

KING EDGAR

BURIED IN

DUNFERMLINE ABBEY



EDGAR (1097 - 1107)



Seal of Edgar.

Walter de Gray Birch (1842-1924). *History of Scottish seals*. 2 volumes. Stirling, 1905-07.

Extracted from -

THE PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SCOTLAND

By James Taylor D.D. London 1859 Vol.1. p. 44.
&

JOHN OF FORDUN'S

CHRONICLE

OF

THE SCOTTISH NATION

VOLUME 2. p. 215

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SCOTO-SAXON PERIOD. A.D. 1097-1306.

Edgar



[1097-1107] the son of Malcolm Canmore, ascended the Scottish throne in 1097, while still a youth, and retained it till his death, on the 8th of January 1107. During his reign the country appears to have enjoyed tranquility both at home and abroad. The marriage of his sister Matildia, or Maud, to Henry Beauclerk, King of England, doubtless contributed to the maintenance of peace between the two countries, and the disposition of Edgar was little likely to provoke hostilities. "He was a sweet-tempered, amicable man," says Aldred, a contemporary chronicler, "in all things resembling Edward the Confessor, mild in his administration, equitable and beneficent."¹ Edgar, dying without issue, was succeeded by his brother, Alexander I. (Pictorial History of Scotland Vol. 1 p. 59.)

JOHN OF FORDUN'S CHRONICLE -CHAPTER XXV. P. 214

Return of Malcolm's sons from England - Flight of Donald from Battle.

MEANWHILE, when Edgar Clito saw that Donald had wickedly usurped the throne of Scotland, which by right, belonged to his nephews, and that he would not restore it, though more than once besought thereto by ambassadors, by a friendly intervention, he was stirred to wrath. So he gathered together from all sides a vast number of his friends, and being strengthened by the aforesaid King William's help, set out against Donald in order to drive him out, and appoint as king of Scotland, his nephew Edgar, a younger son of King Malcolm and his sister Margaret. While, therefore, young Edgar was hastening towards his native soil, and was in fear of the turbulence of his foes, Saint Cuthbert stood before him, in the stillness of night, and said: - "Fear not, my son; for God has been pleased to give thee the kingdom. And this shall be a token unto thee: When thou shalt have taken my standard with thee from the monastery of Durham, and set it up against thine scattered, and those that hate thee shall flee before thy face!" When the young man awoke, he reported the matter to his uncle Edgar; and, committing himself and all his friends to God and to the patronage of Saint Cuthbert, he carried out, with a stout heart, what the saint had encouragingly bidden him do. When, afterwards, the armies met, and Saint Cuthbert's standard was raised aloft, a certain knight of English birth, named Robert, the son of the aforesaid Godwin, and the heir and rival of his father's prowess, being accompanied by only two knights, charged the enemy, and slew their mightiest, who stood out, like champions, in front of the line of battle. So, before the armies had neared one another, Donald and his men were put to flight; and thus, by the favour of God and the merits of Saint Cuthbert, Edgar happily achieved a bloodless victory. See how a faithful home-born people is afraid to withstand its true and liege lord - and so forth, as already shown in Chapter VIII. Let, therefore, the lawless usurpers of kingdoms beware, and shrink from leading a faithful people to war

against their lawful and liege lord, or his heir, any more than a good son against his father. But Edgar, being now in better heart, revived the manly courage of his men - though, indeed, that was not needed - and marched into the kingdom of his fathers, which rightfully belonged to him; and, as he marched in, the kingdom was joyfully offered him by the inhabitants, with none to hinder or gainsay; and he accepted it, and governed it gloriously ever after.

CHAPTER XXVI. P. 215

Accession of King Edgar, Malcolm's son, to the Throne - Donations made to Saint Cuthbert.

IN the year 1098, therefore - the forty-second of the Emperor Henry, Edgar, son of King Malcolm and Margaret, succeeded his uncle Donald, and reigned nine years and some months. Donald himself, indeed, was by him taken prisoner, blinded, and doomed to perpetual imprisonment. Now, when Edgar had been peacefully raised to the throne, and had undertaken to order all things according to his will, he remembered that saying of Solomon's "In the days of prosperity be not unmindful of adversity." So he was not unmindful of his leader, Saint Cuthbert; and gave, granted, and confirmed to the monks of Durham, in perpetuity, his estates of Coldingham, with all the pertinents thereof. This princely man and bountiful king likewise heaped gift on gift; for he gave and confirmed in possession to the bishop of Durham and his successors, the noble village of Berwick, with its appurtenance. This great gift of the king's the whole bishopric thankfully received, and held it in happy peace; until Ranulf the bishop, proved himself unworthy of it - and justly so - on this wise. While King Edgar was on his way to William II, king of England, that Robert, son of Godwin, of whom mention was made above, tarried. with the king's leave, on an estate the king had given him, in Landonia (Lothian); and while he was seeking to build a castle there, he as at last, all of a sudden, beset and taken by the countrymen and barons of Durham - and that same Bishop Ranulf was at the bottom of it. In being thus taken, however, he left a signal remembrance of his bravery among the dwellers in the whole country. Now when Edgar on his return, hears of this, he brought Robert, who had been set free by order of the King of England, back with him to Scotland, in great honour; and whatever he had previously given the bishop he took back to himself - being thoroughly well advised therein.

In the eleventh year of King William II, says William Magnus king of the Noricans (Norwegians), who has been spoken vanian, and whatever other islands lie in the sea; and while he was steadily making his way to England, by Anglesea, he was met by Hugh Earl of Chester, and Hugh Earl of Shrewsbury and driven out by their arms. Hugh of Shrewsbury fell there.

¹ Aldred, Gen. Reg. Angl. p. 367; Haile's Annals vol. i. p. 53.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Marriage of Edgar's sisters, Matilda to Henry King of England, and Mary to Eustace Count of Boulogne - Their sons and daughters - Edgar's death.

NOW this King Edgar was a sweet and amiable man, like his kinsman, the holy King Edward, in every way; using no harshness, no tyrannical or bitter treatment towards his subjects; but ruling and correcting them with the greatest charity, goodness, and loving-kindness. In the fourth year of his reign on the 2nd of August, William Rufus, king of England, having gone out hunting in the New Forest, was unknowingly, and without malice aforethought, slain by Walter Tirel, a knight from over the sea, while the latter was letting fly a shaft at some wild beast. The king fell without uttering a word afterwards, thus in one short hour atoning for many misdeeds. He was at once deserted by all his train; and being carried away on a cart by some countrymen was buried under the tower at Winchester. He was succeeded in the kingship by his younger brother Henry, surnamed Beauclerk, to whom this King Edgar, the same year gave his sister Matilda to wife. She was anointed and consecrated queen the following Martinmas, by Archbishop Anselm. But Mary, his younger sister, Edgar gave in marriage to Eustace the younger, Count of Bouillon. The characters of these sisters, and their good deeds, will be afterwards, in this little book, in some wise shown forth to whoever would know somewhat thereof. But this same Henry, king of England, begat of queen Matilda, a son named William; who, when seventeen years of age, together with his illegitimate brother Richard, his sister and niece Richard Earl of Chester and many nobles both men and women, as well as 140 knights and 50 seamen, was drowned in the sea at Barbefloth, while coming back to England from Normandy with his father. The king barely escaped with a few followers. The king likewise begat, of Matilda, a daughter named Matilda; who, worthy of an empire by her wisdom, beauty, and wealth, wedded Henry, the Roman emperor. To this Matilda, Henry, king of England, her father, made all the English lords swear fealty, before he crossed the sea a second time; for he had no heir to the throne but her. Then the aforesaid Eustace, Count of Boulogne, begat of the aforesaid Mary, Queen Matilda's sister, a daughter, likewise named Matilda, who married a man of great vigour, begotten of a stock equally of kings and of consuls, Stephen, Count of Mauritania (Moriton), King Henry's nephew, and afterwards king of England. Though I pass over the daughters, I hold up the mothers as a pattern of all living. For while beset by the pomps of this world, they were rich in holy virtues - a thing rarely found; tended the poor of both sexes, of whatever condition they might be, as tough they were Christ's members; and most tenderly cherished men of religious orders, clerics, priests, and monks, with singleness of love, and their patrons and men who with Christ were to be their judges. Both after Edgar had reigned nine years and three months in happy peace as was said above, he ended his life at Dundee on the 8th of January, and was entombed in the church of Dunfermline, before the great altar.

Winton in his quaintly odd orthography and rhyme, refers to Edgar's death and interment thus:-

Of Edgar our nobil Kyng,
The days with honoure tuk endying,
Be-north Tay in til Dundee
Ty'l God the Spyrte than yald he
And in the Kyrk of Dwnfermyne
Solemply he wes entery'd syne."

(Wynton's "Orygynale Cronikil of Scot." V. ii. p. 282)

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