

before the Romans down to the time of Edward IV. In the same year appeared "The Description of Britain," telling of the extent of the island, its towns, cities, marvels, etc. The following may serve as a specimen of the style of this then very useful book: "At Stonching besides Salisbury there be greate stones and wondrous huge; and be reared on high, as it were gates set upon other gates; nevertheless it is not known clearly nor apperceived how and wherefore they be so areared and so wonderful hanged." Then, by way of helping his countrymen to a knowledge of other countries, he published, in 1482, "The Polychronicon," the author of which was a monk of Chester, and which was done into English about the time of Edward III., by John de Trevisa, Caxton modernizing the English that it might be better understood. "The Image of the Mirror of the World," was one of his own translations from the French, in which there is an account of the seven liberal arts—how nature worketh, and how the earth holdeth him right in the middle of the world—with an account, in conclusion, of the celestial paradise; the work is further adorned with cuts, "without which," he says, "it may not be lightly understood." One of the most popular of the translations was "The History of Reynard the Fox," which was composed in the twelfth century by some unknown genius, and is popular to the present hour. "The Subtil History and Fables of Esop," another of Caxton's translations, appeared in 1483; at the end of the fables the translator appends a story of his own, admirable for its humour and simplicity, as well as for its doctrinal value, but too lengthy for insertion here. Perhaps the most remarkable of Caxton's books was "The Golden Legend," printed in double columns, and containing between four and five hundred pages largely illustrated with woodcuts, a work which prudent as he was, he was only induced to undertake on being guaranteed the sale of a reasonable number of copies, and a yearly dole of venison in addition.