

ships to the west side of the bridge, and then, afterwards, they ditched the city around, so that no one could go either in or out, and they repeatedly fought against the city, but the citizens strenuously withstood them. Then gathered Edmund his forces, and went to London and relieved the place, and drove the army in flight to their ships." But the heroic efforts of the nation were in vain; the curse of innocent blood treacherously shed by Ethelred the Unready was upon the cause, and the Danes triumphed in the end. Canute subdued London, and took possession of the Saxon throne.

Yet through all its troubles, by plague, fire, sword and famine, the city thrived steadily. In the time of Canute, a witenagemote was held in it, and out of £83,000 voted by the Parliament, £11,000 was raised by London alone; and soon after this we find Londoners sitting with the nobles in the witan, or council held at Oxford. Yet London was not at this time the recognized capital of the country; in the seventh century it is described as the capital of Essex. In fact, although the Heptarchy had been destroyed, yet traces of it remained, and until the time of Athelstane, the Saxon kings were in reality kings of Wessex alone. Nor did either Athelstane or his descendants hold more than a very general control over a vast portion of the Kingdom, the great earldoms of the North, Mercia and Northumberland acknowledging a mere feudal sovereignty in the south-western kings. Hence, Winchester, the chief town of Wessex, was more properly considered the capital of the Kingdom; a fact which will account for the coronation of several of the early Norman sovereigns at that place, though their chief residence was at London. But London had royal mansions before the time of the conquest; Athelstane most probably it was who erected a palace on the banks of the river, a little south of St. Paul's, and here we find Canute residing when he gave orders for the execution of a traitor, whose decapitated body was flung out of the windows into the Thames. This palace was afterwards forsaken by Edward the Confessor, who erected one in the precincts of

Westminster, when engaged in the reconstruction of the Convent of St. Peter, which had suffered much at the Danish hands. This abbey, Matthew Paris describes as being built in a "new style" of architecture. There are portions of it remaining to this day, in what is now called the Pyx Office, consisting of massive pillars and vaults. It bears a strong resemblance to the Norman style of architecture, a circumstance which is accounted for by the predilection the Confessor entertained for the Normans, and the close intercourse which he kept up with them. The church was built in the shape of a cross, contrary to the old Saxon plan which excluded transepts.

The Confessor built his palace contiguous to the Abbey; there he spent the later period of his life; there, according to the chroniclers, he beheld marvellous and supernatural visions, and there, in what is called the Painted Chamber, he died. His death followed close on the consecration of the edifice which had so engrossed his heart. Whether he was able to be present at the ceremony is uncertain, the church having been consecrated during the Christmas-tide, while the King was buried on Twelfth Day.

All vestiges of Saxon buildings in London have disappeared, and we have no remains left, either here or in any other part of the country, which would give us an idea of the appearance of the Saxon towns. The Anglo-Saxon names of streets, such as Horse-mongers, Fell-monger, Iron-monger, etc., still remaining, would lead us to conclude that persons pursuing these and similar trades lived in the neighborhood in guilds. A market cross and a guild-hall, or as we should now call it, a town-hall, together with the cathedral of St. Paul's, the residence of the bishop, and the royal palace not far off, would probably form the chief architectural features. The wealthy merchants and the great men connected with the Court would doubtless have good houses, such as we may see in the illuminated manuscripts; but for the most part the houses were poor and mean, in many cases little better than hovels, and the thoroughfares so deep in mud as to be frequently impassable—a state of affairs,