On 26 July 1822, the House of Commons presented an address to the Crown, stating that the editions of the works of our ancient historians were inconvenient and defective; that many of their writings still remained in manuscript, and, in some cases, in a single copy only. They added, "that an uniform and convenient edition of the whole, published under His Majesty's royal sanction, would be an undertaking honourable to His Majesty's reign, and conducive to the advancement of historical and constitutional knowledge; that the House therefore humbly besought His Majesty, that He would be graciously pleased to give such directions as His Majesty, in His wisdom, might think fit, for the publication of a complete edition of the ancient historians of this realm."

The Master of the Rolls, being very desirous that effect should be given to the resolution of the House of Commons, submitted to Her Majesty's Treasury in 1857 a plan for the publication of the ancient chronicles and memorials of the United Kingdom, and it was adopted accordingly.

Of the Chronicles and Memorials, the following volumes have been published. They embrace the period from the earliest time of British history down to the end of the reign of Henry VII.


Capgrave's Chronicle extends from the creation of the world to the year 1417. As a record of the language spoken in Norfolk (being written in English), it is of considerable value.


This Chronicle traces the history of the monastery from its foundation by King Ælla of Wessex, to the reign of Richard I. The author had access to the title deeds of the house, and incorporates into his history various charters of the Saxon kings, of great importance as illustrating not only the history of the locality but that of the kingdom.


The first is a poem in Norman French, probably written in 1245. The second is an anonymous poem, written between 1440 and 1450, which is mainly valuable as a specimen of the Latin poetry of the time. The third, also by an anonymous author, was apparently written between 1665 and 1774.


The first volume contains original materials for the history of the settlement of the order of St. Francis in England, the letters of Adam de Marisco, and other papers. The second volume contains materials found since the first volume was published.