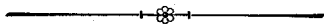




# The Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archæological Journal.



## Study of a Carved Corbel in Ewelme Church.

By Margaret L. Huggins.

“LOOK HERE, UPON THIS PICTURE, AND ON THIS.”

IN Ewelme Church there is a corbel carved with a royal head, the personality of which does not seem to have been identified.\* The corbel occurs as a support to the hood-mouldings between the westernmost arches of the North aisle. I believe this head to represent Edward III., from its satisfactory correspondence with portraits of this monarch which have claim to authenticity.†

The earliest published collection of portraits of the Sovereigns of England is the “*Basiliologia,—A Book of Kings Beeing*,” engraved by R. Elstracke and published in 1618. This volume is,

\* In H. A. Napier’s valuable *Historical Notices of the Parishes of Swyncombe and Ewelme, &c.*, there is a bare mention of this corbel accompanying a small and inaccurate woodcut.

† The difficulties in the way of illustrating a paper of this kind satisfactorily are very great. The originals vary; the artists who have drawn from them, are not always accurate; and tracings from their copies depart almost inevitably slightly further from the originals. Every care has been taken to make the illustrations to this paper as satisfactory as possible, and to this end artistic effect has scarcely been considered.

however, far from satisfactory in the earlier part ; and no authorities are mentioned.

"A Brief Remembrance of all the English Monarchs," by John Taylor, published in 1622, is not more helpful.

I prefer, therefore, to rely upon the following portraits.

The Effigy of Edward III. on his tomb in Westminster Abbey.

The representations on the Great Seals of Edward III.

The tracing from the painting formerly on the wall of St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster.

A Statue in the rood-screen of York Cathedral.

Of these portraits the one entitled to most weight is the gilt-bronze effigy in Westminster Abbey (Plate I. fig. 1), which has connected with it the tradition that it was cast from a mould taken after death.\* The effigy entirely confirms the tradition, the face showing many minute individual peculiarities. Sir Gilbert Scott thought that the hair and beard were not studied from nature, but are merely conventional treatments. The arrangement of the hair, however, is so strikingly similar to that shown in the king's later Great Seals, that it seems to me more reasonable to suppose that the effigy as regards even hair and beard is a faithful portrait. It should be mentioned that in the effigy the eyes are not so open as they are represented in the engraving by Basire, from which fig. I. has been taken.

The personal appearance of Edward III. is thus detailed by Walsingham† :—

"Corpore fuit elegans, statura quæ nec justum excederet nec nimis depressioni succumberet, hultum habens humana mortalitate magis venerabilem similem Angelo, in quo relucebat tam mirifica gratia ut si quis in ejus faciem palam respexisset vel nocte de illo somniasset eo proculdubio die sperabat sibi jocunda solatia probentura."

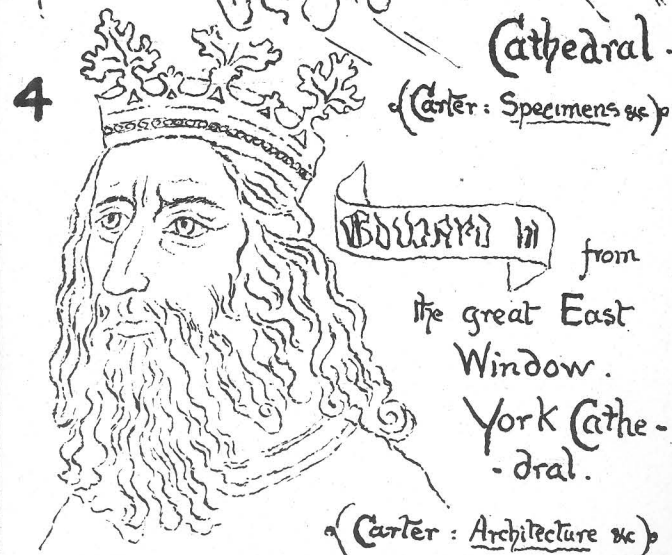
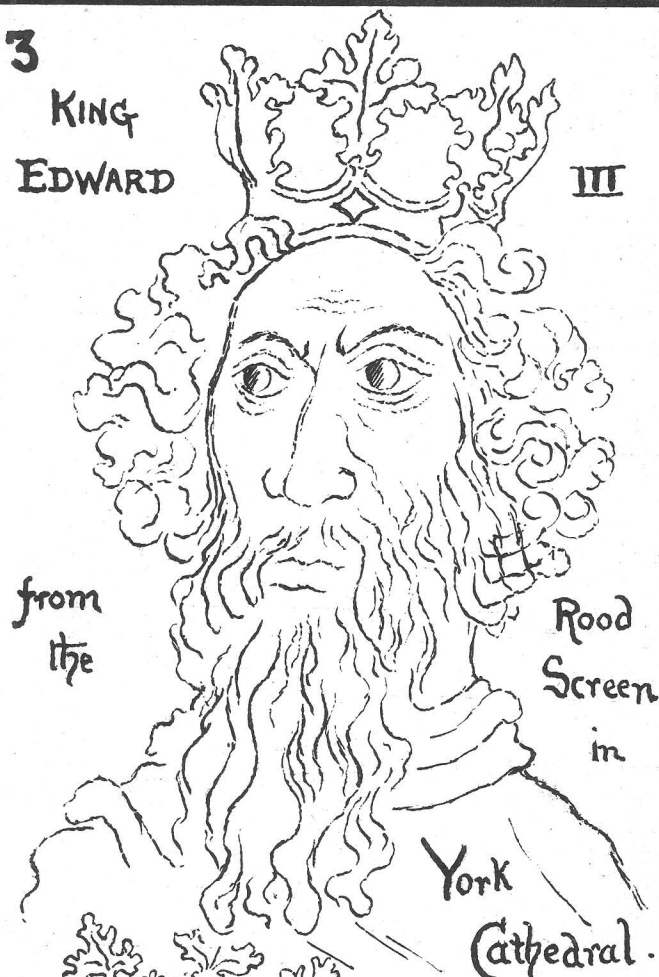
This beautiful description seems to me supported by the effigy at Westminster. Making allowance for years, and for the effect of sorrows and disappointed hopes brought by death, this long passed Majesty of England impresses the gazer on his effigy as having been an exceptional and noble man.

\* G. G. Scott, *Gleanings from Westminster Abbey*.

† Gough, *Sepulchral Monuments, &c.*

‡ Walsingham, *Historia, &c.*, Ed. III.

3  
KING  
EDWARD III



M.L. Huggins. fecit.

1  
KING EDWARD III from  
his Tomb in Westminster  
Abbey.



Reduced from  
Gough:  
Sepulchral  
Monuments &c.



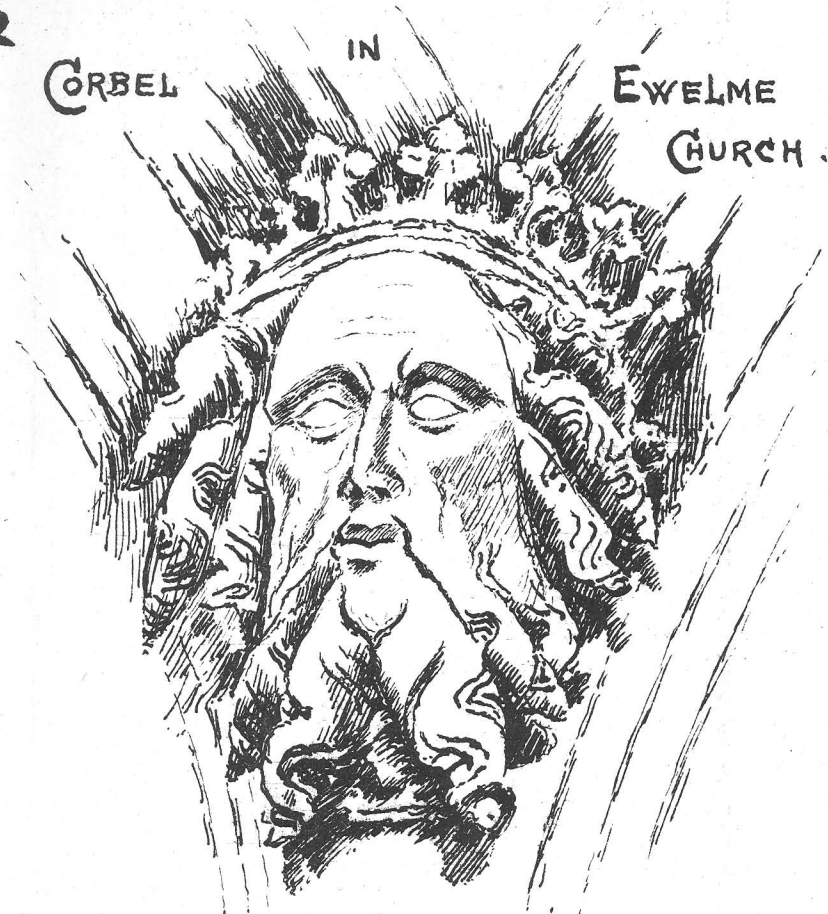
Beard of a Franklin.  
Temp. EDWARD III  
{Planché: Cyc. of Costume.}



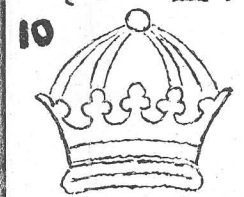
EDWARD III  
Small view of head of effigy seen rather from below. {Gough.}

The crown of the  
Ewelme head has been added.

2  
CORBEL IN EWELME CHURCH.



Crown of  
EDWARD III  
Great Seal  
Guildhall Library  
{Planché: Cyc.}



Crown of EDWARD IV  
{Planché: Cyc.}



ST EDWARD THE  
CONFESSOR  
from the  
Wilton  
diptych.



Crown of HENRY VI  
{Planché: Cyc.}

Without wishing in any way to prejudice the argument of this paper, I will say here that when standing beside the tomb of King Edward in Westminster Abbey, as I looked upon the face I was much struck with the resemblance between it, and the Ewelme head seen somewhat sideways. It was not simply a likeness of features, but also one of expression. The Ewelme portrait, however, represents the King, I think, more towards his middle life. The face is more vigorous than in the Westminster effigy. (Plate I. fig. 2.)

The Great Seals of Edward III. form a complex series of seven or eight.\* They show a gradual increase of hair upon the face. At an early period of his reign, although the King's hair was worn what may be called "long," the then Great Seal shows that it was shorter than it was subsequently. The Seal of the middle time shows the hair longer and much curled, and the forked beard and moustache are more developed. An MS. illuminated Froissart† of the 15th century and probably of French execution, has a portrait of Edward III. quite in harmony with this Seal. The initial letter to the Grant of the Duchy of Aquitaine to the Black Prince‡, in which Edward III. and the Prince appear, also shows the King with a forked beard and a similar moustache.

Of the remaining portraits in Plate I. Fig. 3 is from the rood screen in York Cathedral, and is part of one of the fine series of statues of the English monarchs from William I. to Henry VI. It has been contended that all of these statues are to be regarded as trustworthy portraits based upon authorities.§ Even if authorities were consulted and followed for the earlier statues, there is difficulty in regarding them as satisfactory portraits; but the case is different when we come to Edward II.; and from this King onwards to Henry V. it appears to me that the portraiture may be considered to have value. The reason is obvious; the subjects were nearer the artists' own time.

In the case of Edward III., with which we are more immediately concerned, traditional knowledge of his personal appearance may have been available at the time the statue was carved. Indeed, considering the coming and going of men encouraged by the foreign wars of the King, there may even have been old men living in York whose fathers had personally seen Edward III. It

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\* Wyon, *The Great Seals of England*.

† H. N. Humphreys. *Illuminated Illustrations of Froissart*.

‡ Planché, *Cyc. of Costume*.

§ Rev. J. Milner, F.S.A., *Carter's Specimens, &c.*

may be taken that the screen was constructed between 1475 and 1505\*.

In the early part of his reign Edward was several times at York. He held Parliaments there ; and, most marked event of all, he was married there, in the Cathedral ; and no doubt the three weeks of feasts and tournaments, concluding tragically with fighting, made a considerable impression upon the public memory of York, and would help to keep the King in remembrance.

We have indication of interest in this great King and probably of knowledge of his personal appearance even so late as the time of Elizabeth, for in *Richard II.*, III. iii. Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Northumberland an allusion to "the honourable tomb" that stands upon the bones of Richard II.'s royal grandsire, which suggests that the tomb was familiar to the people of the 16th century.

It is stated in Carter's *Ancient Architecture of England*† that there is a portrait of Edward III. in the 1st tier of the Great East Window. "The likeness," it is there said, "assimilates with that of his statue in the choir screen, and that on his tomb in the Abbey Church of Westminster." I have thought it worth while to give a copy of Carter's sketch ; but I do not offer an opinion as to the identification. (Plate I., fig. 4). The contract for the window with John Thornton, of Coventry, is dated 1405, and the work was to be completed in three years. There is reason for thinking that this time was exceeded‡ ; but even so, the window dates from the earlier part of the 15th century.

It is a somewhat dangerous thing to insist upon personal likenesses. The wish in such matters, no doubt, easily becomes father to the thought, and unconsciously one may play Polonius and find at one moment that the "cloud" is "like a camel" ; while at another it is "very like a whale." But, in spite of the difficulties inherent in such enquiries, it appears to me that the faces presented in Plate I. are in as fair agreement as could be expected considering that the portraits were produced at different times, by different artists, and in different media. Some differences may indeed be expected in any series of portraits of an individual, and may be valuable personal records. The type of face is not only the same, but details occur in all the portraits,—such as the marked vertical

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\* Raine, *Fabric Rolls of York Minster*.

† Carter, *Ancient Architecture of Eng. Part II.*, p. 14.

‡ Weslake, *Hist. of Design in Painted Glass*.

lines above the nose, the full under-lip, and the concentrated look about the eyes,—which are very striking and individual. In every case too, the hair about the face in its amount as well as in its arrangement is much the same.

In considering the sketch given of the Ewelme head it should be remembered that owing to its situation the point of view is much *below* the head, and that on this account the nose appears shorter than it is in reality, and the upper-lip is exaggerated in thickness while the lower one is reduced. It is possible that some portrait of Edward III. in the possession of either the De La Poles or the Chaucers may have been used as the “authority” for the Ewelme head.

In most cases the King’s hair is represented as highly curly. From various sources, however, we know that it was the fashion of the time to have curly hair ; and then, as now, when Nature was not considerate enough to endow persons with such personal appearance as they wished, or found convenient, Nature was assisted. In the Ewelme head at any rate it is strongly suggested that King Edward used the curling tongs. In the reign of John we know that the hair of men was curled with crissing irons ; so the practice was by no means new in England in that of Edward III. We have a reference to it in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, where we read of the “yonge squier” having

. . . “lockes crull as they were laide in presse,”

which indicates the use either of the curling iron or of curl papers. That the hair-dressing seen in the various authentic portraits of Edward III. was the general fashion in England during the later part of his reign is shown in the fragments which have survived of the wall paintings of S. Stephen’s Chapel, Westminster, now in the British Museum.\* In these fragments the forked beard, long hair, and moustache and whiskers running into each other appear. Fig. 6, Plate I., is also interesting in this connection.

It will be convenient to refer here to the tracing representing Edward III. taken from the painting formerly on the wall of St. Stephen’s Chapel, Westminster. The particular tracing I mean, was made with extreme care by Sir George Scharf, and is now in the National Portrait Gallery. The King being in armour, his hair and whiskers are not shown ; but even with this limitation, the face accords well with the portraits in Plate I., and also with a face which I shall presently mention.

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\* Mediæval Department.

At this point I venture to diverge from the main object of this paper to refer to a subject which bears upon it. There is a most interesting diptych of the time of Richard II. in the collection at Wilton, which has become tolerably well known from the admirable chromo-lithograph published of it by the Arundel Society. The late Sir George Scarf wrote a valuable monograph upon the picture, which has also been published by the Arundel Society. That the kneeling royal figure in the diptych is Richard II. cannot be doubted. And it is equally certain that the three Saints behind the kneeling king represent St. Edmund, St. Edward the Confessor, and St. John the Baptist. But neither Sir George Scarf, nor anyone, so far as I am aware, has suggested that the figures personating these Saints *may really represent Richard II. at a later period, King Edward III., and the Black Prince.*

It appears to me that the three Saints correspond well with authentic portraits of the Sovereigns and Prince named, and that they were meant to represent them, and are in fact, portraits of the highest value, having been painted in the early manhood of Richard II. It is the question of the portraiture in the diptych with which alone I am concerned. The personation of Saints or of sacred personages was of course no uncommon thing in mediæval art. There is, to mention but one instance, a notable example in Rogier van der Weyden's *Adoration of the Kings* in the Pinakothek at Munich, in which Philippe le Bon of Burgundy, figures as the oldest King, Caspar or Jaspar.

In fig. 1, Plate II.,\* the heads of the Saints in the Wilton diptych are shown, and it will be seen that St. Edmund corresponds well with Richard II. (figs. 2, 3, 4); St. John the Baptist with the Black Prince (fig. 5); and above all, St. Edward the Confessor with Edward III. (Plate I.)

As a further identification of Richard II., the heraldic device on his robe is worth attention. His own badge, as is well known, was a white hart lodged. But that of his 1st Queen, Anne of Bohemia, was an ostrich with certain charges. The treatment of the ostrich (?) on the robe, while more decorative than heraldic, is still suggestive of Queen Anne's badge. The design of the crown is identical, and the way in which the crown is charged with a pendant is very

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\* The illustration is from the reproduction of the Arundel Society. In preparing the illustration the forehead of St. Edmund has unfortunately protruded too much at one side.

# EDWARD IV

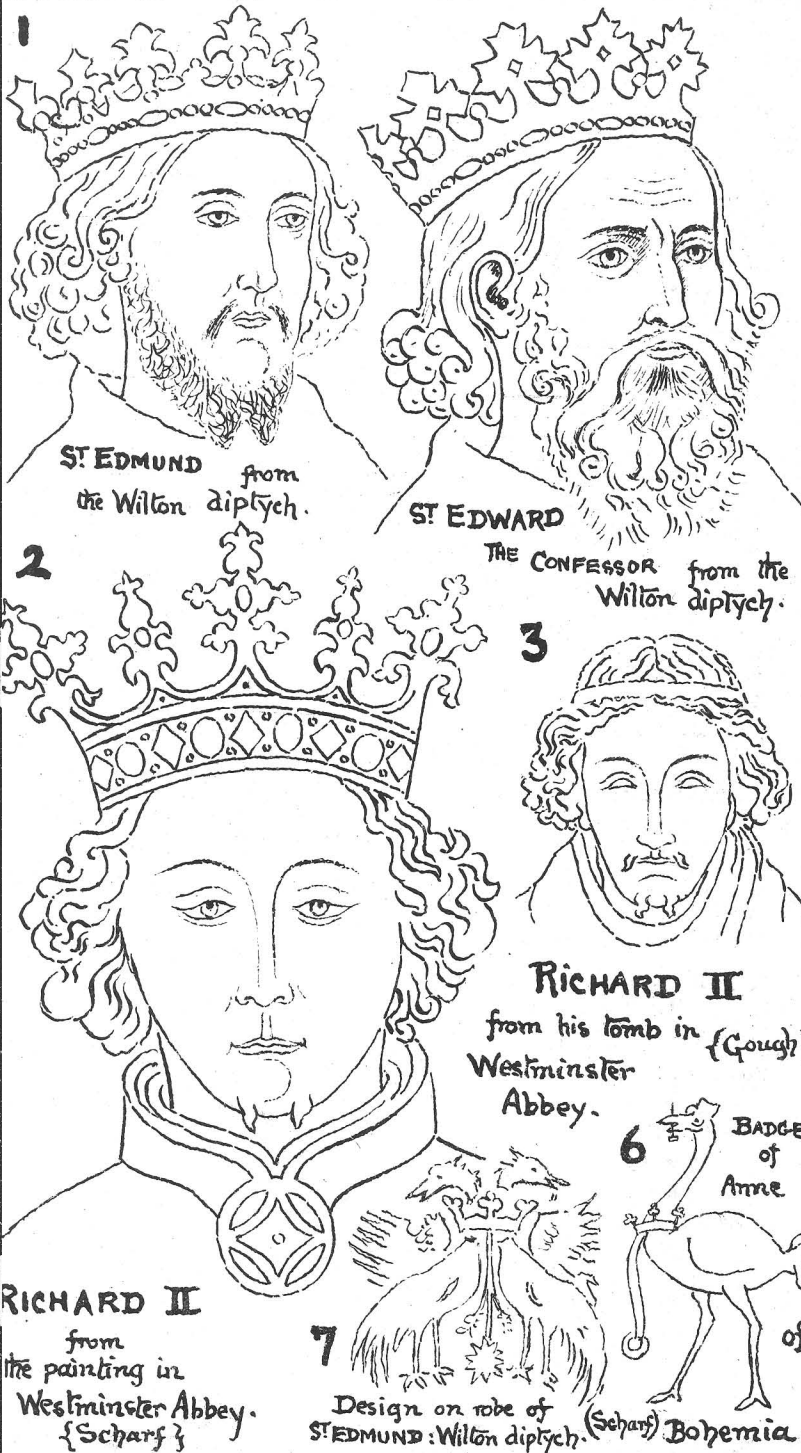
From engraving  
after an ancient  
picture in the  
possession of the  
Society of  
Antiquaries.

These tracings are  
from the 1787 — 1823  
edition of the  
Paston Letters

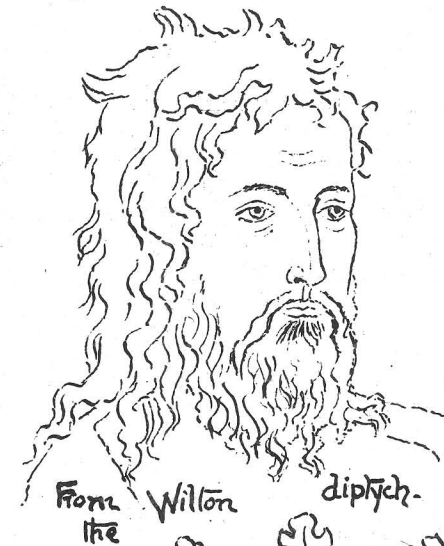
# HENRY VI

From engraving  
after  
an  
ancient picture.

M.I. Huggins. fecit.



# ST JOHN THE BAPTIST



# THE BLACK PRINCE





similar. If it be objected that the bird is not very like an ostrich, it may be replied that it is not more unlike than a free decorative treatment might make it for the purposes of weaving—especially if the artist had no very good drawings to help him and relied chiefly on written instructions. (Plate II., figs. 6, 7). The bird is not like an eagle—which would, however, still suggest connection with Anne of Bohemia; and it is not a peacock—for in mediæval hands the “eyes” of the tail would certainly have been in evidence.

Richard II., as Sir George Scharf has shown, was fond of cloth of gold for his dress; and his warm attachment to Anne of Bohemia, makes her badge a not unlikely ornament for his robe.

The face of the Black Prince (St. John the Baptist), if carefully examined, is seen to be peculiarly straight in profile, which characteristic is seen in his effigy in Canterbury Cathedral (fig. 5). His camail somewhat hides his beard; but the effigy is bearded. Another peculiarity about the Black Prince which is very striking indeed in his effigy, is a marked drooping of the mouth. This can be seen in the Arundel copy of the diptych, although it is not brought out in the illustration in Plate II.

For the purposes of this paper however, the interest of the Wilton diptych turns chiefly on the central Saint. In the face of this figure, appear all the peculiarities we have noticed as characteristic of Edward III. The crown, too, corresponds with the Ewelme crown, while that of St. Edmund, although much simpler than the crown in the Westminster portrait of Richard II., has the lower lobes of the leafy ornaments somewhat similarly formed.

Upon the whole I do not hesitate to suggest that in the Wilton diptych we have a contemporary portrait of Richard II. in early manhood, and portraits nearly contemporary of Edward III. and the Black Prince. And, believing in the soundness of this suggestion, I feel justified in making use of the face of the central figure to strengthen the evidence for the identification of the Ewelme head. It corresponds with it in all essential particulars.

It has been suggested by some that the Ewelme head represents Richard II.; by others that it represents Henry VI. or Edward IV.

Figs. 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, Plate II., sufficiently show, I think, that none of these suggestions will bear examination. Richard II. never had much hair on his face; his lips were thin, and his eyes were long. As his tomb was completed during his reign, the effigy upon it represents him truly we cannot doubt.

Edward IV. was entirely smooth faced ; and Henry VI., nearly so,—and usually quite so. Moreover, the types of face of these kings are quite different to that of the king in Ewelme Church. The crowns worn by Edward IV. and Henry VI. were also wholly different to those of either Edward III. or Richard II. (Figs. 8, 9, 10, Plate I.)

In short, a process of elimination leads to the same conclusion as one of careful comparison. If the Ewelme head does not represent Edward III., there is no other English royal head it can reasonably be thought to represent.

*Aut Cæsar, aut nullus.*

In conclusion, it may be indicated that there is a double fitness in a record of Edward III. appearing in Ewelme Church, intimately associated as it is with the families of De Le Pole and Chaucer. For, as Speed says—"the first raiser of the De La Poles was Edward III."

William De La Pole, a merchant at Hull, entertained the king when on his way to join his army against the Scots and so pleased him that he knighted him, and changing the Government of the town, made Sir William the first Mayor of Hull. In various ways later the king honoured Sir William for services rendered, and he enjoyed the king's friendship.\*

The forbears of Alice, Duchess of Suffolk, also owed remembrance to Edward III. For, Thomas Chaucer her father, at least passed as the son of the immortal Geoffrey, and Geoffrey Chaucer served King Edward both at home and abroad, and was honoured and rewarded by him.

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\* *Patent Roll*, 13, Ed. III., gives information of the relations of Edward III. with the De La Poles.

