EDITOR'S PREFACE.

"William of Malmesbury," according to archbishop Usher, "is the chief of our historians;" Leland records him "as an elegant, learned, and faithful historian;" and Sir Henry Saville is of opinion, that he is the only man of his time who has discharged his trust as an historian. His History of the Kings of England was translated into English by the Rev. John Sharpe, and published in quarto, in 1815.

Though the language of Mr. Sharpe's work is by no means so smooth as the dialect of the present day would require, yet the care with which he examined MSS., and endeavoured to give the exact sense of his author, seemed so important a recommendation, that the editor of the present volume has gladly availed himself of it as a ground-work for his own labours. The result of this plan is, that the public are enabled to purchase without delay and at an insignificant expense, the valuable contemporary historian, who has hitherto been like a sealed book to the public, or only accessible through a bulky volume, the scarcity of which served to exclude it from all but public libraries or the studies of the wealthy.

But the translation of Mr. Sharpe has by no means been reprinted verbatim. Within the last ten years a valuable edition of the original text, with copious collations of MSS., has been published by the English Historical Society. This edition has been compared with the translation, and numerous passages retouched and improved. Some charters, also, have been added, and a large number of additional notes appended at the foot of the pages, together with a few other improvements and additions calculated to render this interesting history more acceptable to the reading public.

J. A. G.

Bampton, June, 1847.
THE

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

The author whose work is here presented to the public in an English dress, has, unfortunately, left few facts of a personal nature to be recorded of him; and even these can only be casually gleaned from his own writings. It is indeed much to be regretted that he who wrote so well on such a variety of topics, should have told so little to gratify the curiosity of his readers with respect to himself. Every notice of such an ardent lover of literature as Malmesbury, must have been interesting to posterity, as a desire to be acquainted with the history of those who have contributed to our instruction or amusement seems natural to civilized man. With the exception indeed of the incidental references made by successive chroniclers, who borrowed from his history, there is nothing to be learned of him from extrinsic sources till the time of Leland, who indignantly observes, that even at Malmesbury, in his own monastery, they had nearly lost all remembrance of their brightest ornament.

To himself then we are indebted for the knowledge of his being descended from both English and Norman parents; his father having probably come hither at the conquest. The exact time of his birth cannot be ascertained; though perhaps an approximation to it may be made. In the "Commentary on Jeremiah,"* Malmesbury observes, that he "had long since, in his youthful days, amused himself with writing history, that he was now forty years of age;" and, in another place, he mentions a circumstance which occurred "in the

time of king Henry;"* apparently implying that Henry was then dead. Now, admitting the expression of "long since" to denote a period of ten years, this, as his "Histories of the Kings" and "of the Prelates" were completed in the year 1125, must have been written about 1135, the time of Henry's death, and would of course place his own birth about 1095 or 1096.†

The next circumstance to be noticed is, that when a boy, he was placed in the monastery whence he derived his name, where in due time he became librarian, and, according to Leland, precentor; and ultimately refused the dignity of abbat. His death is generally supposed to have taken place about 1143; though it is probable that he survived this period some time: for his "Modern History" terminates at the end of the year 1142; and it will appear, from a manuscript hereafter to be described, that he lived at least long enough after its publication to make many corrections, alterations, and insertions, in that work as well in the other portions of his History.

With these facts, meagre as they are, the personal account of him must close. But with regard to his literary bent and attainments there is ample store of information in his writings. From his earliest youth he gave his soul to study, and to the collecting of books;‡ and he visited many of the most celebrated monasteries in the kingdom, apparently in prosecution of this darling propensity. The ardour of his curiosity, and the unceasing diligence of his researches, in this respect, have perhaps been seldom surpassed. He seems to have procured every volume within his reach; and to have carefully examined and digested its contents, whether

* "Ista autem avis (struthio) membrorum grandium, pennas quidem habens, sed volatu carere. Qualem in Anglia vidimus, tempore regis Henrici externorum monstrorum appetentissimi." Ch. iv. v. 31.
† He has afforded another notice of time, but not equally precise. Godfrey is said to have been abbat of Malmesbury from the year 1084 till 1105; and Malmesbury mentions certain transactions which took place in Godfrey's time as beyond his memory; and others which happened when he was a boy. Anglia Sacra, II. 45—7. If Malmesbury wrote the miracles of St. Andrew, a work which is attributed to him, he was born the 30th of November.
‡ He says he also collected many books for the monastic library: and mentions others which he had seen at Canterbury, Bury St. Edmunds, &c. Gale, tom. iii. pp. 376, 298.
divinity, history, biography, poetry, or classical literature. Of his acquirements as a scholar it is indeed difficult to speak in terms of sufficient commendation. That he had accurately studied nearly all the Roman authors, will be readily allowed by the classical reader of his works. From these he either quotes or inserts so appositely, as to show how thoroughly he had imbibed their sense and spirit. His adaptations are ever ready and appropriate; they incorporate with his narrative with such exactness that they appear only to occupy their legitimate place. His knowledge of Greek is not equally apparent; at least his references to the writers of Greece are not so frequent, and even these might probably be obtained from translations: from this, however, no conclusion can be drawn that he did not understand the language. With respect to writers subsequent to those deemed classics, his range was so extensive that it is no easy matter to point out many books which he had not seen, and certainly he had perused several which we do not now possess.

Malmesbury's love of learning was constitutional: he declares in one of his prefaces, that had he turned to any other than literary pursuits, he should have deemed it not only disgraceful, but even detrimental to his better interest. Again, his commendations of Bede show how much he venerated a man of congenial inclinations and studies; and how anxious he was to form himself on the same model of accurate investigation and laborious research, and to snatch every possible interval from the performance of his monastic duties, for the purposes of information and improvement.

His industry and application were truly extraordinary. Even to the moment when we reluctantly lose sight of him, he is discovered unceasingly occupied in the correction of his works.* In the MSS. of the "History of the Kings"

* Some notion of his diligence may perhaps be afforded by the following list of his writings.

1. De Gestis Regum. The History of the Kings of England. The first three books were probably written soon after the year 1120. Malmesbury intimates that he then hesitated for a time on the expediency of continuing his history; but at length having determined on prosecuting his design, he dedicated the fourth and fifth books to Robert earl of Gloucester; at whose request he afterwards composed

2. Historia Novella. The Modern History. This appears to have been begun after the death of Henry I; probably not long before 1140.
may be found traces of at least four several editions; and
the "History of the Prelates" supplies nearly as many
varieties. And though it may reasonably be imagined that

3. De Gesta Pontifex. The History of the Prelates of England con-
taining, in four books, an account of the bishops, and of the principal
monasteries, from the conversion of the English, by St. Augustine, to
1123; to which he added a fifth

4. De Vita Aldhelm. The Life of St. Aldhelm: which was completed in
1125. It is very reasonably conjectured that this last was published sep-
arrately and some time after the others; as, though there are many ancient
MSS. of the first four books, one copy only has yet been discovered with the
fifth. The former were published by Savile, but from very faulty and scanty
MSS. The latter by H. Wharton, and by Gale; but also very defectively.

5. De Vita S. Dunstan. The Life of S. Dunstan, in two books. MS.
Bodley Rawlinson, 263. This was written at the request of the monks of
Glastonbury, for whom he had previously composed the following three:

6. Vita S. Patrick. The Life of S. Patrick, in two books. Leland,
Collectanea, 3, 272, has extracts from it, but no MS. has hitherto
occurred.

7. Miracula S. Benigni. The Miracles of S. Benignus. This has not
occurred.

Digby, 112. This he translated and abridged from the Anglo-Saxon.
Abbreviated in Capgrave's Legenda Nova.

It is addressed to Henry bishop of Winchester, and was of course written
after 1129. Printed in Gale's Collection, t. 3, and by Hearne, from an
interpolated MS.

10. Vita S. Wulstani Episcopi Wigorniensis. The Life of S. Wulstan,
Bishop of Worcester. A Translation from the Anglo-Saxon, addressed to
Prior Guarin, between 1124 and 1140. The greater part of it has been
printed. Anglia Sacra, t. 2.

11. Chronica. Chronicles, in three books. See p. 480. This work is
probably lost.

12. Miracula S. Elfisae. The Miracles of Elfisa, in metre. A
specimen of these rhymes, there printed as prose, may be seen in the
De Gesta Pontif, f. 143: they were apparently written while he was very
young; as, before 1125, he says, "quondam vecini."

13. Itinerarium Joannis Abbatis Melduniensis versus Romam. The
Itinerary of John Abbat of Malmesbury to Rome. This was drawn up,
after 1140, from the relation of another monk of that foundation who
accompanied the abbat. Leland, Collect. 3, 272, ed. 1774, mentions it as
being very curious. It does not occur, but it was formerly in the possession
of Bale.

14. Expositio Threnorum Hieromiae. A Commentary on the Lamenta-
tions of Jeremiah. MS. Bodley, 868. Abridged from Paschatus
Radbert, probably about 1136.

15. De Miraculis Diva Maria libri quatuor Gul. Cantoris Malmubr. The
Miracles of the Blessed Virgin, in four books. Leland, Coll. 4, 155.
a great portion of the alterations are merely verbal, and of course imperceptible in a translation, yet they contribute in an extraordinary degree to the polish and elegance of his style.* Another excellent feature of Malmesbury's literary character is, his love of truth. He repeatedly declares that, in the remoter periods of his work, he had observed the most guarded caution in throwing all responsibility, for the facts he mentions, on the authors from whom he derived them; and in his own times he avers, that he has recorded nothing that he had not either personally witnessed, or learned from the most credible authority. Adhering closely to this principle, he seems to have been fully impressed with the difficulty of relating the transactions of the princes, his contemporaries, and on this account he repeatedly apologizes for his omissions. But here is seen his dexterous management in maintaining an equipoise between their virtues and vices; for he spares neither William the First, nor his sons who succeeded him: indeed several of his strictures in the earlier editions of this work, are so severe, that he afterwards found it necessary to modify and soften them.

His character and attainments had early acquired a high degree of reputation among his contemporaries. He was entreated by the monks of various monasteries to write either the history of their foundations, or the lives of their patron saints. He associated with persons of the highest consequence

16. De Series Evangelistarum, Carmine. The Order of the Evangelists, in verse. Leland, Collect. 4. 157. These two have not occurred.

Several other works are attributed to him by Tanner, on the authority of Bale and Pits.

* These remarks on the character and style of our author must be received, as they say, cum grano salis. They more justly evince the zeal of Mr. Sharpe than the merits of Malmesbury's composition. The classical reader will probably lament with me that our early historians should have used a style so cumbersome and uninviting. To this general censure Malmesbury is certainly no exception. His Latinity is rude and repulsive, and the true value of his writings arises from the fidelity with which he has recorded facts, which he had either himself witnessed or had obtained from eye-witnesses.
and authority; and in one instance, at least, he took a share in the important political transactions of his own times. Robert earl of Gloucester, the natural son of Henry the First, was the acknowledged friend and patron of Malmesbury. This distinguished nobleman, who was himself a profound scholar, seems to have been the chief promoter of learning at that period. Several portions of our author's work are dedicated to him, not merely through motives of personal regard, but from the conviction that his attainments as a scholar would lead him to appreciate its value as a composition, and the part which he bore in the transactions of his day, enable him to decide on the veracity of its relation.

Having thus stated the leading features of Malmesbury's life, his avocations and attainments, it may not be irrelevant to consider the form and manner which he has adopted in the history before us. A desire to be acquainted with the transactions of their ancestors seems natural to men in every stage of society, however rude or barbarous. The northern nations, more especially, had their historical traditions, and the songs of their bards, from the remotest times. Influenced by this feeling, the Anglo-Saxons turned their attention to the composition of annals very early after their settlement in Britain; and hence originated that invaluable register the Saxon Chronicle,* in which facts are briefly related as they arose;—in chronological order, indeed, but without comment or observation. After the Norman conquest, among other objects of studious research in England, history attracted considerable attention, and the form, as well as the matter, of the Saxon Chronicle, became the prevailing standard. It might readily be supposed that Malmesbury's genius and attainments would with difficulty submit to the shackles of a mere chronological series, which afforded no field for the exercise of genius or judgment. Accordingly, following the bent of his inclination, he struck into a different and freer path; and to a judicious selection of facts gave the added charm of wisdom and experience. It may therefore be useful to advert to the exemplification of this principle in the scope and design of the work immediately before us. His

* This valuable work has been published, together with Bede's Ecclesiastical History, in a preceding volume of this series.
first book comprises the exploits of the Anglo-Saxons, from the period of their arrival till the consolidation of the empire under the monarchy of Egbert. Herein too is separately given the history of those powerful but rival kingdoms, which alternately subjugated, or bowed down to the dominion of, each other, and deluged the country with blood, as the love of conquest or the lust of ambition prompted. The second portion of the work continues the regal series till the mighty revolution of the Norman conquest. The three remaining books are occupied with the reigns of William and his sons, including a very interesting account of the first Crusade. His Modern History carries the narrative into the turbulent reign of Stephen.

Such is the period embraced: and to show these times, "their form and pressure," Malmesbury collected everything within his reach. His materials, as he often feelingly laments, were scanty and confined, more especially in the earlier annals. The Chronicles of that era afforded him but little, yet of that little he has made the most, through the diligence of his research and the soundness of his judgment. His discrimination in selecting, and his skill in arranging, are equally conspicuous. His inexhaustible patience, his learning, his desire to perpetuate every thing interesting or useful, are at all times evident. Sensibly alive to the deficiencies of the historians who preceded him, he constantly endeavours to give a clear and connected relation of every event. Indeed, nothing escaped his observation which could tend to elucidate the manners of the times in which he wrote. History was the darling pursuit of Malmesbury, and more especially biographical history, as being, perhaps, the most pleasing mode of conveying information. He knew the prevailing passion of mankind for anecdote, and was a skilful master in blending amusement with instruction. Few historians ever possessed such power of keeping alive the reader's attention; few so ably managed their materials, or scattered so many flowers by the way. Of his apt delineation of character, and happy mode of seizing the most prominent features of his personages, it is difficult to speak in terms of adequate commendation. He does not weary with a tedious detail, "line upon line," nor does he complete his
portrait at a sitting. On the contrary, the traits are scattered, the proportions disunited, the body dismembered, as it were; but in a moment some master-stroke is applied, some vivid flash of Promethean fire animates the canvass, and the perfect figure darts into life and expression: hence we have the surly, ferocious snarl of the Conqueror, and the brutal horse-laugh of Rufus. Malmesbury's history, indeed, may be called a kind of biographical drama; where, by a skilful gradation of character and variety of personage, the story is presented entire, though the tediousness of continued narrative is avoided. Again, by saying little on uninteresting topics, and dilating on such as are important, the tale, which might else disgust from the supineness or degeneracy of some principal actor, is artfully relieved by the force of contrast and the mind, which perhaps recoils with indignation from the stupid indifference of an Ethelred, hangs, with fond delight, on the enterprising spirit and exertion of an Ironside.

It may be superfluous, perhaps, after enumerating qualities of this varied kind, in an author, who gives a connected history of England for several centuries, to observe, that readers of every description must derive instruction and delight from his labours. Historians, antiquaries, or philosophers, may drink deeply of the stream which pervades his work, and find their thirst for information gratified. The diligent investigator of the earlier annals of his own country, finds a period of seven hundred years submitted to his inspection, and this not merely in a dry detail of events, but in a series of authentic historical facts, determined with acuteness, commented on with deliberation, and relieved by pleasing anecdote or interesting episode. When the narrative flags at home, the attention is roused by events transacting abroad, while foreign is so blended with domestic history, that the book is never closed in disgust. The antiquary here finds ample field for amusement and instruction in the various notices of arts, manners, and customs, which occur. The philosopher traces the gradual progress of man towards civilization; watches his mental improvement, his advance from barbarism to comparative refinement; and not of man alone, but of government, laws, and arts, as well as of all those attainments which serve to exalt and embellish human nature. These are topics carefully, though perhaps only inci-
dentally, brought forward; but they are points essentially requisite in every legitimate historian. Here, however, it must be admitted, that in the volume before us, a considerable portion of the marvellous prevails; and though, perhaps, by many readers, these will be considered as among the most curious parts of the work, yet it may be objected, that the numerous miraculous tales detract, in some measure, from that soundness of judgment which has been ascribed to our author. But it should be carefully recollected, that it became necessary to conform, in some degree, to the general taste of the readers of those days, the bulk of whom derived their principal amusement from the lives of saints, and from their miracles, in which they piously believed: besides, no one ever thought of impeaching the judgment of Livy, or of any other historian of credit, for insertions of a similar nature. Even in these relations, however, Malmesbury is careful that his own veracity shall not be impeached; constantly observing, that the truth of the story must rest on the credit of his authors; and, indeed, they are always so completely separable from the main narrative, that there is no danger of mistaking the legend for history.

Having thus noticed the multifarious topics embraced by Malmesbury, it may be necessary to advert to his style: although, after what has been premised, it might seem almost superfluous to add, that it admits nearly of as much variety as his facts. This probably arises from that undeviating principle which he appears to have laid down, that his chief efforts should be exerted to give pleasure to his readers; in imitation of the rhetoricians, whose first object was to make their audience kindly disposed, next attentive, and finally anxious to receive instruction.* Of his style, therefore, generally speaking, it may not be easy to give a perfect description. To say to which Roman author it bears the nearest resemblance, when he imitated almost every one of them, from Sallust to Eutropius, would be rash indeed. How shall we bind this classical Proteus, who occasionally assumes the semblance of Persius, Juvenal, Horace, Lucan, Virgil, Lucretius; and who never appears in his proper shape so long as he can seize the form of an ancient classic?†

* See his prologue to the Life of Wulstan, Anglia Sacra, ii. 243.
† Some of these allusions are occasionally marked in the notes.
Often does he declare that he purposely varies his diction, lest the reader should be disgusted by its sameness; anxiously careful to avoid repetition, even in the structure of his phrases. It may be said, however, that generally, in his earlier works, (for he was apparently very young when he wrote his History of the Kings,) his style is rather laboured; though, perhaps, even this may have originated in an anxiety that his descriptions should be full; or, to use his own expression, that posterity should be wholly and perfectly informed. That his diction is highly antithetical, and his sentences artfully poised, will be readily allowed; and perhaps the best index to his meaning, where he may be occasionally obscure, is the nicely-adjusted balance of his phrase. That he gradually improved his style, and in riper years, where he describes the transactions of his own times, became terse, elegant, and polished, no one will attempt to dispute; and it will be regretted, that this interesting portion of history should break off abruptly in the midst of the contest between the empress Maud and Stephen.

In this recapitulation perhaps enough has been said to make an attempt at translating such an author regarded with kindness and complacency. To prevent a work of such acknowledged interest and fidelity from remaining longer a sealed book to the English reader, may well justify an undertaking of this kind; and it should be remarked that a translation of Malmesbury may serve to diffuse a very different idea of the state of manners and learning in his days from that which has been too commonly entertained; and at the same time to rescue a set of very deserving men from the unjust obloquy with which they have been pursued for ages. For without the least design of vindicating the institutions of monachism or overlooking the abuses incident to it, we may assert that, in Malmesbury's time, religious houses were the grand depositaries of knowledge, and monks the best informed men of the age.

It remains briefly to speak of the mode in which the translation has been conducted. The printed text of Malmesbury*

* A considerable portion of the present work was printed anonymously as a continuation of Bede, at Heidelberg, in 1887. The whole, together with the History of the Prelates, was first printed by Sir Henry Saville, who appears to have consulted several copies in the "Scriptores post
was found so frequently faulty and corrupted that, on a careful perusal, it was deemed necessary to seek for authentic manuscripts. These were supplied by that noble institution, the British Museum; but one more especially, which, on an exact comparison with others, was found to possess indisputable proofs of the author's latest corrections. This, Bib. Reg. 13, D. II, has been collated throughout with the printed copy; the result has produced numerous important corrections, alterations, and insertions, which are constantly referred to in the notes. In addition to this, various other MSS. have been repeatedly consulted; so that it is presumed the text, from which the translation has been made, is, by these means, completely established.

As the plan pursued by Malmesbury did not often require him to affix dates to the several transactions, it has been deemed necessary to remedy this omission. The chronology here supplied has been constructed on a careful examination and comparison of the Saxon Chronicle and Florence of Worcester, which are considered the best authorities; although even these occasionally leave considerable doubt as to the precise time of certain events. The remoteness of the period described by Malmesbury makes notes also in some measure indispensable. These are derived as frequently as possible from contemporary authors. Their object is briefly to amend, to explain, and to illustrate. By some perhaps they may be thought too limited; by others they may occasionally be considered unnecessary; but they are such as were deemed likely to be acceptable to readers in general.

With these explanations the translator takes leave of the reader, and is induced to hope that the present work will not be deemed an unimportant accession to the stock of English literature.

Bedam," London, 1596, fol. This was reprinted, but with many additional errors, at Frankfort, 1601, fol. Saville's division into chapters, in the second book more especially, has no authority; but as it appeared sufficiently convenient, it has been adopted: the division of the sections is nearly the same throughout all the MSS.
THE AUTHOR'S EPISTLE

To

ROBERT, EARL OF GLOUCESTER,*

SON OF KING HENRY.

To my respected Lord, the renowned Earl Robert, son of the King, health, and, as far as he is able, his prayers, from William, Monk of Malmesbury.

The virtue of celebrated men holds forth as its greatest excellence, its tendency to excite the love of persons even far removed from it: hence the lower classes make the virtues of their superiors their own, by venerating those great actions, to the practice of which they cannot themselves aspire. Moreover, it redounds altogether to the glory of exalted characters, both that they do good, and that they gain the affection of their inferiors. To you, Princes, therefore, it is owing, that we act well; to you, indeed, that we compose anything worthy of remembrance; your exertions incite us to make you live for ever in our writings, in return for the dangers you undergo to secure our tranquillity. For this reason, I have deemed it proper to dedicate the History of the Kings of England, which I have lately published, more especially to you, my respected and truly amiable Lord.

* Robert, Earl of Gloucester, the Mecenas of his age, was a natural son of Henry I., and a man of great talents and of unshaken fidelity. He married Mabil, daughter of Robert Fitzhamon, by whom he had a numerous issue. He died October 31, A.D. 1147.
None, surely, can be a more suitable patron of the liberal arts than yourself, in whom are combined the magnanimity of your grandfather, the munificence of your uncle, the circumspection of your father; more especially as you add to the qualities of these men, whom you alike equal in industry and resemble in person, this peculiar characteristic, a devotion to learning. Nor is this all: you condescend to honour with your notice those literary characters who are kept in obscurity, either by the malevolence of fame, or the slenderness of their fortune. And as our nature inclines us, not to condemn in others what we approve in ourselves, therefore men of learning find in you manners congenial to their own; for, without the slightest indication of moroseness, you regard them with kindness, admit them with complacency, and dismiss them with regret. Indeed, the greatness of your fortune has made no difference in you, except that your beneficence can now almost keep pace with your inclination.

Accept, then, most illustrious Sir, a work in which you may contemplate yourself as in a glass, where your Highness's sagacity will discover that you have imitated the actions of the most exalted characters, even before you could have heard their names. The Preface to the first book declares the contents of this work; on deigning to peruse which, you will briefly collect the whole subject-matter. Thus much I must request from your Excellency, that no blame may attach to me because my narrative often wanders wide from the limits of our own country, since I design this as a compendium of many histories, although, with a view to the larger portion of it, I have entitled it a History of the Kings of England.
PREFACE.

The history of the English, from their arrival in Britain to his own times, has been written by Bede, a man of singular learning and modesty, in a clear and captivating style. After him you will not, in my opinion, easily find any person who has attempted to compose in Latin the history of this people. Let others declare whether their researches in this respect have been, or are likely to be, more fortunate; my own labour, though diligent in the extreme, has, down to this period, been without its reward. There, are, indeed, some notices of antiquity, written in the vernacular tongue after the manner of a chronicle,* and arranged according to the years of our Lord. By means of these alone, the times succeeding this man have been rescued from oblivion: for of Elward,† a noble and illustrious man, who attempted to arrange these chronicles in Latin, and whose intention I could applaud if his language did not disgust me, it is better to be silent. Nor has it escaped my knowledge, that there is also a work of my Lord Eadmer,‡ written with a chastened elegance of style, in which, beginning from King Edgar, he has but hastily glanced at the times down to William the First: and thence, taking a freer range, gives a narrative, copious, and of great utility to the studious, until the death of Archbishop Ralph.§ Thus from the time of Bede there is a period of two hundred and twenty-three years left unnoticed in his history; so that the regular series of time, unsupported by a connected relation, halts in the middle. This circumstance has induced me, as well out of love to my

* This alludes to those invaluable records, the Saxon Chronicles. These, as originally compiled, have been already published in the present Series of Monkish Historians.

† Elward, or Ethelward, was a noble Saxon, great-great-grandson of King Ethelred, brother of Alfred. He abridged and translated the Saxon Chronicle into Latin, published in the present Series. He lived apparently in the time of Edgar, towards the close of the tenth century.

‡ Eadmer, a monk and precentor of Christ-Church, Canterbury, and pupil of Archbishop Anselm, together with a variety of other works, wrote "Historia Novorum," or, a history of modern times, from A.D. 1066 to 1122.

§ MS. Anselmi. Eadmer at first brought down his history to the death of Archbishop Anselm only, A.D. 1109, but afterwards continued it to the decease of Ralph, A.D. 1122.
country, as respect for the authority of those who have en-
joined on me the undertaking, to fill up the chasm, and to
season the crude materials with Roman art. And that the
work may proceed with greater regularity, I shall cull som-
what from Bede, whom I must often quote, glancing at a few
facts, but omitting more.

The First Book, therefore, contains a succinct account of
the English, from the time of their descent on Britain, till
that of King Egbert, who, after the different Princes had fallen
by various ways, gained the monarchy of almost the whole
island.

But as among the English arose four powerful kingdoms,
that is to say, of Kent, of the West Saxons, of the Northum-
brians, and of the Mercians, of which I purpose severally to
treat if I have leisure; I shall begin with that which attained
the earliest to maturity, and was also the first to decay.
This I shall do more clearly, if I place the kingdoms of the
East Angles, and of the East Saxons, after the others, as
little meriting either my labours, or the regard of posterity.

The Second Book will contain the chronological series of
the Kings to the coming of the Normans.

The three following Books will be employed upon the
history of three successive kings, with the addition of what-
ever, in their times, happened elsewhere, which, from its
celebrity, may demand a more particular notice. This, then,
is what I purpose, if the Divine favour shall smile on my
undertaking, and carry me safely by those rocks of rugged
diction, on which Edward, in his search after sounding and far-
fetched phrases, so unhappily suffered shipwreck. "Should
any one, however," to use the poet's expression, * "peruse this
work with sensible delight," I deem it necessary to acquaint
him, that I vouch nothing for the truth of long past trans-
actions, but the consonance of the time; the veracity of the
relation must rest with its authors. Whatever I have re-
corded of later times, I have either myself seen, or heard
from credible authority. However, in either part, I pay but
little respect to the judgment of my contemporaries: trust-
ing that I shall gain with posterity, when love and hatred
shall be no more, if not a reputation for eloquence, at least
credit for diligence.

* Virg. Ecl. VI. v. 10.