

**ALLITERATIVE POEM ON THE  
DEPOSITION OF KING RICHARD II.  
RICARDI MAYDISTON DE  
CONCORDIA INTER RIC. II ET  
CIVITATEM LONDON, 1838**

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**THOMAS WRIGHT & RICHARD MAIDSTONE**

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# ALLITERATIVE POEM

ON THE DEPOSITION OF KING RICHARD II.

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RICARDI MAYDISTON

DE CONCORDIA INTER RIC. II. ET CIVITATEM LONDON.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE following curious poem on the Deposition of Richard the Second is preserved in a paper manuscript in the Public Library of the University of Cambridge, where it is known by the shelf-mark Ll. 4. 14. The MS. itself seems to be of the beginning of the 15th century, and contains, 1. a copy of Piers Plowman ; 2. the Poem now edited ; 3. a treatise of Arithmetic in English prose ; 4. a treatise " of Philosophie and Astronome \*," also in English prose ; 5. the Arguments of the Psalms, in Latin Distiches ; 6. a Collection of Latin Aphorisms turned into English verse ; 7. a Short Glossary to Piers Plowman ; 8. a copy of the singular Poem of Piers of Fulham,

\* " Here bigynneth the wyse boke of philosophie and astronomye conteyned and made of the wyseste philisophre and astromyer that evere was sythe the world frist bygan, that is for to say of the lond of Greece, ffor in that lond was an Englishe man full wyse and well undirstandyng of philosophie and astronomye, studied and compylid this boke out of Grew graciously in to Englishe."



which was badly printed from a MS. in Trinity College Library in Hartshorne's *Metrical Tales*. The last four articles are in a somewhat later hand than the rest of the MS.

The poem on King Richard bears internal evidence of having been written after the time when the King fell into the hands of his enemies, and before the intention of deposing him was publicly made known. In its style it is an imitation of the popular poem of "Piers Plowman," of which it seems to have been intended as a continuation; and it possesses much of the energy and spirit which characterise so strongly that famous satire. The scribe of this unique MS. seems to have been a partizan of the opposite party, and in one instance, as I understand it, he has given vent to his indignation by writing in the margin, opposite ll. 24 to 26 of page 15 of our edition, the following note—

"Propter ingratitude[m] liber hic revocatur in servitium (*sic*) ut in stimulo compunctionis et in lege civili." \*

Unfortunately the copyist's prejudices got so far the master of him, that he broke off his transcript abruptly in the middle of the amusing description of

\* The meaning of this note is not quite clear. I suppose *servitatem* to be a pun on the word *liber*.

the famous parliament which surrendered so readily to Richard the privileges of his country, leaving a few pages blank to continue the copying of it at a future period. By this means it has happened unfortunately that the poem is come down to us only in a mutilated form.

The transcript of the Poem of Richard de Maidstone was kindly presented to the Camden Society by Sir Frederick Madden. It is preserved in one of the Digby Manuscripts, in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Richard is said to have been born at Maidstone in Kent. He was afterwards Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, became a Carmelite at Aylesford, and at a later period pursued his studies in the Hostle of the Carmelites at Oxford, where he took the degree of Doctor in Theology. He was in great repute at Court, and was famous for his theological writings. The Poem now printed seems to have been the only production of his muse, and as a work of taste it does little credit to its author, for it is poorly written, and some lines sin grievously against the sage rules of Latin prosody. Richard de Maidstone died at Ailesford in 1396, and was buried there.

It has been thought advisable to add a slight popular glossary to the Alliterative Poem, in order to ren-

der it more accessible to the general reader. Like most alliterative poems, it contains several words that are not easily explained. It may be observed, that a peculiarity of the MS. is the use of the *ff* at the beginning of syllables, which has been carefully retained in the text, because I think that it may mark some local pronunciation, though I have not thought it necessary to preserve it in the glossary.

THOMAS WRIGHT.