PREFACE.

(5) Sir William Hardy published in the Appendix to the Forty-second Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Records, in 1881, a specimen of a lexicographical English Calendar of the Patent Rolls of the reign of Edward I., which had been prepared by Mr. Frank Scott Haydon. The specimen there printed deals with the first year of the reign, and further instalments of the work, carrying it down to the end of the ninth year, are printed in the eight following Reports of the Deputy Keeper. This Calendar was discontinued by my order in 1886.

(6) In 1885, M. Francisque Michel published in a volume entitled "Rôles Gascons" a Latin transcript, without contractions, of some short Rolls of the reign of Henry III., containing copies of Letters Patent issued while the King was abroad.

Without attempting in this place to discuss the relative merits of these different systems, I may be allowed to express an opinion that while M. Francisque Michel’s appears to be the best with regard to an early period, when entries on the Rolls are very brief, Sir Francis Palgrave’s appears to be the best with regard to a later period, when the entries admit of considerable condensation in a Calendar.

Reserving the reign of Henry III. for future treatment, the object of the present undertaking is to provide an English Calendar of the Patent Rolls from the reign of Edward I. to that of Henry VII. inclusive.* For this purpose identical instructions have been given to the different officers employed upon the work, and great pains have been taken to ensure accuracy and uniformity by means of co-operation among them, subject to my own supervision.

A mere Index, or a briefer Calendar, might be made much more easily, but considering the undesirability of encouraging students to refer directly to invaluable manuscripts, which must suffer from frequent handling, I have caused the abstracts in the Calendar to be made so full that in ordinary cases no further information can be obtained from the Rolls themselves. The great majority of Letters Patent, such as grants of offices, pardons, protections and safe-conducts, licences, presentations, and the like, were worded according to certain precedents, which were so familiar to the clerks who wrote the Rolls, that they often entered short notes of the documents issued under the Great Seal without transcribing them in extenso. Examples of the forms commonly used in the early part of the

* Calendars of the Patent Rolls of the reigns of Edward I. and Edward II. are in the press; a Calendar of those of the reign of Richard II. is in progress.