

**GILBERT CRISPIN, ABBOT
OF WESTMINSTER:
A STUDY OF THE ABBEY
UNDER NORMAN RULE**

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Gilbert Crispin, abbot of Westminster: a study of the abbey under Norman rule by J. Armitage
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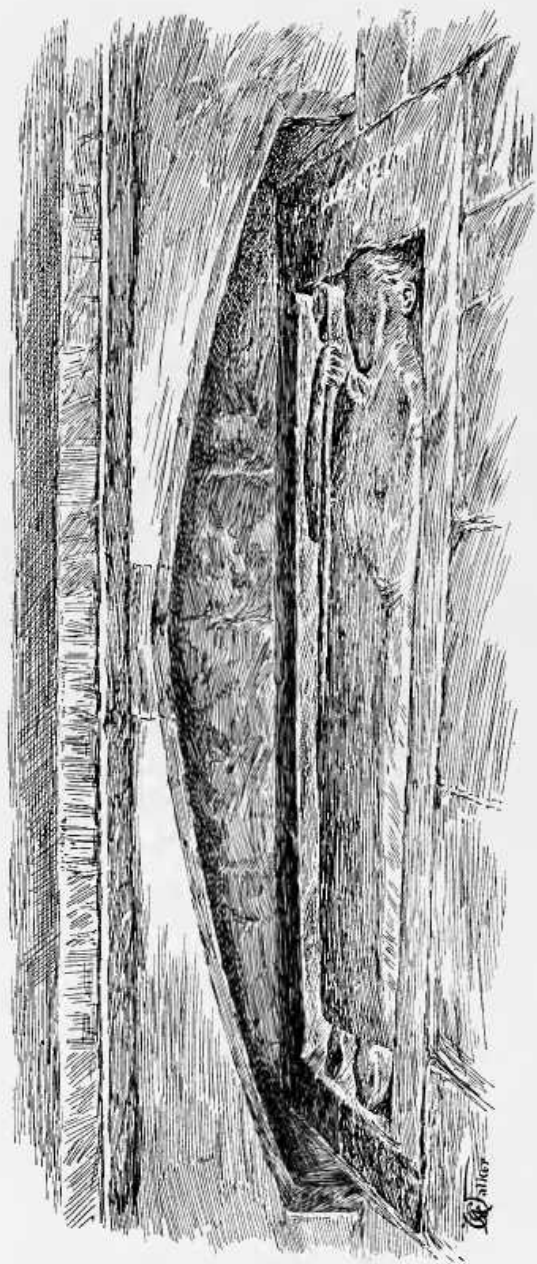
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RELATING TO

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

No. 3

ABBOT GILBERT CRISPIN



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GILBERT CRISPIN
ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER

A STUDY OF
THE ABBEY UNDER NORMAN RULE

BY
J. ARMITAGE ROBINSON, D.D.
DEAN OF WESTMINSTER

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COLLEGIS · AMICIS
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PREFACE

GILBERT CRISPIN is the earliest abbot of Westminster of whom we have any considerable knowledge: and he is one of the greatest of the line, distinguished alike by his noble descent, his high character, the fame of his learning and the length of his rule. Yet, though his effigy has been before the eyes of every generation that has trod the cloisters in the past eight centuries, no one has cared to gather together what may be known of his life and times. Even his biography of Abbot Herluin has never been edited intact, though historians draw from it all they know of the early days of Bec, which gave three archbishops to Canterbury within seventy years. This neglect seems the more strange when we remember that he was a favourite pupil of both Lanfranc and Anselm, some of whose letters to him still survive; and that his judgment as a theologian could be appealed to on the continent more than a generation after his death.

He was a true monk and a scholar, with no desire for fame: his vocation and his instincts alike made him shrink from public affairs. His Westminster sons remembered him, as the Bec monks remembered their Anselm, chiefly for his gentleness; and they wrote the epithet *mitis* on his tomb before they praised his justice, wisdom, strength and learning.

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