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Notes on the Burial-Places of England's Royal House

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NOTES ON THE BURIAL-PLACES OF ENGLAND'S ROYAL HOUSE.

By T. DYER EDWARDS.

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IN considering the three royal tombs in Gloucester Cathedral to Osric, Robert of Normandy, and Edward II, one's thoughts are led to where the rest of our Royal House and their immediate relatives lie interred; and the following notes must not be regarded as an exhaustive paper on the subject, but rather as a few remarks which may stimulate someone more able than myself, and with more spare time, to take up the subject and treat it as it deserves.

It is interesting to note that stately ceremonials connected with the burials of royal and noble personages, as the world progressed in culture and refinement up to the Reformation, gradually increased. Subsequently the funerals became pageants of pomp and heraldry rather than religious ceremonies, but lately a new revival of religious thought is noticeable in our midst, and things are done more reverently and the dead are more respected than has been the case for centuries.

The subject of royal funerals would also be sufficient to occupy thrice the time available on the present occasion, likewise that of the royal lying-in-state, or of the funeral effigies like those in the Islip Chapel and the "ragged regiment," formerly in Henry V's Chantry, but now elsewhere disposed in the Abbey of Westminster. I would, however, confine my remarks to the burial-places of some of our kings and queens, their immediate ancestors, and some of their descendants.

This story of our royal dead is, however, largely a narrative of disturbance, sacrilege and neglect.

Henry VIII heads the ignoble army of destroyers, and official documents prove that his actions were mostly directed for personal and worldly gain. Marillac, the French Ambassador, declares that his avariciousness and covetousness was such that "all the wealth of the world would not be enough to satisfy and content his ambition, from which has come the spoiling of every church in which there was anything to take. St. Thomas was declared a traitor because his relics were adorned with gold and precious stones."

The fanatics who followed him were afflicted with minds obsessed with distorted ideas concerning the treatment of the dead and the righteous beauty of the sanctuary.

The deeds of public bodies and so-called "responsible" persons in the last century will probably prove the final chapter of this spoliation and ruin, as it is to be hoped that the present-day reverence for the dead and for the things of the past will remain a leading feature of our national characteristics.

Although the kings of the petty kingdoms, before England began to be united, were too numerous for us to trace each to his respective sepulchre, it is curious to note that no king has been canonised since Edward the Confessor, although Edward II and Henry VI were popularly regarded as such, and the reputed dagger wherewith the latter was killed in the Tower was found by the Commissioners of Henry VII at Caversham, Berks, where it was regarded as a relic; and five churches were also dedicated to Charles I, whereas on the other hand no less than six of the petty kings were saints:—

I. St. Kenelm, the seven-year-old King of Mercia, was murdered by order of his jealous sister, and his body buried secretly in the forest where the tragedy occurred; but the

locality being supernaturally revealed, his remains were removed to the Benedictine Monastery at Winchcombe, where they were found in 1815 enclosed in a stone coffin, but were thrown out, and the coffin sold and placed in the grounds of Warminster Grange.

II. The body of St. Oswald, King of Northumbria, was mutilated by his conqueror, Penda (A.D. 642), who impaled the arms and head on stakes, until St. Oswald's successor removed them to various localities. His head is now in the coffin of St. Cuthbert at Durham, and his arms were enshrined in silver at Bamborough. The body was buried on the battlefield, but later translated to Bardney, and subsequently to our own abbey at Gloucester, where his shrine was a conspicuous object in one of the chapels until the seventeenth century.

III. St. Oswin's death took place in 651, but over four hundred years elapsed before his relics were honoured by a shrine within the church at Tynemouth.

IV. St. Alkmund of Northumbria died in 774, and to him eight churches are dedicated. He was first buried at Lilleshall, but through fear of the Danes his remains were shortly afterwards removed to Derby, where a few fragments of carved Saxon stone were probably part of his shrine.

V. St. Ethelbert, King of East Anglia, was murdered in 793, and was buried at Marden and subsequently at Hereford the cathedral being erected over his remains, which were magnificently enshrined by Bishop Athelstan II (1012-56); and although the church was burnt in 1055, when the relics are supposed to have been nearly destroyed, his shrine continued to draw many pilgrims up to the time of the Reformation. A tooth is his only relic now preserved at Hereford. Old St. Paul's contained his head and his jawbone in a separate shrine, and these probably perished at the Reformation.

VI. St. Edmund, martyred in 870 by the Danes, may be termed the St. Sebastian of England. After decapitation,

his body was buried at Hoxne, and his head flung into a dense part of the wood at Eglesdene, but was miraculously recovered. In 903 the relics were re-interred in a spot now known as Bury St. Edmunds. The shrine was much damaged in the great fire at the abbey, but was re-edified by 1198.

It is believed that Louis took these relics to France on his return in 1216, and some of us will remember the correspondence in *The Times* about fifteen years ago, which went far towards proving that the remains were at St. Sernin, Toulouse.

It is, however, probable that in those days, when the dissection of saintly corpses was so common, part of the remains were left. At all events, Henry III made a new shrine in 1269, which was greatly enriched by Edward I and other kings. At the suppression in 1538-9 the abbey yielded 1,553 ounces of gold, and 10,433 ounces of silver.

PRE-NORMAN KINGS.

Starting then, eleven hundred years ago, when Egbert, the first King of England, died in 839 after a reign of thirty-eight years, we find that both he and his son Ethelwulf who succeeded him were buried at Winchester. The latter's four sons reigned in turn. Ethelbald and Ethelbert were buried at Sherborne, where a modern tablet commemorates them. Ethelred has a brass of the fifteenth century at Wimborne, and Alfred the Great and his son Edward the Elder were buried at Hyde near Winchester. The site of Hyde Abbey after the surrender was granted to Richard Bethel after the term of a lease to Lord Wriothesley, who merely employed his time to dispose of all that was disposable. In Camden's time the ruins were magnificent, but Dugdale complained that they were no more, and a gaol was built early in the last century on the site of the church and choir. During the necessary excavations beautiful leaden

coffins were disinterred and sold for old metal, the most beautiful, probably that of Alfred himself, being disposed of for £2. Athelstan, Edmund and Edred, his sons, were laid to rest in Malmesbury, Glastonbury and Winchester respectively, and the last two places afforded sepulchre to Edmund's sons Edgar and Edwig respectively.

St. Edmund the Martyr was buried on the north side of the altar at Shaftesbury, but his remorseful rival Ethelred translated him to a magnificent shrine, probably behind the high altar, whilst he himself was interred next King Sebba in old St. Paul's, and near them, some centuries later, was erected the magnificent tomb of John of Gaunt. All of these perished in the Great Fire, after the indignities of the Reformation and the Plague, when the Cathedral was used as a Pest House, and subsequently cleansed by vinegar.

Edmund Ironsides found rest in Glastonbury, where until recently sheep browsed over his bones; but the site of this Valhalla has recently been re-acquired for the Church. Cnut was laid at Winchester, likewise Hardacnut, who, succeeding his brother Harald Harefoot, evicted his remains from Westminster¹ and threw them in the Thames, whence they were rescued by the Danes, and buried in their own ground surrounding St. Clement Danes Church in the Strand, the site of which now forms the road for the modern Juggernaut, the motor bus.

The north and south screens of the choir at Winchester were erected by Bishop Fox in 1525, and on them are placed the six chests, carved, painted and gilt, within which are the original caskets into which Bishop Henry of Blois first collected these remains, which he placed over the holy hole. The labels on these chests record the names of Kynegils, first Christian king of the West Saxons and founder of the

¹ The record of the burial of Harald in 1040 in the Saxon Chronicle is the first mention of a connection between the abbey and the Royal House.

cathedral; King Ethelwulf, father of Alfred the Great; Kenulph, son of Kynegils; and Egbert, founder of the monarchy.

There are still twelve skulls, but the allocation of the remains does not correspond to the names on the chests, which lends corroboration to the theory that these royal relics were used as missiles to destroy the painted glass of the cathedral by the fanatics.

Rufus, whose bones are here mingled with those of better people than the folks he consorted with during his lifetime, was brought back on a charcoal-burner's barrow, and has a stone to his reputed memory in the choir.

Hardacnut was buried at Winchester after a drinking bout had brought about his death at Lambeth, and he is but another case which seems to show that those who most deserved to be remembered have had their remains despoiled, whilst those who would otherwise have been forgotten with pleasure have monuments and tombs to keep their memory green. There are some notable exceptions to this rule, but the coincidence in general is curious.

Edward the Confessor, having re-edified the Church of St. Peter at Westminster, was himself laid there. The Bayeux tapestry shows the gabled chest in which his body was first enclosed. William the Conqueror caused a sumptuous monument of stone and precious metals to be made for it, which was replaced by a still more elaborate shrine made by order of King Henry II, the date of the translation of the body into which (October 13th, 1163) is still regarded as a special festival in the abbey. In 1241 Henry III caused a third shrine to be made of purest gold and most costly jewels; but Matthew Paris remarks that "the workmanship exceeded the materials." It was not until October 13th, 1269, that the body was again translated from before the high altar to the position it now occupies. The shrine was despoiled by Henry VIII, but the mutilated base is still a most artistic union of Byzantine richness

with English architectural forms. Upon this rests the wooden Renaissance canopy of Feckenham, which was probably made similar to the old case of the Feretory, destroyed twenty years before. In removing the scaffolding after the coronation of James II this canopy was considerably damaged, and the chest containing the relics was broken, the aperture being about six by four inches over the breast of the saint's body. A choirman mounted a ladder, put his hand in the hole, drew the head down so that he could view it, and calmly tells us that it was very sound and firm, with the upper and lower jaws whole and full of teeth, with a band of gold an inch broad round the temples. He purloined a richly-adorned and enamelled crucifix on a gold chain two feet long, which was eventually lost sight of after being sold at public auction in 1830.

The body of Harold was laid in Waltham Abbey, which was practically his foundation. A reputed fragment of his tomb was used as a garden ornament in the last century, but now nothing remains to commemorate the last of the English Kings.

William the Conqueror was sumptuously interred in the Abbey of St. Stephen at Caen, but his tomb was rifled in the Revolution, and only a thigh is now buried there, which was recovered by Viscount Falaise, a most appropriate person, for was it not at Falaise that William's father first saw the tanner's daughter, whose bastard son was our first Norman King?

Queen Matilda's remains still rest under the ancient stone with a simple Latin inscription (see *Stothard*, p. 3), in the Abbey aux Dames, and here nuns continually pray for the repose of her soul.

Reading Abbey, the place of the sepulchre of its founder, Henry I, is now almost obliterated, and it yielded its site, like that of Hyde, for a county Bridewell. The king's remains were thrown out at the Reformation, and his tomb despoiled in the belief that he was enshrined in silver. A carved

fragment of his tomb was formerly placed under a Tudor fireplace in the ignorant belief that this was a Gothic arch.

Stephen founded the Abbey of Faversham, and was buried there. Stow says that the body was at the dissolution cast into the river for the gain of the lead that enclosed it, and the fate of the bodies of the queen and prince was doubtless similar.

Geoffrey Plantagenet, Earl of Anjou, who became the second husband of Matilda, daughter of Henry I, died in 1150, and was buried in the Church of St. Julian, in Mans, in the museum of which city is a beautiful enamelled tablet representing him with a drawn sword in the right hand, and holding a shield charged with golden leopards on a blue ground in the left, his helmet being similarly charged; a tunic, under-tunic and mantle clothed his body in place of armour, and the figure stands under an embattled circular-arched canopy. This tablet formerly hung in the church, but disappeared during the Revolution, probably to protect it from the melting-pot, to which the Revolutionaries had consigned it.

Henry II selected the Abbey of Fontevraud as the place of his own burial and that of his queen, and his son Richard directed his body to be buried at the feet of his father, his heart being conveyed to Rouen, to show his love for the people and the city; but his bowels, as his ignoble parts, were to be carried to the rebellious Poitevins, a strange *post-mortem* form of humility to his sire. The heart was found in a silver casket let into the base of one of the choir pillars during some recent repairs in Rouen Cathedral during the last century.

The reason of the interment here of Isabel, Queen of King John, was that on the death of her second husband, the Earl of March, she took the veil at this abbey; but on her own demise she was unceremoniously interred in the churchyard, her body being taken up by order of her son,

Henry III, who caused the effigy to be placed over her tomb.

Mrs. C. Stothard, in her *Tour in Brittany*, gives the following description of the re-discovery of these effigies by her husband :—

“ When Mr. Stothard first visited France, during the summer of 1816, he came direct to Fontevraud to ascertain if the effigies of our early kings who were buried there still existed. . . . He found the abbey converted into a prison, and discovered in a cellar belonging to it the effigies of Henry II and his Queen, Eleanor of Guienne, Richard I, and Isabella of Angouleme, the Queen of John. The chapel where the figures were placed before the Revolution had been entirely destroyed, and these valuable effigies, then removed to the cellar, were subject to continual mutilation from the prisoners, who came twice in every day to draw water from a well. It appeared they had sustained some injury, as Mr. S. found several broken fragments scattered around. He made drawings of the figures, and upon his return to England represented to our Government the propriety of securing such interesting memorials from further destruction. It was deemed advisable, if such a plan could be accomplished, to gain possession of them, that they might be placed with the rest of our royal effigies in Westminster Abbey.”

Although this application failed, it drew the attention of the French authorities to the figures, and saved them from further destruction, and similar movements for their transhipment have subsequently been unavailing.

This was not the first time they had been disturbed, for Jeanne Baptiste de Bourbon, natural daughter of Henry IV, had removed them in 1638 from their position in the choir

to the chapel she had erected to contain them. On this occasion the effigies appear to have received their third or fourth painting.

☞ Berengaria of Navarre, Queen of Richard I, is shown in her effigy holding a book, the cover of which is embossed with a second representation of herself (which agrees with the effigy) lying upon a bier, with wax tapers burning on either side. This contrasts sadly with the state of her effigy, which was found in 1816 in a mutilated state, and concealed under a quantity of wheat in the abbey—her own foundation—of l'Esplan, near Mans, which had been converted into a barn. But hers is another case of earlier removal, for her remains had been re-interred in the tomb when it was moved in 1672 to the choir.

King John was buried between St. Oswald and St. Wulstan in Worcester Cathedral, and these two saints are represented at his pillow. This is the earliest of the royal effigies in this country, and rests on a tomb of much later date (*circa* Henry VII). The tomb was opened in 1797, and although the remains had evidently been disturbed at an earlier date, the corpse and the effigy were found to be most similar, both in position and in being clothed in a monk's cowl over the royal robes.

It is curious that Prince Arthur, the first husband of Katherine of Aragon, should be buried in the same place as John, who divorced his second wife, Isabella of Gloucester, on the plea of consanguinity, in order to marry Isabelle d'Angoulême.

Henry III was buried near by Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey, which he had re-edified.

Edward the Black Prince gave instructions that he should be buried in the undercroft of Canterbury Cathedral, but this was overruled, and he was entombed in the Trinity Chapel to the south side of the shrine of Thomas à Becket. Over his tomb and over that of Henry IV and his queen, on the north of the site of the shrine, are wooden canopies,

that of the Prince being painted with a representation of the Trinity and the emblems of the four Evangelists.

The helmet, chapeau, shield, sword, surcoat and gauntlets are the most complete set extant on any royal tomb, and had not Cromwell, as it is alleged, stolen the sword from its scabbard they would be perfect.

Henry IV who, dying in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster, recognised therein the fulfilment of a prophecy that he should die at Jerusalem, was conveyed by water to Faversham, and thence overland for burial; but the sworn testimony of Clement Maydestone¹ states that the body was thrown into the river during a great storm, and an empty coffin was buried. Mary de Rohun, his first wife, was buried in Canterbury Cathedral, and Joan (who died in 1397) of Navarre is buried with him.

The fifth Henry's figure was formerly covered with plates of silver, but these, with the head of the same metal, have long been stolen. In his chantry above lie the remains of his queen, placed there by order of Queen Victoria, so that none now can say with Pepys that they did kiss the lips of a queen. The vergers are no longer allowed to make a show of her royal remains.

The mangled body of Richard III was so terribly hacked on Bosworth Field that it is said it had the appearance of only a mass of blood. Stripped naked, trussed up behind a pursuivant-at-arms, it was, according to Speed, carried to Leicester, and after being publicly exposed for two days in the Town Hall, was buried in the Church of the Grey Friars without any funeral service. Henry VII erected an alabaster tomb over his remains, but at the Dissolution fifty years later it was ruined, and his bones taken in triumph through the streets, and at last thrown over the bridge across which he had ridden his last ride in regal pomp to the fatal field, and over which his insulted corpse had returned. His stone coffin remained in the possession of an innkeeper until

¹ Corp. Chr. Coll. MS., MXIV, 98.

the beginning of the eighteenth century, and some fragments of it were extant in 1760. The Grey Friars Church is also but a memory now.

The chapel eastern to that of St. George's at Windsor was commenced by Henry VII as the shrine of Henry VI, but difficulties as to cost arising with Rome, the king changed the venue of his building operations to Westminster, where he contented himself with preparing a place of sepulchre for himself and his queen, which, with the beautiful portrait figures by Torrigiano, who likewise was responsible for the beautiful effigy of Margaret Lennox in the south aisle, more than reconcile us to the fact that it was on account of his breaking Michael Angelo's nose that necessitated his fleeing from Rome. Michael Angelo's pain was our English gain.

Henry VIII was laid beside Jane Seymour, the only one of his half dozen queens he can be said to have truly mourned. They lie side by side under the choir of St. George's Chapel at Windsor, whilst his other consorts are disposed of as follows: Catherine of Aragon at Peterborough, Anne of Cleves at Westminster, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard at the Tower, and Catherine Howard at Sudeley.

Henry VIII, being conveyed from Westminster to Windsor for burial, stood all night among the broken ruins of Sion, and there, the leaden coffin being cleft by the shaking of the carriage, the pavement of the church was wetted with his blood. In the morning plumbers came to solder the coffin, under whose feet was suddenly seen a dog creeping and licking up the king's blood. This occurred on the very day after the fifth anniversary of the execution of Katherine Howard, who had been imprisoned here. Some regarded the incident of Friar Peyto's denunciation against the king from the pulpit of Greenwich Church, in 1553, where he had compared him to Ahab, and told him to his face that the dogs would in like manner lick his blood.

Edward VI was interred in the Chapel of Henry VII at Westminster, and his tomb also made by Torrigiano,

and was the only one in the abbey broken by the reformers. This shows how unprincipled were their actions, when it is considered that the English Prayer Book was first issued in the reign of Edward VI.

Dying at Richmond, the body of Elizabeth was brought by water to Whitehall, where, contrary to her expressed directions, the body was embalmed, and as Lady Southwell writes, whilst six ladies watched the coffined body at night "her body bust with such a crack that it splitted the wood, lead and cerecloth, whereupon the next day she was fain to be new trimmed up." She was interred in the same grave as her predecessor, Mary Tudor, and her successor, King James, caused a noble monument to be erected to her memory. Her recumbent effigy reposes beneath a stately canopy of the early Renaissance style. Attired in her royal robes, with farthingale and ruff, there is an almost classical absence of ornament in her dress. She wears no crown, and the sceptre has been broken from one hand and the cross torn from the orb in the other. Thenceforward, till the time of another Queen, Victoria, we have no royal effigies on tombs.

A prying Westminster boy discovered the hearts of Elizabeth and Mary, and subsequently described how he grasped in his puny hand those once haughty and indomitable hearts.

The body of Anne of Denmark, the Queen Consort of James I, was brought from Hampton Court, and laid in state at Somerset House, and heavy was the mourning at her funeral at Westminster, each private lady having twelve yards of broadcloth about her, and the countesses sixteen yards of the same, so for the weight of their garments each lady had someone to lean on.

The widow of Charles I died at her castle at Colombe, four leagues from Paris, and her heart was buried in her foundation, the convent at Chaillot, to which Charles II gave two thousand gold jacobuses for the building of a chapel to contain the relic, half of which at least was paid.

Her body was disinterred on October 16th, 1793, the mob coming from St. Denis, when the vaults of the Bourbons were despoiled in the French Revolution, likewise was that of Henrietta Stuart her daughter. The bodies were flung into a trench dug in the burial-ground, called Des Valois, dug on the north side of the abbey.

Catherine of Braganza died at Bemposta, and was buried at Belem with regal solemnities.

Mary Beatrice, of Modena, died at St. Germain's, and left directions that her body was to be deposited in the Convent of the Visitation at Chaillot, to be there till the bodies of the king, her husband, and the princess, her daughter, should be transported to England, but that her heart and part of her entrails should rest in perpetuity with the nuns of the said convent, with the heart of the king, her husband, and that of her mother-in-law (Queen Henrietta).

It was probably on account of shortness of cash, caused by continuous wars, that prevented William III from preparing a tomb for himself and Queen Mary II before her demise, but both were buried in Westminster Abbey, and their wax effigies look out from the same glass case.

It is curious to note that after her death a Jacobite clergyman preached on the text, "Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her, for she was a king's daughter," which same insult had been shown to Mary, Queen of Scots, by a Puritan, so nearly do extremes meet.

Queen Anne was buried in the then newly-made vault in the south side of the Chapel of Henry VII in which the remains of Charles II, William III and Mary, and Prince George of Denmark had been placed.

James II had expressed a wish to be buried in the Parish Church of St. Germain's, but his remains were provisionally translated to the English Benedictine Church in the Faubourg

St. Jacques. His heart went to Chaillot, his brain to the Scots College at Paris, and his bowels were divided between the English College of Omer and the Parish Church of St. Germain. The last only seem to have survived the French Revolution, and were interred in 1824 by order of George IV.

James II remained unburied, and lights were kept burning round the hearse until the French Revolution, when the *sans-culottes* broke the coffin to get at the lead to make bullets. The embalmed body was found entire, and in an extraordinary state of preservation. The teeth, hair and nails were very fine and the limbs flexible. The people crowded to St. Germain from all parts of Paris, and the functionaries charged from a sou to a franc for admission. In the midst of the Revolution rumours went round of miracles performed by his corpse. It is said it was buried in the churchyard, but in 1813 the body remaining above ground, George IV ordered it a royal funeral on its return for burial in St. Germain, and raised a monument of white, grey, and black marble to him in the Chapel of St. Germain.

Queen Anne and her Consort and thirteen children, who all died in infancy, lie under the floor of Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster Abbey, as also do George III, George IV and William IV. •

From Elizabeth to Victoria, however, there was no royal effigy on the monuments of our royal dead.

The death of the Prince Consort may be said to have introduced the revival of the sense of the fitness of things, especially in matters connected with the dead. The body of the Prince Consort was first laid in the unfinished Eastern Chapel at Windsor, while the Mausoleum at Frogmore was being prepared. Queen Victoria caused her effigy to be executed at the same time as that of the Prince, and here they rest side by side in the counterfeit resemblance of 1861, the white marble figures resting on a tomb cut in the finest piece of black marble known.

King Edward VII is laid in the catacomb-like tomb-house beneath the chapel which, completed and decorated by Queen Victoria and her family in remembrance of the Prince, is now known as the Albert Memorial Chapel, the central object in which is the tomb-monument to the Duke of Clarence, the elder brother of our present King, the decoration of which has been entrusted to Mr. Gilbert, R.A.

EPILOGUE.

We have thus shown that, were a member of the Royal House (which God preserve) to wish to visit the burial-places of his ancestors and relatives, he would have to journey to where county Bridewells were erected on the sites of Reading and Hyde (Winchester) Abbeys, to the ruined frames of the Abbeys of Faversham, Leicester and Glastonbury, to the splendid abbey churches, now parochially applied, of Shaftesbury, Sherborne, Tewkesbury, to the Royal Chapels of Westminster and Windsor, and to the Mausoleum at Frogmore.

He would have to cross the Channel and seek St. Germain, Caen, Rouen and Fontevrault in France, Hanover in Germany, and Rome. He would find comparatively few of their bodies undisturbed, and many of their shrines and fanes, the glory of which they formed no small part, demolished and destroyed.

Turning away, he would realise the fatuity of raising noble monuments to keep green the memory even of kings, and would in the bitterness of his soul exclaim :—

“ Sic transit gloria mundi.”

Another curious aspect of our Royal Tombs is that comparatively few of them have inscriptions, and in no (?) cases were their secondary epithets recorded, which, if sometimes “ bold,” were always expressive. Edmund Ironsides, Ethelred the Unready, Harold Harefoot, Edward the Confessor, William the Conqueror, William Rufus, Henry

Beauclerc, Henry Plantagenet, Richard Cœur-de-Lion, John Lackland, The Henrys Bolingbroke of Winchester, of Monmouth and of Windsor, Edward of Carnarvon, Richard of Bordeaux, Edward Longshanks, Charles the Martyr, all are more illuminative and descriptive than mere Roman numerals I, II, or III. In our own times, and for centuries to come, none will forget Victoria the Good, Edward the Peacemaker, or our own Imperial Emperor George, about whose Royal Tomb God grant we may not be able to speak for many decades yet to come.

The causes of the deaths of our Royal Sovereigns would form the subject of an interesting cognate paper. Few passed the allotted span of threescore years and ten, and almost equally few met their end in their own beds surrounded by their family. We would except those of the last century. Many were done to death by foul means, others met the headman's shining blade. Some died of grief. To others over-indulgence at the table was more or less the direct cause of their exit from this world's stage.

A surfeit of the lampreys of our Severn estuary was accountable for the death of Henry I, and his successor's end was hastened by overfeeding. Of Queen Anne, Roger Coke in his *Detection* wrote, "Her life would have lasted longer if she had not eaten so much. . . . She supped too much chocolate, and died monstrously fat, insomuch that the coffin where her remains were deposited was almost square."