

S. Edward the Confessor.

AN OFFERING OF BAUDEKINS BY THE PRIOR OF
HURLEY AT HIS SHRINE, OCTOBER 13, 1238.

WHEN, in the reign of Richard II., the Hurley Monks besought "the Lord King," that "out of reverence due to Lady Edith, sister of the sainted King Edward the Confessor there [i.e. in Hurley Church] buried . . . it may please the aforesaid Lord King to appropriate to them the Church of Warfield in the diocese of Sarum, of which they are and from ancient times have been the patrons,"—they conjured with a name which was a household word within the walls of Hurley Monastery. The Confessor himself, as we may not doubt, was fond of Hurley; and that is the reason why this Thames-side Church was selected as the resting place of his sister.

King Edward died at Westminster on January 5th, 1066, just after having completed the re-building of the Abbey Church, originally founded by King Offa on Thorney Island in 785. The King's last days, however, were fast approaching. He had summoned his great men to the dedication of the Church on the festival of the Holy Innocents (December 28th, 1065), the day on which it actually took place; but on Christmas Eve he was taken ill and breathed his last just twelve days later, eight days after the magnificent dedication ceremony. His body was buried next day before the high altar. Later, the tomb was enclosed in a shrine of gold by William the Conqueror.

At the time of the canonization of S. Edward in the ninety eighth year after his death, his body was translated, on October 13th, 1163, to a higher tomb in Westminster Abbey by Archbishop Thomas a Becket in the presence of Henry II. John Flete remarks at the end of his account of this ceremony—"and thus that virginal body of chastity was honorably placed on its precious bier (*sicque illud vas virgineum castitatis in feretro pretioso honorifice collocatum est*)." Flete was a monk at the Abbey from 1420 to 1465, and is the only mediæval historian that Westminster ever possessed.

And yet, once again, the sacred remains of S. Edward were

removed to an even higher tomb than before, on the occasion of the rebuilding of the church by Henry III., a hundred and six years later ; and, according to Widmore, on this occasion the king himself, his brother, his two sons and some of the chief of the nobility personally helped at the removal of the body, on October 13th, 1269.

In further illustration of the excessive reverence with which King Edward the Confessor's remains were regarded, I subjoin a translation from an extract in the Close Rolls for the year 1238 (*membrane 5*), which is in very intimate connection with Hurley Priory, containing a very interesting order given by Henry III. to his treasurer, H. de Path'.* This Royal Order is dated on August 22nd, 1238, just two years and a half later than the very remarkable and copious charter of rights and privileges which was accorded by him in favour of the Hurley monks on February 27th, 1236, at Woodstock. And it is further interesting to notice that, on January 14th of this very year, the king had been married to Eleanor of Provence entirely through the negotiations and kindly offices of Richard le Gras, at that very time Prior of Hurley, and who was promoted later on in the year 1236 to be Abbot of Evesham, and afterwards to be keeper of the Great Seal. He died on a mission to France on the King's service shortly before his intended consecration to the Bishopric of Lichfield and Coventry.

To sum up, it will be readily seen that in all the existing circumstances Henry III. was very favourably inclined towards Hurley Priory and everything to do with it ; and on Sanson de Eswelle, who had succeeded Richard le Gras as Prior here, being anxious to make an offering of a costly and elaborate hanging for the back of the high altar at Westminster Abbey, out of reverence for S. Edward on the occasion of his Festival, in 1238, he found a ready supporter and promoter of his pious object in the august person of the King. This offering consisted of brocades of gold, still known as "baudekins," which were to be trimmed all round with Arras tapestry specially for the occasion. The extract from the Close Rolls, which has only been lately known to me, runs as follows, with the following heading on the parchment, viz. : "*De baudekinis emendis*" (i.e. concerning the purchase of baudekins) "The King, to H. de Path', his treasurer, greeting. We command you that you purchase four baudekins of gold and cause them to be stitched together (*consui*) so that out of these four cloths (*pannis*) one cloth may be made ; that you also purchase one cloth of Arras [tapestry]

* Hugh de Pateshull had been King's Treasurer from the year 1234.

and cause the cloth made out of the four baudekins to be bordered (*listari*) all round with it and cause that cloth thus made to be suspended at the back of the great cross above the high altar at Westminster so that it may be hung there (*sit ibi appensum*) on the Vigil of the blessed Edward; that you cause also to be made five hundred tapers against that Festival,—that is to say two hundred large and three hundred smaller ones, and that you provide that a hundred of the larger [tapers] may burn from the ninth hour of the day of the Vigil continuously until the ninth hour of the day of the Festival and that the other hundred tapers may burn from the ninth hour of the day of the Festival until the morning of the next day continuously, and that the three hundred smaller tapers may burn at vespers and at the [other] hours [of prayer] and at the mass; and that the tapers, the larger and the smaller alike, may be placed around the bier (*feretrum*) as well and as fittingly as they can be arranged; and on the aforesaid day of the Festival that you offer eight oboles of musk, that is to say four oboles for ourselves and four for the Queen, and that you provide that all these [orders] may be so secretly carried out that no one may [have cause to] consider by whose agency they are done; and if anyone peradventure should speak of it then let him be told (*dicatur*) that these things are by the gift of the Prior of Hurley (*quod illa sunt de dono prioris de Hurl'*). Do you therefore with all diligence carry out this command in the same way as you carried out my last injunction in a matter of like nature as this, lest peradventure it may turn out that we be moved [to take action] against you, which we had rather were not the case (*ne forsitan nos contra vos moveri contingat, quod nollemus*). Witness as above (*i.e.*, the King at Merevale [near Atherstone]), 22nd day of August. By the King himself."

The word *obolus* was sometimes used to designate a coin, and sometimes a weight. In the above Royal Order it refers to a weight.

Musk is a strong perfume obtained from the Musk-deer. It is obtained from a bag behind the deer's navel (Skeat). There is an Inspecimus of Richard II. in the Muniment Room at Westminster Abbey which confirms "a grant of 24 oboles 'de musca reddendos nomine cheuagii' by the hand of the King or Queen, or in their absence the Treasurer, on the high altar—12 on the Deposition [December 28th] and 12 on the Translation [October 13] of S. Edward"—20 April 26 Hen. III. [1242].

F. T. WETHERED.

Hurley Vicarage, Berks,
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