and un-failing interest in the Abbey its structure and arrangements have been so much indebted.

In addition to these improvements, it has been often suggested that none would add so much to the external beauty of the Building, without changing its actual

proportions, or its relations to past history, as the restoration of the Great Northern Entrance to something of its original magnificence, which has almost disappeared under the alterations of later times. Such a glorification of the main approach to the Abbey from the great thoroughfare of the Metropolis would be more in keeping with its position and character than the addition of new Towers, either in the centre or at the west end, which are already provided for (if not adequately yet sufficiently), by the actual buildings of Sir Christopher Wren, or the adjacent Towers of the Palace of Westminster.

Much has been said on the question of the Monuments. With regard to the Royal Monuments, a Report was, in 1854, presented by the distinguished Architect of the Abbey, Mr. Gilbert Scott, to Sir W. Molesworth, then First Commissioner of Public Works, containing an exhaustive account of the state of these interesting Tombs, and of the arguments for and against their restoration.<sup>1</sup> On that Report Parliament proceeded to grant, according to the estimated cost, the sum of £4,700. The question was submitted to a Commission of eminent antiquaries, who decided that their venerable aspect, and the marks of antiquity and of history which they bear, pointed not to reparation, but to preservation. In 1869 the question was reopened by the present First Commissioner, Mr. Layard,

<sup>1</sup> Estimates of the House of Commons, April 8, 1854, No. 24, with Report of Mr. G. G. Scott.

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who convened a like body distinguished in science and archæology, under whose sanction it was determined not to restore, but to cleanse, the superb tombs from the incrustation which had obliterated their original gilding and delicate workmanship. This has been carefully effected, and the completely successful result may be seen in the tombs of Henry VII. and his mother, Margaret of Richmond.

The Private Monuments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries offer less difficulty. They belong for the most part to a later age, and their defects are such as arise not so much from time as from neglect. I have much pleasure in expressing my grateful sense of the promptitude with which the noble and illustrious Houses which they represent have, in several instances, undertaken to restore their original splendour, yet so as not to interfere with the general harmony of the surrounding edifice. These examples, it is hoped, will be followed up generally.

The question of the later Monuments is sufficiently discussed in the account of them in the pages of this work.<sup>1</sup> Doubtless, some rearrangement and reduction might with advantage take place. But, even where the objections of the representatives of the deceased can be surmounted, constant care is needed not to disturb the historical associations which in most cases have given a significance to the particular spots occupied by each, and each must be considered on its

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV.

own merits. One measure, however, will sooner or later become indispensable, if the sepulchral character of the Abbey is to be continued into future times, for which, happily, the existing arrangements of the locality give ample facilities. It has been often proposed that a Cloister should be erected, communicating with the Abbey by the Chapter House, and continued on the site of the present Abingdon Street, facing the Palace of Westminster on one side, and the College Garden on the other. Such a building, the receptacle not of any of the existing Monuments (which would be yet more out of place there than in their present position), but of the Graves and the Memorials of another thousand years of English History, would meet every requirement of the future, without breaking with the traditions of the past.

I have ventured to throw out these suggestions, as relating to improvements which depend on external assistance. For such as can be undertaken by our Collegiate Body—for all measures relating to the conservation and repair of the fabric, and to the extension of the benefits of the institution—I can but express my confident hope that they will, as hitherto, receive every consideration from those whose honour is so deeply involved in the usefulness, the grandeur, and the perpetuity of the venerable and splendid edifice of which we are the appointed guardians, and which lies so near our hearts.

*August 11, 1869.*

## NOTE.

IN the second and third Editions I have incorporated the numerous corrections which, according to the invitation held out in the Preface, have been suggested by critics or kindly sent to me from various quarters, and for which I beg to return my sincere thanks. It is only by such information, that a work, touching on so many points of English history and art, can be brought to the correctness which the subject requires. I have also expanded or fortified some statements which have been questioned on insufficient grounds.

It has been urged that the arrangement of the book would have been improved had it followed the history in chronological sequence. There would, no doubt, have been some advantages in this course, and it would have involved far less care and labour. But I am convinced that, in order to give a distinct and intelligible account of an institution so complex and so diverse as Westminster Abbey, the plan which I have followed was indispensable. I have, however, endeavoured to supply the defect by adding a chronological Table of Events.

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## NOTE.

It has also been urged that the history of the Monastery should have been given in detail. But, as in the case of Canterbury, so here, I purposely abstained from introducing such a special element into a work intended for general readers. The regulations of the Monastery, except in certain peculiarities which I have noticed, were those of Benedictine convents generally; and the actual narrative as given by Flete is singularly devoid of interest. I have, however, added a few additional points from documents since discovered, and from a more careful analysis of Abbot Ware's 'Consuetudines.' These various additions and corrections, together with the account of the Royal Vaults, as disclosed in the record for the burialplace of James I., I have printed in a separate form for the purchasers of the First Edition.

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