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LONDON AND BUNGAY.
Dedicated

(by special permission)

to

The Right Honourable

James Walter,

Second

Earl of Verulam,

who, until recently, occupied the exalted position of

Lord-Lieutenant

and

Custos Rotulorum of Hertfordshire.
This Work is limited to THREE HUNDRED COPIES, of which the First Hundred are issued as an ÉDITION DE LUXE.

No. 68
ÉDITION DE LUXE

Charles H. Ashdown

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INTRODUCTORY.

Many English towns have been immortalised in works devoted exclusively to their history, but none is more justly entitled to such distinction than St. Albans. Dating from the remote period that succeeded the rule of the Romans in Britain, this famous Hertfordshire town emerged from obscurity and became intimately connected with many of those remarkable events which, from time to time, have stirred the hearts of Englishmen and tended to advance their country to the proud position she now occupies. It is, therefore, surprising that, hitherto, there has never been produced a publication containing an approximately-exhaustive account of our ancient City. True, this important subject has not been neglected by Chauncy and Clutterbuck, but in their comprehensive works only a comparatively few pages could be spared for St. Albans, while our latest County historian, Mr. Cussans, omitted it altogether, presumably through lack of sufficient local encouragement. The present volume, however, does not pretend to supply that omission, for, to effect this result, it would be necessary to explore greater depths of local learned lore, and to include here, in their entirety, certain minute details which are usually considered as essential to the completeness of any historical record. St. Albans is so charmingly picturesque and pre-eminently rich in interesting associations, that we, in our separate capacities, have preferred to deal only with those special points which, we venture to believe, will appeal more forcibly to, and be more welcomed by, the majority of our readers than would the more serious labours of the erudite topographer.

The Illustrations in this Work are chiefly the result of many sketching expeditions among the highways and byways of St. Albans since 1890. Owing to what is euphemistically termed the "march of improvement," the pictorial features of our quaint City are gradually, but surely, disappearing; it therefore seemed desirable that some record by pen and pencil should perpetuate them before it was too late. Considering its proximity to the Great Metropolis,
it is most gratifying to discover in our historic town so many vestiges of mediæval architecture, for, in this utilitarian age, we are generally prepared to find ugly and obtrusive brick structures where formerly stood ancient tenements enriched by such charming accessories as red roofs, ivy-clad gables, carved beams, and quaint old dormer windows. That St. Albans has by no means escaped this distressing transformation is a fact amply testified by the prints and drawings which depict our principal streets and houses as they appeared during the time when the pillory and the stocks played no unimportant part in our social life, and when the general effect of those thoroughfares was indisputably far more picturesque and pleasing than it is to-day.

Needless to say, a book of this kind could not be brought to a successful issue without the generous assistance of well-wishers. It is, therefore, our duty and pleasure to gratefully acknowledge the valuable aid we have received during the progress of our labours from many well-known residents in the County, by whom we have been favoured with the loan of Manuscripts, scarce Pamphlets, local Histories, Maps and Plans, Drawings, Prints, Coins, Pottery, etc. For such privileges we offer our sincere thanks to Sir John Evans, K.C.B., F.R.S., etc., the Venerable Archdeacon Lawrance, M.A., the Rev. Canon Liddell, M.A., the Rev. H. Fowler, M.A., the Rev. F. Willcox, M.A., Mr. Lewis Evans, J.P., F.S.A., Mr. J. Hopkinson, F.L.S., F.G.S., Mr. A. E. Gibbs, F.L.S., Mr. W. F. Andrews, Mr. R. T. Andrews, Mr. T. G. Page, Messrs. Gibbs and Bamforth, the Proprietors of the "Hertfordshire Illustrated Review," and many others.

Finally, the Author's special gratitude is due, and hereby tendered, to Mr. John Hopkinson and Mr. A. E. Gibbs, as well as his coadjutor, for generous assistance in revising the proof-sheets; but for their kind help these pages would have contained more inaccuracies than those which even the most lenient critics will discover therein, but from which it is impossible for such an undertaking as this to be absolutely free.

CHARLES H. ASHDOWN.
FREDERIC G. KITTON.

St. Albans,
November, 1893.
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WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES.

FULL-PAGE SUBJECTS.

The Abbey, from Alban’s Hill ........................................... Etched Frontispiece

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THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL IN THE LADY CHAPEL.—Showing north side. This engraving is from a scarce photograph.

CLASS-ROOM IN THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.—The room in which the Borough Sessions were held from A.D. 1554 to A.D. 1551. The wooden tablets affixed to the wall relate respectively to the Ancient Benefactors and Headmasters, and to the Wine Charters. In front of the window stands the cope-table, previously shown in the illustration of "The Grammar School in the Lady Chapel"

SOPWELL RUINS.—In the foreground is seen a portion of the ruined wall of the Nunnery Garden, while in the distance, on the left, is the Abbey.

MEDALLION IN SALISBURY HALL.—These were removed from Sir Richard Lee's house at Sopwell upon its demolition.

ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH.—Sketched in January, 1827. To the left of the nearest buttress is the window of the so-called Lepers' Chapel.

ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, AS IT APPEARED BEFORE THE LAST RESTORATION.—From a contemporary engraving. This view is taken from the south-west, and shows the stunted wooden tower.

ANCIENT SCOTTISH LECTERN.—Formerly belonging to Holyrood Palace, but now in St. Stephen's Church.

ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY FROM HOLYWELL BRIDGE.—The building in the foreground is the "Duke of Marlborough" Inn; the adjacent cottages are occupied on the site of Holywell House.

WALTER DE ANERSHAM ATTACKED BY THE RABBLE OF ST. ALBANS.—From an illuminated MS. in the British Museum (see Note, p. 134).

"HOLYWELL HOUSE" (demolished circa 1837).—From a drawing by G. Shepherd, representing the east front, facing the private grounds. The tower of the Abbey may be discerned above the trees on the right. The square structure to the rear of the right wing is probably a portion of the "New Barras," the ancient residence of Sir Ralph Rowlatt.

OLD COTTAGES, HOLYWELL HILL.—On the extreme right the old mansion known as "Inn House" is faintly indicated.

SOPWELL LANE, LOOKING WEST.—The building in the foreground, on the right, is the "White Lion" Inn, whence to the opposite side extended Sopwell Bar.

HOLYWELL.—The "Wonder" Coach starting for London. The two nearest houses on the right are those of the original "White Hart" Inn, while just beyond is the coach-entrance to the "Saracen's Head" Yard.

THE "WHITE HART" YARD, HOLYWELL HILL.

HOLYWELL HILL LOOKING SOUTH.—The old tenement on the right is the "Trumpet" Inn, adjoining which is seen on the left a portion of the house once occupied by Sir William Dominie, and now called "Hollywell House." Lower down the incline is the "Post-Boy" Inn.

THE CORNER OF THE HIGH STREET AND VERULAM STREET.—The building on the right is the "Great Red Lion" Inn, over which appears the Clock Tower.

THE CLOCK TOWER, MARKET CROSS, AND CONDUIT, AS THEY APPEARED IN 1787.—From an aquatint by F. Jukes after a drawing by J. Schneebille. This view includes, on the left, the "Fleur-de-Lys" Inn, with its coach-entrance and quaint signboard, and the "Old Christopher" beyond; the Clock House standing on the Tower; and the Market Cross and Conduit, surrounded by the figure of Justice.

FRUIT STALL NEAR THE CLOCK TOWER.—A sketch in the High Street. On the left is French Row, with the "Old Christopher" Inn and part of the "Fleur-de-Lys".

"THE CLOISTERS," LOOKING NORTH.—Over the building at the end of the passage is seen the Clock Tower.

"HALL PLACE."—The residence of Miss Lydekker, adjoining the north side of St. Peter's Chuchyard.

WEST ENTRANCE DOORWAY, ST. PETER'S CHURCH.—This Doorway, the only remnant of the 13th century Church, is in the centre of the present West Elevation.

SOUTH VIEW OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH.—From a drawing by Baskerfield, 1787, now in the British Museum. The Tower is here represented as having a short spire, or "spike," and a Staircase Turret at the north-east angle. The low building projecting from the west front of the Chancel is that referred to by Salmon as "a chapel or vestry.

SOUTH-EAST VIEW OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH, SHOWING TRANSVERSES.—From a drawing by Baskerfield, 1787, now in the British Museum. The Chancel, Transepts, and Staircase Turret (the latter sitting on the Tower) are here clearly indicated.

ST. PETER'S CHURCH, FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.—As seen immediately prior to Lord Grimthorpe's restoration in 1883. This engraving represents the structure from the same point of view as in the preceding illustration, and the difference in the dimensions of the Chancel is at once observable. The Tower, as here shown, was built 1302-6.

ANCIENT MEMORIAL BRASS, in the form of a Rose, with Inscription on Pedestal.—The Latin word in the centre is "Ecce" ("Behold"). This brass is believed to have been purchased by the authorities of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the vendor being a St. Albans workman! [It should be regretted that great England and her ancient seats of learning have been gleaned of such valuable relics for the Churches.]

OLD COTTAGES ON ST. PETER'S GREEN.—From a sketch made in 1837.

ANCIENT MANTELPIECE IN "THE MANSEL."—This Overmantel is in a room on the first floor, facing the Town Hall. The apartment is panelled throughout.

ALMSHOUSES FOR THREE POOR WINDOWS.—Demolished in 1829. From a Contemporary Sketch. On the site of these tenements the present Town Hall was built. The board which projects from the nearest corner is an advertisement of the "White Hart" Inn, Holywell Hill. In "The Blue Puppy" Inn, and "The White Hart," the old Abbeys were immediately behind the building above the ground floor, and beyond stands the old Tudor house, called "The Mansion," which is still standing, but the adjoining wall and gateway were pulled down when Spencer Street was constricted.
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE TOWN HALL AND "THE MANSION."—On the left is the principal façade of the present municipal building—the only example of classical architecture in St. Albans. It will readily be noticed that the house in the centre of the picture is the same as that described above.

THE MARKET PLACE.—This picturesque"bit" represents the east front of the block of buildings between French Row and the Market Place. Between the "Boot" Inn, on the extreme left, and the Clock Tower are seen two distant houses, in front of which stood the old Market Cross, its position being here indicated by the Drinking Fountain. Of the two houses just mentioned, that on the left is of special interest, and stands on the site of the old Wax-House Gate.

A SKETCH IN FRENCH ROW.—On the right is the "Old Christopher" just observable. The house seen immediately under the two distant turrets of the Abbey bears upon its gable the date 1663.

THE "FLEUR-DE-LYS" YARD.—As seen from Verulam Street. The coach-entrance at the farther end leads into French Row.

CARVED BRACKET.—At the rear of the Entrance Gateway leading to the "Christopher" Yard. The corresponding bracket has disappeared. Similar brackets are preserved at Messrs. Thorpe and Collings', adjoining the entrance to "The Cloisters".

ANCIENT FIREPLACE IN THE MOOT HALL.—The Moot Hall now forms the printing premises of Messrs. Gibbs and Bamforth.

OLD HOUSE-FRONTs IN THE MARKET PLACE.—These are represented, from another point of view, in the illustration on page 239.

"BOOT ALLEY."—This narrow thoroughfare which runs between the Market Place and Chequer Street, to the rear of the "Boot" Inn, apparently bears no authorized name; it is, therefore, here christened "Boot Alley."

TELEGRAPHIC APPARATUS ON THE CLOCK TOWER.—Taken down circa 1814. From a contemporary drawing by G. Shepherd. (See engraving in Beauties of England and Wales, 1812.)

THE "GEORGE" YARD.—Over the Gateway is seen the carving brought from Holywell House when it was demolished circa 1837.

THE "OLD ANTELOPE" INN.—From a drawing by J. Buckler, 1824. This Inn was pulled down circa 1840, the site being now occupied by the Abbey Schools and the present "Antelope," at the corner of Spencer Street and George Street.

OLD HOUSE IN COLLEGE STREET.—The surviving portion of the "Collegium Insanovum" possessed over by Dr. Nathaniel Cotton. Here the Poet Cowper was a patient for two years, the room occupied by him being that indicated by the middle window on the ground floor. The house is now divided into four separate tenements.

A SKETCH IN ROMELAND.—The old timbered house on the left, adjoining the entrance to the Abbey Churchyard, stands upon the site of the Monastic "Polyandrimum," and is now occupied by the Rev. Canon Liddell. Above it are seen the turrets surrounding the west front of the Cathedral Church.

"BLUE ROW."—These cottages were demolished in 1823, and the site now forms part of the Burial-ground extension in Romeland. The well depicted in the corner of the near garden originated the name of Wellclose Street, which is just opposite that point.

ST. MICHAELS STREET.—This picturesque thoroughfare is the only street in the village. Beyond, nesting in the trees, is the Church.

ROMAN GLASS AND POTTERY FOUND IN ST. MICHAELS AND ST. ALBANS.—The three glass vessels on the right (now preserved in Gorhambury House) were contained in a stone coffin, which was unearthed in 1815. The right-hand jar is of clay, and was discovered in Worley Road during excavations there in 1882; it is in the possession of Mr. A. E. Gibbs, F.R.S.E.

FISHPOOL STREET, looking towards St. Albans.

ANCIENT DOOR-HEADS: Fishpool Street. These and other interesting door-heads are on the right-hand side of the Street going west.

"GODMERSHAM HOUSE," West Wing.—On the right is the "Crown" Inn,—a building of about the same date.

CARVED PULPIT, ST. MICHAELS CHURCH.—On the right is seen the wrought-iron Stand for the Hour-glass: the latter, however, has disappeared.

FRANCES BACON'S MONUMENT, in St. Michael's Church.—This famous alabaster effigy, erected by Sir Thomas Measlys, occupies a niche on the north side of the Chancel.

RUINS OF FRANCES BACON'S HOUSE, Gorhambury Park.—The rectangular structure here depicted formed the entrance into the Hall. To the left of this are the remains of the Chapel and other portions of the House.

ENTRANCE HALL, Gorhambury House, Sketched in 1890.—This is the loftiest apartment in the Mansion, and extends to the roof. The gallery above leads to the various chambers. On the walls hang many interesting Portraits by Old Masters. Here, also, is a footstool which originally belonged to Queen Elizabeth.

A VERULAM COIN.—From an engraving in Leland's Itinerary, 1610.

THE TOKENS OF St. ALBANS.—This engraving represents all the known Tokens that were issued by the tradesmen in the Town, and are now for the first time delineated in their entirety.

PLAN OF THE CITY OF ST. ALBAN, 1693.

THE OLD "FIGHTING COCKS" INN.—Originally a monastic gateway.

THE WATER GATE OF THE MONASTERY.—From the drawing by Dr. Liévens. (Verso Illustration facing page 10.)

PLAN OF THE SITES OF THE MONASTIC BUILDINGS AND ENCLOSURES.

ANCIENT CLOCK, discovered in a ruined wall of St. Albans Monastery.

"VERULAM HOUSE."—Erected by Frances Bacon, and demolished circa 1676.

ARMS OF THE ABBEY OF ST. ALBAN.—Surmounted by a Mitre.
There are probably few sites in Great Britain which have such a varied wealth of historical associations as that of Verulamium. Back, far back, into the misty past of bygone ages; back through the epochs of iron, bronze, and stone; back to that vaguely-defined palaeolithic epoch which even our geological savants, handling æons of ages with indifference, mention with a certain degree of respect, we are carried by links of evidence which render the chain continuous up to the present time. What generations of men of
various races have trodden that earth which now nourishes the golden grain waving in the autumn breeze! The rude flint weapons which we find in the soil were once the sole means of offence or defence with which our remote ancestor, palæolithic Man, contended with the huge woolly mammoth, the great Irish elk, and other long-extinct animals; with the lapse of centuries Man began to fashion his flint weapons with more taste and skill, and then the neolithic age approached, flourished, and waned. Those rudely-chipped and those smoothly-polished implements, unearthed from the soil of Verulamium, are indisputable evidences of the occupation of the site by prehistoric Man for untold generations.

Gradually there arrived another phase of Man’s development, when he drew from Mother Earth the long-hidden metals, and fashioned swords and spears of bronze. With this came a marked change in his erstwhile savage state; an exacting priesthood, fostered by his own superstition, caused the gigantic trilithons of Stonehenge to be reared, the huge figures on our hill-slopes to be cut, and covered our land with cromlechs and barrows. Then, and not till then, can the history of the Briton with any degree of certainty be deciphered,—all that preceded is vague and intangible. Roads were formed in most parts of the island, a great many being constructed in the neighbourhood of Verulamium. They were merely track-ways, and wound along the sides of hills or through the dense forests from one settlement to another. Of these ways the most celebrated was the Watling Street, extending from the shores of Kent to the Thames, which it crossed at the site of the then non-existent settlement of London; from thence it reached Sulloniac (near Elstree) on the borders of Hertfordshire, and afterwards proceeded direct to Verulamium, being continued towards the north by way of the British town of Durocobriv (near Dunstable). A second road ran from Verulamium to Lexden (Colchester) by way of Hertford; a third through Calleva (Silchester) to Winchester; a fourth joined Verulamium with Regentium (Chichester), a fifth went to Enfield, another to Baldock, a seventh to Ravensburgh.

Connected thus with the principal British settlements, Verulamium held no unimportant position; it was a centre from which radiated the trade and commerce of an extensive tract of country, occupied by the Cassii, or Catyeuchlani, whose capital it was. It apparently occupied the same site as the Roman city which succeeded it, but its area of
about two hundred acres would be insufficient to accommodate the large numbers of cattle which formed the chief wealth of the tribe. To provide for these an extensive district on the other side of the river was utilized, and to a certain degree fortified, the earthwork known as Beech Bottom, and that which can be traced thence to the river nearly opposite St. Michaels, then by the river to Sopwell, and returning through the camp to Beech Bottom again, being its probable limits. Verulamium itself was defended on three sides by a wide and deep dry ditch, fringed with palisades and sharp stakes; while upon the remaining side (the north-east), the river Ver overflown a considerable area of the valley and formed a wide morass.

To confine the waters of the river an embankment was made across the stream from the eastern part of Verulamium, which also formed a causeway leading to the great cattle-enclosure. This embankment still exists, though cut through in one part long afterwards by a Saxon Abbot to release the pent-up water. There is probably in no part of England, except at Stonehenge, a work which carries back the history of our country to such a remote period as does this bank, laden with the weight of unnumbered years. It may have been ancient when Nebuchadnezzar sacked Jerusalem, when Romulus founded Rome, or even when David danced before the ark; but judged only from its authentic historical record of twenty centuries it is a truly venerable memorial of bygone ages. Within the rude defences of the city the Britons built their wattle huts, covered with skins, boughs, or turf; worshipped in their oaken groves, and feasted with rudest revelry; anon they sallied forth into the dense forests to hunt the bear, or chase the deer, or from their fragile coracles caught the glittering fish in the placid lake.

While the Britons thus lived contentedly in primeval barbarism, with but little indication of social progress for each of the passing centuries, a mighty nation had pushed its conquering arms into all the known territories of the earth, and held the world in bondage. The Roman general, Julius Cæsar, had subdued Gaul, and now turned his envious eyes across the narrow channel which separated Britain from the mainland. In B.C. 55, he landed with comparatively few followers, and retired again almost immediately; the next year (B.C. 54) he returned

1 The fortified area is about two miles and a quarter long and a mile and three-quarters broad, enclosing the town of St. Albans within its limits.
with overwhelming forces, and, crushing all opposition, made his way into the country towards the Thames. Cassivelaunus, prince of the Cassii, had hitherto waged almost incessant war with his neighbours, but now, in the face of the common danger, he was placed at the head of a coalition of British chiefs and their united forces. A determined opposition was made to Caesar's approach at Coway Stakes, near Walton in Surrey, where the British army was drawn up on the northern bank of the Thames, and the ford rendered almost impassable by thick oaken stakes. The Romans valiantly forced the passage, and Cassivelaunus retreating, dismissed the greater portion of his army, reserving four thousand chariots with which he harassed the Romans in their advance to Verulamium; he also destroyed the whole of the provisions and forage in the country on their line of march. The Trinobantes, however, submitted to Caesar and furnished him with provisions; several other states following their example, he at last found himself in a position to attack the stronghold of Cassivelaunus, to which a great number of the country people had retired with their flocks and herds.

Advancing upon it by way of the Watling Street, the Roman general at length reached Verulamium. He found it to be a large wood, defended by deep ditches and morasses, and, though the entrenchment appeared most formidable, he resolved to attempt its conquest. Dividing his forces, he assaulted the city defences at two different points. The opposition was determined and prolonged, and the loss on both sides considerable; but one division eventually succeeded in overcoming all obstacles and forced its way into the stronghold; a panic then seized the Britons, and they fled out of their city by one of the avenues cut in the dense forest around them. Great numbers were slain or captured, whilst the enormous herds of cattle proved welcome spoil for the victors. Cassivelaunus managed to escape, but, seeing that he had no hope of successfully resisting Caesar, he sued for peace; this was readily granted him upon condition of his furnishing hostages for his good behaviour, and paying a yearly tribute. The Britons, resolute and fierce by nature, agreed to pay tribute and submit to Roman levies, but would bear no insult or injury; they were willing to obey, but would not be slaves. Assuredly the great composite edifice of our British character has been reared upon very solid foundations.

1 Camden, p. 155. Bede, i. i. c. 2. Tyrrel, p. 34.  
2 Tacitus.
The Romans now retired from Britain, and for nearly one hundred years the land was left in peace. Cassivelaunus appears to have paid tribute during the remainder of his life, but his successor, Tenuantius, refused to do so, until a threatened invasion so frightened him, that he not only submitted, but made rich presents to the Emperor Augustus, which were laid up in the Capitol.

In the nineteenth year of the reign of Augustus Caesar, Tasciovanus became prince of the Cassii. His capital was Verulamium, and he reigned for thirty-five years over the Sagontiaci, Catyeuchlani, and perhaps the Trinobantes. Many of his coins struck at Verulamium are in existence in gold, silver, and copper. In the latter part of his reign that great event occurred in the far-distant Jewish capital which was destined to exert such a powerful influence upon the nations of the globe, and shatter the foundations of all existing theologies. But whilst the wise men of the East so diligently sought the Light, the barbarians of the West lived on contentedly in their primeval darkness.

In a.d. 5, Tasciovanus died, and was succeeded by his celebrated son, Cunobeline, the Cymbeline of Shakespeare. Educated in Rome, and a favourite of Caesar Augustus, Cunobeline had imbibed much of the civilised manners of Roman life, and introduced reforms and improvements in the arts and manufactures of his British subjects. During the reign of this King the foolish expedition of the Emperor Caligula occurred. One of the sons of Cunobeline, named Adminius, was exiled by his father and fled to Rome; he hoped to be restored by Roman aid, and prevailed upon the Emperor to march with an army for the conquest of Britain. Before crossing the Channel, Caligula's ardour cooled; he ordered his soldiers to fill their helmets with sea-shells as spoils of the ocean, and then returned to Rome. Other sons of Cunobeline were Epaticcus and Togodumnus, but the most renowned of that family was he whose name will never fade from history, the heroic Caractacus; this prince

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1 Sir John Evans, Ancient British Coins.
ruled over a portion of his father's territories upon the death of Cunobeline in A.D. 41, the other portion falling to Togodumnus.

In A.D. 43, the Emperor Claudius determined to subjugate Britain; an army was sent from Rome under the command of Aulus Plautius, with whom Vespasian served; the landing was unopposed, and the general marched inland. The policy of the Britons on this occasion was to hide in inaccessible places, and to weary the Roman troops with fruitless searches and pursuits, but Plautius managed to first defeat Togodumnus and subsequently Caractacus. The inhabitants of Verulamium submitted without a blow, and the Romans, finding the site in all respects suitable, at once made it their headquarters and a military colony.

It is worthy of note that Verulamium was the first Roman city built in Britain; it was at once fortified by means of an encircling wall, and by towers at intervals, to defend the weaker parts and the entrances to the town. The wall, of which so many interesting parts remain, was twelve feet in thickness; its height probably varied considerably according to the locality, but judging from the present altitude a minimum of about twenty feet was probably attained.
The gates were massive, square, castellated structures, judging from the thickness of the existing foundations. The South Gate stood at the entrance to the double fosse, at the upper portion of the Verulam woods; another, whose remains were visible until 1700, occupied the entrance of the Camlet Way; a similar stronghold defended the exit of this road and the bridge or ferry on the other side of the city. The Watling Street was also protected by gates, one being situated near the wicket at the lower end of the walk in Verulam woods, and the other near Gorham Block.

The method of building the walls and gates was somewhat peculiar; large boxes or caissons were filled with alternate layers of coarse gravel and flints, concrete was poured in, and double or treble layers of Roman tiles in mortar were superposed, the remaining space being filled up with concrete. The tiles measure about sixteen inches by thirteen inches, by an inch-and-a-half in thickness. Both bricks and mortar are remarkably good, being intensely strong and hard; the vestiges now existing excite our admiration by the wonderful manner in which they have resisted the influences of time and climate for nearly two thousand years. This massive wall encircled the whole city. The Romans
deepened and enlarged the fosse which the Britons had commenced, and thereby added to the defences of three sides; the remaining side was protected by the broad and deep waters of the lake which no doubt lapped the walls.

The general shape of the city was an irregular oval, the major axis being formed by the Watling Street, and the minor axis by the Camlet Way; the two intersecting (as may be seen by the plan) near the church of St. Michael. It is a remarkable coincidence that Verulam and Pompeii resemble each other in a marvellous degree as regards shape, dimensions, arrangement of streets, and position of buildings. The length of Pompeii is 4,300 feet, of Verulam 4,488 feet; the width of Pompeii is 2,460 feet, of Verulam 2,541 feet; the area of the former is 167 acres, and of the latter, 190 acres. If the plan of one city be applied to that of the other they nearly coincide, and it would almost appear as though the authorities deputed to lay out Verulam had taken the Campanian city as their model.

In the streets, also, a similar resemblance seems to exist both as to position and width, for in either case they run at similar angles along the axes of the ellipses, and are from 24 feet to 27 feet in width. Verulam, however, has the advantage of the greatest regularity, having been evidently built on one formal plan, as the new American cities are now arranged; the streets were composed of gravel concrete, with an occasional upper facing of stone slabs, but in most places loose metal only was used. Buildings, both public and private, were erected, and an uninterrupted course of prosperity apparently lay before the town, but in the year A.D. 61, a general feeling of uneasiness and apprehension pervaded the Roman world in Britain. Although the inhabitants had been subdued and were living in apparent contentment under the Roman rule, yet the conquerors, in spite of their number (which was considerable by reason of the immigration of numerous colonists), believed the auguries of their priests, which foretold calamity. Many portentous signs occurred to excite the wildest fears of the credulous Romans. "The statue of Victory in the temple built and dedicated to the deified Claudius at Camalodunum (Colchester) fell down without any visible violence; the affrighted Romans saw terrible omens in the appearance of the tidal lakes; women chanted prophetic denunciations in the streets, and strangers howled and murmured in the public places." ¹

¹ Xiphilini Epitomes Dionis Cassi, lib. lxii.
Such were the apprehensions which preceded the terrible and sanguinary outbreak of the Britons under the leadership of the infuriated Boadicea, the much-injured Queen of the Iceni. Profiting by the absence of the Roman general, Suetonius Paulinus, who was engaged in subduing Anglesey, Boadicea placed herself at the head of a numerous army of Britons and successfully attacked several Roman settlements. Suetonius hurriedly hastened southwards, but was too late to save either Verulamium or the rising colony of London, for tumultuous hordes of half-savage Britons had swept over the district, leaving death and desolation in their track. In vain did the Roman inhabitants of Verulamium try to repel them; they swarmed into the fated city, putting to death every man, woman, and child in whose veins ran the blood of the hated invader; after they had exterminated the inhabitants and taken all the portable plunder, fire completed the work of destruction, and the great town lay a dreary expanse of blackened ruins. Tacitus states that the Britons passed by other minor places in order to obtain the riches of Verulamium,—a circumstance which indicates the importance of the settlement even at that early period. In the city and the immediate neighbourhood over 70,000 Romans were put to death, the cruelties practised by the victors being of the most inhuman and barbaric description. But the Roman general was now at hand; he met the Britons, and, though considerably outnumbered, completely defeated them, 80,000 being (it is said) left on the field. With the suicide of Boadicea this memorable insurrection ended, and the inhabitants accepted as inevitable the yoke of the conquerors of the world.

From its ashes Verulamium rose like a phoenix, but in greater magnificence than before. Upon this great metropolis of the south was now conferred by the Emperor Nero the dignity of being a ‘Municipium,’ or Free City, York being the only other town in England sharing the same honour. The rights of Roman citizenship (a privilege dearly prized in those days) could be claimed unquestioned by all born within its walls; they could proudly say with St. Paul, “I was free born.”

Under the favour of successive Emperors, Verulamium enjoyed many long years of uninterrupted prosperity; the spacious streets were now lined with luxurious villas in which the inmates revelled in the delights of the bath and the table, and thus recalled to mind their sunny Italian homes. The great Forum spread its columned space in the heart of the city, where gaily-dressed groups of citizens passed their time in discoursing upon serious or trivial affairs,
where markets were held, and at times noisy municipal or religious meetings assembled; and in close proximity rose the massive walls of the Basilica, with its law-courts and attendant halls of council, where justice was administered. Hither thronged crowds of grave *curiae*, anxious clients, slaves of all colours and degrees, and a long array of Imperial officials and tax-gatherers. Here were the great public baths, whilst the summits of temples, dedicated to the well-known deities of Roman mythology, reared their column-supported façades in many of the principal streets. Shops of bakers, leathersellers, oil-dealers, money-changers, and armourers stood on either side of the stone-paved causeways, whilst noisy groups of boisterous citizens and brawny foreign legionaries crowded round the open stalls of the wine-vendors. The regular clank of metal ringing on metal was heard, as glittering bodies of mail-clad warriors, with the sun glinting on many a burnished helm and sharpened spear-point, tramped through the streets, under the stern command of the grim centurions. The iron grasp of the mighty Roman Empire had closed upon the city; the multitudinous blessings and curses of the highest civilisation which the world had ever seen awed and astonished the simple islanders.

Upon the calm bosom of the great lake which stretched from the ancient British dam far up the valley of the Ver, the miniature Roman galleys, propelled by the muscular arms of their rowers or by gaily-painted sails, conveyed crowds of gorgeously-dressed citizens of all classes, on pleasure bent; while on the landing-stages in the massive masonry of the fortifications, or on the opposite verdure-clad slopes of the valley, stood many a group awaiting the ferry to carry them over the water.

To the sumptuous Greek theatre with its frescoed walls and marble-girdled spaces walked or drove an intermittent audience of sightseers, whilst ever and anon the distant roar of a multitude of voices was heard from the vast amphitheatre without the city walls, where poor wretches butchered each other to make a Roman holiday, and satiated that lust for bloodshed which so strongly characterised the people.

And so the years passed on and grew into centuries; Jerusalem fell before Titus, and the Jews were scattered; the last of the Apostles closed his eyes at Patmos; successive Emperors were elected and died, were deposed or assassinated; the Christians were periodically massacred in various parts of the Continent; the Emperor Severus died at York; and through
THE ABBEY AND CONVENTUAL BUILDINGS.

From a drawing by De Lievens, a pupil of Rembrandt.
all the varying changes Verulamium flourished as the capital of southern Britain. The country also increased in wealth and importance, for we find that a few years after the usurpation of Carausius, A.D. 285, Eumenius writes:—"Britannia, fortunate and happier than all other lands, enriched with the choicest blessings of heaven and earth." To the Romans in the days of Constantine it was proclaimed by another orator to be matchless, as a land "so stored with corn, so flourishing in pasture, so rich in variety of mines, so profitable in its tributes, on all its coasts so furnished with convenient harbours, and so immense in its circuit and extent." Christianity was introduced and numbered many converts, but Britain was so far distant from the heart of the Roman empire that no wave of persecution reached her remote shores for nearly three centuries after the great tragedy at Calvary.

In A.D. 284, the son of a Dalmatian peasant became Emperor by the power of the soldiers, and under this monarch, Diocletian, the last and worst persecution occurred. Express orders were sent forth that the edicts against Christianity were to be enforced with the utmost rigour, and provinces which had hitherto escaped began to suffer. The general in command in Britain at that time was Maximianus Herculius, who in all probability resided in Verulamium, as we find that the machinery of the law was first set in motion against the Christians at this place. The first to suffer was Albanus.

"Alban, our proto-martyr called."

(Drayton, Polyolbion, xxiv.)

He was executed in A.D. 303, and the persecution spread with frightful results throughout Britain, one thousand Christians suffering death at Lichfield alone. The citizens of Verulamium, as a disgrace to St. Alban’s memory and a terror to other Christians, had the story of his murder inscribed upon marble and inserted in the city walls.

In 305, Constantine succeeded Diocletian as Emperor of the West, and he instantly put an end to the persecution; and in 313 a church was erected by the Christians of Verulamium upon Holmhurst Hill, where the martyr had suffered.¹ This Romano-British church was standing in Bede’s time (A.D. 673—735), and in that of Offa, King of Mercia, the founder of the Abbey. At the time of the Pelagian heresy, which prevailed A.D. 401, Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre,
and Lupus, Bishop of Troyes, came to Britain for the purpose of suppressing the heresy, and assisted at a synod held in Verulamium. Germanus exhumed the bones of St. Alban and placed them, together with a number of holy relics, in a wooden coffin which was again buried. A chapel was erected in honour of Germanus, the ruins of which were in existence at the beginning of the last century and gave the name to St. German's Farm, which includes a large part of the site of Verulam.

By the end of the fourth century the great Roman empire was tottering to its fall, though convulsive efforts were made by a few energetic spirits to avert the catastrophe; Rome itself being threatened by savage tribes from northern Europe, the troops stationed in Britain and other colonies were withdrawn to defend the very heart of the empire. The four legions usually stationed in Britain were ordered home one by one, and in A.D. 420 the Roman occupation ceased, the Britons being advised that henceforth they would be left to govern themselves. But four hundred years of dependence on others had rendered them totally incapable of combining for their own defence, and had destroyed their spirit of self-reliance. The Picts and Scots came down from their mountain fastnesses and overran the northern part of Britain; the Irish pirates descended upon the western coasts, and marauding bodies of Saxons and Danes on the east and south. Against these swarms of plundering and merciless barbarians the Britons waged a hopeless struggle for years, but were gradually driven from their fastnesses and towns to the inaccessible mountains of the west.

In the year 465, a large force of Northmen, fresh from the spoliation of the eastern counties, appeared before the walls of Verulam. With what wondering eyes they must have looked upon those massive walls, and the great city lying within them; perhaps some recollections of those enchanted towns which figure prominently in Norse legends flashed before their minds as they saw the vast palaces, temples, triumphal arches, and columns outspread before their astonished gaze. But the clustered crowds of armed Britons behind the defences soon aroused them, and a fierce attack was made upon the city. In vain did the Britons line those walls which the Romans

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1 Camden.
would have held with far less numbers,—they were driven from them by the Saxons through the long straight streets, and fled affrighted into the forests. The invaders, gratified, and, perhaps, awestruck by the prize which had fallen into their hands, made Verulam their head-quarters and stronghold; for over thirty years they lived in or adjacent to it, and doubtless defended it from many a sharp attack of the Britons.

The British prince, Uther Pendragon (A.D. 498 to 516) defeated the Saxons in a number of encounters, and forced his way from the west of England, where lay his dominions, to the vicinity of Verulam, and here, in a pitched battle, he defeated the invaders, but received a wound in the contest. The healing powers of the water of the Holy Well soon cured him of his hurt, when, at the head of his forces, he made a determined attempt to capture Verulam, and after a long-sustained siege succeeded in retaking the city and driving the Saxons from the neighbourhood; it remained in his possession until his death. Soon afterwards, however, a vast force of Angles landed on the eastern coast of England, exterminating the British inhabitants of what is now Norfolk and Suffolk, and, after establishing the district of East Anglia, sweeping in overpowering numbers into the southern midlands of England.

Once more, and for the last time, an enemy appeared before the walls of Verulam; once more the Britons were driven out of the city by overwhelming numbers. The conquerors, who are credited with being the most savage and vindictive of Northmen, turned in their wild lust for plunder and destruction upon the devoted city; down came fluted column and carved capital, down crashed the roofs of stately piles of buildings, grinding the statues and priceless works of art to worthless fragments. Fire completed the dire destruction, and amidst the hoarse cries of triumphant barbarians, the roar of writhing flames, the crash of masses of Cyclopean masonry and rolling clouds of densest smoke, Verulamium, the great mistress of Southern Britain, the favoured representative of Imperial Rome for four long and glorious centuries of wealth and power, glided from the living annals of the world, and was no more.

1 Prompton.
CHAPTER II.

VERULAM (continued).


For many years the ruins of Verulam\(^1\) lay untouched and neglected. The great kingdom of Mercia was founded by Crida, and upon the opposite bank of the extensive lake rose a palace of the Mercian Kings, who hunted in the woods of Kingsbury and fished in the waters of the King's Fishpool. The great Penda, from the windows of his palace, might look over the shapeless heaps of ruins which once was Verulam, and witness the results of the ruthless devastation of his ancestors; but time had been kind to the blackened and seared remains, for garlands of glistening ivy depended from column and arch and wall, and a trailing network of flowering convolvulus and sweet-scented honeysuckle grew in clustering masses over demolished carvings and defaced frescoes. For three long centuries the elements wrought their will with the overthrown city, and during this period the Saxon Kingdoms came into existence. Verulam was shunned as a city of the dead; the superstitious Saxon swineherd alone ventured tremblingly near its desolate site, to gaze with awe and wonder upon the mementoes of past greatness which were being rapidly hidden by rank vegetation and by the dust that blows with every wind. Within the ruins the wild beasts held undisputed sway; the pale moon looked down upon a weird scene as the boar and the jackal left their retreats in the underground hypocausts to seek their prey, while silently the wary wolf crept across the moonlit Forum of the deserted city.

\(^1\) After the departure of the Romans the town was called Verulam, not Verulamium.
But towards the end of the eighth century the repose of the long-silent ruins was disturbed by those who came for materials wherewith to raise the monastery on Holmhurst Hill. Vast quantities of Roman tiles, with stone and flints, were transported across the river, and a huge and stately pile of buildings rose upon the site of St. Alban's martyrdom. Around the religious establishment dwellings began to spring up, and trade and commerce commenced. Verulam itself could boast of a few inhabitants, but they were outcasts from society, and those who preyed upon their fellow men. So great did the nuisance arising from their presence become to the monks, that the eighth Saxon abbot, Ealdred, determined to destroy the hiding-places of the robbers, and with that end in view he filled up the many underground places in the ruins, and carted away quantities of material for the purpose of eventually building a church. He found great subterraneous passages, solidly arched, passing underneath the bed of the lake, which were possibly the *magna cloaca* of the city; in the same locality were discovered planks of oak studded with nails and smeared with pitch; also anchors and quantities of shells. The succeeding abbot, Eadmer, determined to explore the ruins more thoroughly than Ealdred had done; he came upon the foundations and remains of great palaces and other important buildings, and also found some manuscripts. He discovered several stone floors, with tiles and columns fit for the intended church; also pitchers and urns made of earth and neatly shaped as with a wheel, with vessels of glass containing the ashes of the dead. The abbot apparently possessed no taste whatever for antiquities, for, in his religious zeal, he smashed all the relics of the heathens which he found, and spared none of the numerous urns, or amphorae, or even pillar-moulded glass vessels which he dug up, preserving only some carved cameos and gems for decorating the shrine of the saint, and these, too, have since disappeared. The parcel of books and rolls thus brought to light proved to be of great value, one of them having an inscription and title that glistened with letters of gold. "It was encompassed or bound with board of oak and silken bands which still preserved their strength and beauty. But, alas! they found themselves quite unable to read this volume, and though the curiosity of all persons was great to be informed of its contents, yet no person could be found able to

decipher it, until after a long search they found a poor decrepit old man, a priest, who was versed in languages, and who reported it to be written in the tongue that had used to be spoken by the ancient inhabitants of Werlamceastre, for so the Saxons called Verulam. Having committed the other books to the flames, because they treated of the idols and worship of the heathens, this, which contained a history of the life and sufferings of Alban, was treasured up, and used to be read in the monastery with great devotion, says Matthew Paris, even to this day. Eadmer caused it to be translated into Latin, in order to make the subject better known and understood, and as soon as the Latin translation was finished, the original in the British tongue crumbled into dust.”

There is a remote possibility that this extraordinary monkish fable may have some foundation of truth.

It is worth recording that the town of St. Albans bore the name of Verulam until the time of King Edgar (959—975). From the period when the monastery was founded until a comparatively recent date Verulam appears to have served simply as a quarry for building materials; large quantities were utilised by Abbot Ulsinus in the time of King Edred to build the churches of St. Michael, St. Stephen, and St. Peter; from that time until Paul de Caen became abbot, the material was removed which is now incorporated in the Abbey, after which the townspeople carried off much that the monks had left.

Camden (the famous historian, born 1551) says: “Nothing now remains of Verulam besides ruins of walls, chequered pavements, and Roman coins which they now and then dig up. Were I to relate what common report affirms of the many Roman coins, statues of gold and silver, vessels, marble pillars, cornices, and wonderful monuments of ancient art dug up here, I should scarcely be believed.” The poet Spenser (1553-1598), in his Ruins of Time, speaks thus of Verulam:

“I was that city which the garland wore Of Britain’s pride, delivered unto me By Roman victors, which it won of yore, Though nought of all but ruins now I be, And lie in mine own ashes, as ye see. Verlam I was; what boots it what I was, Sith now I am but weed and wasted grass.”

1 Newcome, p. 35. 2 Newcome, p. 265.
Stukeley (1687 to 1765) visited the ruins and noted the vestiges of the ancient city which he saw; these will be found upon the map of Ancient Verulamium.  

By far the most important discovery was that made in the present century by Mr. Grove Lowe. He observed some flints embedded in mortar on the left side of the private road from St. Albans to Gorhambury, about a hundred yards from the entrance-gates. Excavations were at once commenced, and the remains of a Roman Theatre were laid bare, the only discovery of that nature in Great Britain up to the present time. The earliest theatres were those of the Greeks, which had their outer walls containing rather more than a semi-circle. There was an inner concentric circle, the diameter of which was one-third that of the theatre. The space included in this smaller circle was called the orchestra or place for dancing, and was devoted to the chorus. The width of the stage was twice the diameter of the orchestra, and its depth one-seventh of that diameter. The Roman theatres were modelled upon those of Greece; but the orchestra was much smaller, as the chorus did not occupy such an important part. The outer walls rarely exceeded a semi-circle; and the orchestra, instead of being devoted to the chorus, was occupied by the seats of the spectators of highest rank in the state. The stage was more capacious than that in the Greek theatre, being twice the diameter of the orchestra in length and one-fourth in depth, so as to afford space for the chorus on the stage. Round every ancient theatre was a corridor, forming a space between the outer wall and an inner concentric wall. Over the corridor were seats sometimes used by ladies; and the space between these seats and the orchestra was occupied by rows of seats, concentric with the outer wall and rising like wide stairs, so that the spectators placed their feet on the next lower row. The scene was at the back of the stage, and usually represented a street, or the front of a palace, or a wood, and could be changed to suit the locality of a play. Behind the scene was the postscenium, in which murders and other incidents of the play were sometimes supposed to take place, while at the sides of the stage were entrances to rooms built for the convenience of performers.

See page 6.
The Theatre at Verulamium is one hundred-and-ninety feet three inches in diameter, the theatre at Pompeii one hundred-and-ninety-five feet. The two outer walls are on the plan of the Greek theatres, comprising an angle of 240°; between them is a corridor nine feet wide. The stage is forty-six feet long and eight feet nine inches deep. At the east portion is a room with a coarse tesselated pavement without any pattern, composed of tesseræ of Roman tiles about one inch square, set on a very thin layer of concrete; this was one of the rooms at the end of the stage for the use of performers. The foundations of a corresponding room on the west side have not been found. The outer wall of the Theatre at Verulamium is five feet nine inches thick, the second wall three feet six inches, the scena two feet six inches, and all the other walls two feet. An entrance at the centre opposite the stage, and another on the east side, have been partially laid open; but no trace of one has been found on the west side. The space over the corridor is twelve feet wide, including the thickness of the inner wall, and from thence to the outermost wall of the orchestra is thirty-three feet six inches. Immediately inside this wall were found vestiges of an inner wall, a few feet from it, which probably formed a separation for some privileged class; the space it surrounded was the orchestra for the seats of the most distinguished persons.

All the walls of the theatre, except, perhaps, the exterior, were painted in fresco; they were first plastered in mortar, which was reduced to a perfectly even surface; upon it was laid a covering of the finest mortar, absolutely white and seldom thicker than thin cardboard, and on this, while both the coatings of mortar remained wet, were laid mineral water-colours which adhered to and dried with it. The pigments being native earths and not artificially prepared, cannot be affected by time or damp; therefore, so long as the mortar retains its surface, they will remain uninjured. Slabs of marble, thirteen-sixteenths of an inch in thickness, were used freely in the theatre for adorning the walls in conjunction with the frescoes; the material is similar to that used for lining the fountain's basin at the famous Roman Villa at Bognor, in Sussex. In Pompeii a second and smaller theatre exists close to the large one, and foundations have been struck at Verulam which seem to point to the presence of a similar building there.

In 1869, when the British Archæological Association held their annual congress at St. Albans, some extensive excavations were made on the site of Verulam. The theatre was once more opened, and the accompanying illustration represents its general appearance. The foundations and remains of a number of villas were also laid bare, the site of the barracks was discovered, and many of the streets were localised. The débris brought to light during these operations is decidedly of interest. Upon the surface of the stone or concrete roads lies a quantity of oyster and mussel shells such as are always found in Roman towns, and which were probably thrown there by the inhabitants to deaden the rattling sound of passing chariots; upon the shells lie masses of burnt wood and charred remains of fallen timbers and rafters; then come overturned walls and great quantities of roofing-tiles, made with the rolls as seen at the present time in Italian towns. The fresco-painting upon the walls of the apartments of the villas laid bare in 1869 was very perfect; the intonaco, or thin finishing coat of plaster, was generally in excellent preservation. The colours were usually of a cream or white tone, with brown, red, and blue stripes, as in Pompeii, and the frescoes were sometimes painted with flowers. In the field where the theatre stands (which is still called the Black Grounds, probably because of the presence of a large amount of charcoal and blackened stones which are found there), the plough frequently exposes or turns up a quantity of tessellae, chiefly red or white, showing that the pavements are very near the surface.

The position of the Amphitheatre of Verulamium has not yet been ascertained; that shown on the plan of Ancient Verulamium was suggested by Mr. Grove Lowe in 1869, but was subsequently proved by himself to be erroneous. The most probable position (and one which, I believe, has not hitherto been pointed out) is that at the western termination of the double fosse on the south-east of the ancient site. A large oval depression occurs
at this point, one extremity lying where the word “Fosse” appears in the plan of Modern Verulamium; the roadway runs through the centre of the depression, the steep dip in the road at one point being probably down the eastern side. By placing the Amphitheatre on this spot the use of the double fosse becomes apparent; in an emergency, or sudden attack by an enemy, the spectators could gain the gateway of the city without unduly exposing themselves to danger.

In closing this brief account of one of the most interesting sites in the British Isles, a feeling of the deepest regret is naturally felt that these wondrous memorials of a bygone age are hidden from our view. If we consider carefully the following facts:—that Verulamium was a populous Roman city for four hundred years, and that, in all probability, the whole of its large site was occupied by the substantial erections of those “who built for eternity and not for time;” that the ruins were not disturbed for three centuries after the city was burnt; that during such a long period they must in the course of nature have been covered up, to a great extent, with earth; finally, that only a monastery, four churches, and a limited number of dwelling-houses have been built from the débris, which was naturally taken from the remains nearest to hand, i.e., those appearing above the surface of the soil,—the conclusion inevitably forces itself upon the mind that but a comparatively small proportion of material has been removed from the site, and that there still remain hidden in the soil rich treasures for the antiquary, the archaeologist, the numismatist, and the ever-increasing number of intelligent observers who take an interest in the history and antiquities of our native land. The time must eventually come to Verulam (as it has to many another interesting locality) when the jealous layer of superincumbent earth will be removed, and our knowledge of past ages enriched with the treasures which have so long lain dormant. The need of a local museum is acutely felt; many relics found at Verulam would have been preserved to us had a place been at hand in which to deposit them; as it is, the works of art and other interesting objects which continually come to light are scattered far and wide (the writer has himself seen Verulamium fresco and pottery in the museum at Madras), and we have no collection to offer for inspection to those who visit St. Albans in the natural expectation of finding an interesting museum of British, Roman, and mediaeval antiquities.
CHAPTER III.

MONASTIC RECORDS OF ST. ALBANS AND LIVES OF THE ABBOTS.


The foundation of the great monastery may be looked upon as the root from which ancient, mediæval, and modern St. Albans have sprung. Like many other ecclesiastical edifices in England, it owed its origin to an act of expiation for a deed of violence. The central portion of England under the Saxons, known by the name of Mercia,1 contained twenty-three English counties2 and formed a large and powerful state; King Offa II., whom Asser (in his life of Alfred) describes as, "A certain valiant king who was feared by all the kings and neighbouring states around," reigned over it from A.D. 755 to 794. One of our earliest historians3 has recorded the genealogy of this monarch, making him fifteenth in descent from the Scandinavian god, Odin.

Offa's wife, Drida, or Cynedrida, has a romantic history. She was born in France of a noble family allied to the French king, and, for some crime of which she was found guilty, was adjudged to die, but respect for her royal connection saved her from the ordeals of fire and iron. She was therefore committed to the sea in an open boat, alone, and with but little food and water; the stormy ocean cast her upon the wild coast of Wales, where her marvellous beauty much impressed the wild Welshmen, and, to ingratiate themselves with Offa, they conducted to his presence this remarkable waif of the sea. Her plaintive story enlisted his compassion, and he recommended her to

1 Mercia is probably the same word as "Mark" in Denmark, and "March," as in the Welsh Marches.
2 Matthew of Westminster.
3 Henry of Huntingdon.
the protection of his mother; her charms, or her wiles, animated his pity into love; and she eventually became his wife. But her influence upon him was not for good, and to her instigations have been ascribed many acts of cruelty performed by Offa. Bede, however, seems to imply that he was naturally cruel, stating that "He sought the kingdom with a bloodstained sword." An epithet so marked as "sanguinolento," from a contemporary, implies that Offa's reign commenced with human slaughter.

The murder of Ethelbert, King of East Anglia, is probably the worst of these deeds of violence. Offa expressed his willingness to grant the hand of his daughter, Elfrida, in marriage to the young sovereign, who, delighted at the idea of an alliance with so powerful a monarch, lost no time in visiting the king's court in order to pay his devoirs to his intended bride. But Queen Drida urged her husband to destroy Ethelbert, and the amiable and accomplished young prince was foully murdered in the king's palace. He had been hospitably received, but at night, when he had retired to his chamber, a messenger summoned him to an interview with the king, who desired to confer with him upon some matter of importance. Not suspecting danger, the youthful monarch quickly obeyed the royal mandate, and on his way to Offa's presence was cruelly assassinated. Chauncy affirms that the unfortunate Ethelbert was called by the queen upon the pretence of seeing Elfrida: "King Albert being gone with the queen, all the soldiers who followed at their heels were shut out; and when he expected the young princess, the queen said, 'She's called; sit down, my son, till she comes:' and when he had sat some time in a memorable seat, set forth with delicate furniture, longing for the delightful company of the princess, the innocent king drop'd suddenly through a trapdoor into a deep ditch made under the chamber, where he was strangled by the executioner, whom the queen had hid there, and she and her wicked instruments immediately smother'd him with the boulsters, cloaths, and curtains, so that none could hear him cry. Thus this elegant young king and martyr Albert was innocently destroyed without offence, and immediately received a crown of glory." Immediately after this

1 Vita Offa.
2 Ethelbert was afterwards canonized. Offa built a church where Hereford Cathedral now stands, and there the body of the king and martyr was buried.
crime East Anglia was annexed to Mercia, while Elfrida retired from her father's court to spend the remainder of her days in the nunnery at Croyland.

The evil deed, however, sat heavily upon the king's conscience, and being desirous to appease his troubled mind, and re-establish, if possible, his character in the world, he determined to do so in the usual manner adopted in those days by erring monarchs, viz.:—by founding a monastery. Tradition says that his pious purposes were assisted by divine aid whilst he was at Bath, for "In the rest and silence of the night he seemed to be accosted by an angel who admonished him to raise out of the earth the body of the first British martyr, Alban, and place his remains in a shrine with suitable ornaments."¹ William of Malmesbury says that the king was also encouraged in his devout purpose by Charlemagne, and it is further recorded that a friendship subsisted between these two monarchs, a statement strongly corroborated by the discovery some time since near the west entrance of the Abbey Church of a small coin which proved to be a denier of the French king.

Offa, by the advice of his special counsellors, appointed a day on which to search for the relics of the Martyr. As the king approached the vicinity of Verulam, attended by a numerous company of prelates, nobles, and courtiers, a light resembling a large torch was seen hovering over the devastated ruins; this was hailed at once as an omen of success, for the exact locality of the Saint's second interment had been forgotten. Upon the spot where the Martyr had suffered (ascribed by tradition to be that occupied by the present north transept of the Abbey) stood the ruins of the small church built soon after St. Alban's death by the Christians of Verulam.² This building had contained the Saint's bones for possibly more than a century, but the devastations of the Saxons subsequent to the departure of the Romans, in A.D. 410.

² Bede, i-7.
caused them to be again hidden under the soil. The apprehensions of the Christians were not ill-founded, for when the city of Verulam was dismantled and burnt by the Northern barbarians, the sacred edifice on Holmhurst shared the same fate. Guided by the miraculous light, the king, clergy, and people entered upon the search "with prayer, fasting, and alms,"¹ and finally discovered the spot of burial. When the coffin was found it contained the remains of Alban, and in addition thereto were the relics of the twelve apostles and the martyrs which had been placed there by Germanus, 344 years previously. The king affixed round the skull a golden circlet inscribed "Hoc est caput S. Albani," and, having been deposited in a reliquary adorned with gold and silver and precious stones, the relics were conveyed in solemn procession to the little church,² which was at once repaired for their temporary occupation, the walls being decorated with pictures, tapestries, and other ornaments. An illuminated MS. in the British Museum (Nero D.i.) gives a representation of the reliquary, which, if it be not altogether imaginary, was of good design and elaborate workmanship.

King Offa now made a pilgrimage to Rome to obtain the consent of Pope Adrian to the building and endowment of the monastery. This mission was important not only to St. Albans but also to the English nation at large, as it entailed for many centuries the levying of the tax so well known as "Peter's Pence." Ina, King of the West Saxons, had originally appointed the levy of Peter's Pence in a.d. 727, for maintaining a Saxon College at Rome: a penny being collected from each family in those of his dominions which held lands of the annual rent of thirty pence.³ Offa appears to have promised that this tax should apply to the whole of the Saxon kingdoms in Britain, provided that the money collected by him in his dominions should be appropriated especially to the Abbey of St. Alban. Not only was this granted by the Pope, but many special privileges were made by him to the new foundation; amongst other things

¹ Matt. Paris. ² Matt. Paris, Vita Offa, II. ³ Peter's Pence, also called Romescot, obtained its name by being paid on August 1st, which day is sacred to St. Peter ad Vincula, and was the day on which Offa discovered the bones of the Martyr. In 1113, Henry I. forbade its payment to the Pope, but eventually it was claimed as a right, as appears by the bull of Adrian in 1154, which authorized Henry II. to invade Ireland. (Rymer's Foedera, 1, xviii.)
tossed them to be again heated under the soil. The apprehensions of the Christians were not unfounded, for when the city of Verulam was dismantled and burnt by the Northern barbarians, the sacred edifice on Holmhurst shared the same fate. Guided by the crumbling light, the king, clergy, and people entered upon the search "with prayer, tending and slow," and slowly uncovered the spot of burial. When the coffin was found it contained the remains of Alban, and in addition thereto were the relics of the twelve apostles and the temple which had been placed there by Germanus. In round numbers the king placed round the skull a golden circlet inscribed "Hic est corpus N. Albani," and, having been deposited in a reliquary adorned with gold and silver and precious stones, the relics were conveyed in solemn procession to the little church, which was at once repaired for their temporary occupation, the walls being decorated with pictures, tapestries, and other ornaments. An illuminated MS. in the British Museum (Nero D.I.) gives a representation of the reliquary, which, if it be not altogether imaginary, was of good design and elaborate workmanship.

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the Abbey was to be exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, while Alban was canonized and acknowledged to be Britain’s Protomartyr.

Elated with his success, Offa returned homewards; a numerously attended council of nobles and prelates was held at Verulam, and the building of the great monastery was at once commenced. Historians differ in opinion as to whether Offa built an entirely new church in connection with the conventual buildings, or enlarged and beautified the Romano-British church which he had repaired. The latter conjecture is the more probable, for he was thus enabled to devote his attention to the monastery, which occupied five years in its erection. The idea that Offa did not build a church at St. Albans, for the use of his monastery and the greater honour of the Saint, is antagonistic to the general belief, and contrary to the testimony of several authors; but Matthew Paris distinctly states that “Offa at his own expense constructed all the buildings except an old edifice which he found erected formerly out of the ancient edifices of the heathens,” and, again, that “Offa in his monastery, which he had begun from the foundations within four or five years after he had begun the pious work, had in a style of excellence, erected nearly all the official buildings.” In addition to this we have another satisfactory corroboration in the fact that within two centuries of Offa’s death a new church was deemed necessary. So there is strong reason to believe that the building which stood until the time of Paul de Caen was the original structure erected by the early Christians soon after A.D. 305, with additions and alterations by Offa. If this structure was not totally demolished to make way for the Norman church (and certainly there appears to be no positive proof to the contrary) then we may still have incorporated in the ancient walls of the venerable Abbey the work of men who lived in the days of Constantine, and who witnessed the martyrdom of St. Alban.

The king resolved that the endowments of the monastery should be ample, and that its means for exercising hospitality might be sufficient for the entertainment of the numerous travellers, whom its vicinity to the Watling Street would probably attract, during their respective journeys either to the Metropolis or to the North. He selected a number of monks from establishments well known for their piety and discipline, and placed the monastery under

1 This seems to indicate that Verulam still possessed some inhabitants.

2 Dugdale’s Monasticon, vol. ii., p. 179.
the rule of St. Benedict—an order introduced by Augustine in 596. Their dress consisted of a long black tunic, or close gown, ungirded, a white close waistcoat of woollen beneath, and a shirt of hair, while a cowl either covered the head or hung back on the shoulders. The hair was shaven off the greater part of the crown, and the feet and legs were encased in high boots. They lived in the observance of the most rigid chastity, had no possessions of their own, never tasted meat (except when ill), and paid implicit obedience to their superior.

Willegod, the first Abbot, was a relative of Offa. The king retired to his palace at Offley, where he died A.D. 794, and was buried in a chapel on the banks of the Ouse, near Bedford. It is recorded that his tomb was washed away by a flood, together with the buildings containing it. The church of St. Alban, Wood Street, Cheapside, London, was originally the chapel attached to Offa's palace there; it afterwards came into the possession of St. Alban's monastery through a gift by Robert Mowbray, Earl of Northumberland, in the time of the fourteenth Abbot. Strange to say Willegod died about two months after his master's demise, his end being hastened, it is said, by grief at the refusal of Offa's son, Egfried, to allow his father's bones to rest in the monastery which he had founded.

Eadric, the second Abbot, was also of the blood-royal. In accordance with the request of the regal founder he was chosen from the body of the monks: but history is altogether silent as to the acts of this Abbot.

Vulsig, the third Abbot, was a man whose method of living was so totally at variance with the rules of his order as to be calculated to bring his abbey into disrepute. He was proud, intemperate, fonder of hunting than of the cloister, and practised the great enormity of inviting crowds of noble ladies to dine at his table.
Vulnoth, the fourth Abbot, was enabled to recover some of the lands which his predecessor had so lavishly bestowed upon his own near relations. The rule of this abbot is noteworthy by reason of the desecration of the shrine of St. Alban. A party of marauding Danes seems to have entered the monastery and appropriated whatever they pleased; and a few bones of the Saint were abstracted from the reliquary made by King Offa and conveyed to Denmark, where they were enclosed in a costly shrine and became objects of special veneration.

Ædfrid was the fifth Abbot. During his time a chapel was built by Ulpho the Prior, in honour of Germanus, upon the spot where the ruins of the rude hut stood in which the Saint had lived over four hundred years before. The ruins of this chapel existed until nearly the end of the last century; a sketch of them is given by Stukeley, and the site is now indicated by a mound just outside the northern Roman wall of Verulam, contiguous to the spot formerly occupied by the southern extremity of the ancient Fishpool. But these ruins were not entirely those of the chapel erected by Ulpho, but of a structure, restored or rebuilt, by Richard D'Aubeny, the second Norman Abbot.

With the accession of Ulsinus, the sixth Abbot, the history of St. Albans proper commences. It is true that a few houses had already been built where the central part of the present town stands, but they appear to have been of poor construction, and were huddled near the Abbey for protection. Ulsinus, by every means in his power,
induced the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages and country districts to settle in St. Albans. He built the three parish churches dedicated to St. Peter, the first of the Apostles, St. Stephen, the first of the Martyrs, and St. Michael, the first of the Archangels, at each entrance to the town; thus we have the strange anomaly of erecting churches to attract a population, the general rule in modern times being the introduction of such edifices when an increase of inhabitants justifies the proceeding. These churches (of SS. Peter, Stephen, and Michael) thus date from about the year 940, and consequently can boast of a greater antiquity than the Abbey, unless (as conjectured above) the Romano-British church is merged in the present structure. With large-hearted generosity Ulsinus gave money and materials for building to those who were attracted to St. Albans, and laid out a large market for the inhabitants. It is not improbable that, being especially fond of learning, he made provision for teaching the youths under his protection; but the first mention of an establishment of this description does not occur until more than a hundred years later, when it had become a large and flourishing school. There is, therefore, a possibility that Ulsinus began the educational work in the town, and that St. Albans Grammar School is a direct descendant, being thus enabled to refer its foundation to the time of King Edred, a period far more remote than that of any other school in the kingdom. The Abbot also built a chapel within the walls of Verulam, in the field which still retains the name of St. Mary Magdalene's Meadow; unfortunately there are no records extant to show when this chapel or oratory was demolished. Under the abbacy of Ulsinus the monastery first began that career of princely hospitality and charitable benevolence for which it was famous for centuries. The sick and infirm were taken within its walls and received medicinal help for the body, combined with spiritual aid to the soul. Poor wayfarers and benighted travellers hailed the first sight of its embattled walls with joy; they knew that food and shelter were granted there to all who asked, and in mingled prayer and thankfulness they fell upon their knees to bless the distant haven of rest. Learned scholars, whether rich or poor, received a hearty welcome; the monastery became the local centre from which emanated the erudition of the surrounding country; subsequently its Scriptorium witnessed the production of numerous
manuscripts under the deft fingers of the monks, either original or copied from older manuscripts, or translated from other languages. The monastery was the nucleus of the spiritual, mental, and bodily requirements of the neighbourhood, and the guardian of its peace, for the Abbots possessed civil jurisdiction and committed offenders against the law to prison, that structure being within the precincts of the monastery, and, as a rule, its Magna-Porta. What an autocratic power for good or evil had these magnificent establishments; the very heart and brain of the district in which they were placed, they swayed the thoughts and actions of those around! What a fearful responsibility,—how nobly carried out in some instances, how grossly perverted in others!

The successor of Ulsinus was Ælfric, whose learning and piety raised him to the Archbishopric of Canterbury in A.D. 995. He is mentioned in a previous chapter as having purchased the King's Fishpool from King Edgar, and draining it. He is said to have been one of the most learned men of the age in which he lived. He first became a monk of the Benedictine order at Abingdon, under Abbot Athelwold, who, on his promotion to the See of Winchester, took Ælfric with him to instruct him in his cathedral. Here he drew up his Latin and Saxon vocabulary, which was published at Oxford in 1659. The liturgy which he composed for the service of St. Albans Abbey was in use in Leland's time. He translated some parts of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha into the Saxon language, and wrote a number of epistles and sermons. It is strange that this Abbot held a belief concerning the bread and wine used at Holy Communion exactly similar to that avowed by the Established Church at the present time, and quite distinct from the tenets of the Roman Catholic Church upon that point. He says, "That Living Bread is not so bodily; not the self-same body that Christ suffered in; nor is the Holy Wine the Saviour's Blood which was shed for us, in Bodily Reality, but in Ghostly understanding."¹ This active and able prelate died in 1005, and by his will left books and lands to the Abbey of St. Albans. He was supposed to have been canonized, and a statuette of this saint may be seen in the High Altar screen.

The next two Abbots, Ealdred and Eadmer, are chiefly known for their researches amongst the ruins of Verulam.² Leofric and Ælfric, the tenth and eleventh Abbots, were

¹ Ep. to Wulfstan, Bp. of Sherborne, in Ex. Cath.
² Dugdale's Monast.
sons of the Earl of Kent. The former became an Archbishop of Canterbury, while the latter is remembered for his demolition of the Royal Palace of Kingsbury in the time of King Canute, and also for having composed a musical history of St. Albans, which was used for many years afterwards in the Abbey choir.

Leofstan, the twelfth Abbot, was an intimate friend, and also the confessor, to Edward the Confessor; during his abbacy the important manor of Langley was granted to the monastery by Egelwine the Black and Winifred his wife; the grant was confirmed by the king, and the new possession was henceforth termed "Abbot's Langley," to distinguish it from the adjacent King's Langley. A good mental picture of the rude and unsettled state of this later portion of the Saxon period is furnished by an agreement made by Leofstan with a knight named Thurnoth, and his two followers. For a grant to him of the manor of Flamstead, this bold lance agreed to guard the Abbey from injury, and to keep the highway from London through St. Albans free from robbers and wild beasts, for the better protection of the numerous travellers. To aid him in carrying out the latter project the woods and groves were cut down on either side of the Watling Street, so as to destroy the hiding-places in which these marauders had been lurking so long. Leofstan died during that momentous year in English history, 1066.

Frederic was the last of the Saxon Abbots, and was elected during the short reign of Harold, the last of the Saxon kings. The royal blood of England ran in the veins of this Abbot, for he was next in succession to King Canute. The great Norman invasion caused Harold to march his army into Sussex, where, near Hastings, he lost one of the decisive battles of the world. The Conqueror thought it advisable not to enter London before securing the submission of the neighbouring counties; passing northwards, he crossed the Thames and encamped at Berkhamstead. Here the Saxon nobles came to him to swear fealty, but in vain did he wait for the proud Abbot of St. Albans to appear with his submission. The king proceeded to Westminster for his coronation, and then, with a considerable force, started for St. Albans on no friendly visit to the Abbot. But Frederic was not to be easily trapped, and the king found himself forestalled. Huge trees had been felled and laid across his path, with other entanglements to hinder

1 Willis's *Mit. Parl. Abbeys.*
his march, whilst Frederic, at the head of a powerful coalition of discontented nobles (including the two renowned Earls, Edwin and Morcar, whose avowed object was to place Edgar the Atheling, "Engelondes Dereling," upon the throne), found himself powerful enough to dictate terms to the baffled monarch. The Conqueror took an oath, which was administered by Frederic himself, to keep inviolate all the laws of the realm which his predecessors had established. But the astute king simply desired to gain time to establish himself more firmly in his new dominions, and soon the Abbot found his position becoming so perilous, that he deemed discretion "the better part of valour," and fled precipitately to the monastery of Ely. Here he shortly afterwards died, his end being accelerated by mortification and grief. But the brave Abbot had left a sorry legacy to St. Albans; William seized a large portion of the possessions of the Abbey, and would have demolished the whole of the buildings, but for the intercession of Lanfranc, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who desired that one of his relations should be appointed to the Abbacy of St. Albans. In this he was successful, and Paul of Caen, the first Norman Abbot, received his appointment in 1077.
CHAPTER IV.

LIVES OF THE ABBOTS (Continued).


Paul de Caen. The advent of the Norman element into the monastery was marked by the most radical changes. The buildings then existing were not thought to be of sufficient size and grandeur for the new inmates, so considerable portions of them were demolished and re-erected in a style of magnificence more worthy of the importance and magnitude of the monastery. The Bake-house and the Mill-house alone were left untouched. The Abbey was wholly or partially demolished and rebuilt, the materials being the huge store of bricks and stones which preceding Abbots had accumulated for this purpose from the ruins of Verulam, and the timber which had also been collected and reserved during many years previously. Slowly, the huge edifice rose from the ground, covering nearly the same area as the present structure. To relieve the inordinate length of the nave, huge flanking towers were built at the west front, an apse terminated the church at the eastern end, while, dominating the transepts, nave, and presbytery, the massive tower arose, probably not greatly differing in appearance from the aspect it presents to-day. But the Abbey, in all its grandeur, was but the nucleus of a widely spreading mass of monastic buildings. From Holywell Hill to the silk mills, from
the High Street to the river’s banks, a palatial assemblage of turreted and embattled edifices proudly reared their heads, and formed a worthy habitation for one of the most influential and powerful monastic communities that England ever witnessed. Those who visit Verulam’s site, and marvel at the meagre remains to be seen there, will cease to wonder when they think of the constant spoliation and removal of material that went on for centuries to supply the requirements of monastic buildings and a flourishing town, though it is highly probable that the greater part of the Roman city still remains covered up. The improvement of the monastery was not solely confined to the buildings; for Abbot Paul introduced such severe rules for the guidance of the inmates, and insisted so rigorously upon their being strictly carried out, that St. Albans soon acquired a reputation for exceptional sanctity, and “became a school of religious observance for all England.”

Many benefactions were made during the time of Abbot Paul; probably the most important was that of the magnificent Priory of Tynemouth by Robert Mowbray, Earl of Northumberland, who had been kept a prisoner by William Rufus for many years, but subsequently became a monk of the Abbey, and was buried with great pomp near the altar of the church. The epitaph upon his tomb is still extant. In 1093, Abbot Paul died. William Rufus, following out a system not wholly unknown to subsequent monarchs, did not appoint an Abbot for four years, during which time the revenues of the monastery were appropriated by the king.

Richard de Albini was the fifteenth Abbot. In his time the important ceremonial of consecrating the newly-built Abbey took place with most imposing magnificence. King

1 Walsingham.
2 Weever, _Funeral Monuments_.
Henry the First and his queen, Matilda, with a large number of the principal nobles and prelates of the kingdom, were entertained by him for eleven days at Christmas time in the year 1115. On Innocents’ day, December 27th, Geoffrey, Archbishop of Rouen, assisted by Robert Blouet, Bishop of Lincoln (the Diocesan), Richard de Beaumeis, Bishop of London, Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, and Randal, Bishop of Durham, consecrated this grand Norman Abbey to the service of God, with all the ornate concomitants of the Romish ritual.

It was during the abbacy of Richard de Albini that a requisition was sent to the Continent for a learned man to succeed to the mastership of the Grammar School, which by this time had become such an important institution as to warrant this step being taken. In compliance with this, Gaufridus, or Geoffrey de Gorham, came to England, but as he delayed somewhat on the journey the vacancy in the school was filled by another master. The position appears to have been one of such great consequence that Geoffrey determined to wait until there was a fresh vacancy, and accordingly gave lectures in Dunstable to tide over the time. He also composed a very good play entitled “St. Catherine,” which is interesting by reason of its being the first production of the kind in England specified by name. These dramatic representations (which still survive in the performance, every tenth year, of the Passion Play at Oberammergau, in the Bavarian Highlands) were called “Miracles,” because they consisted of sacred plays and the portrayal of miracles and dramas from Holy Scripture, the church being the playhouse, and the ecclesiastics and their scholars the actors. In later days they were called “Mysteries.” To mount his play Geoffrey de Gorham borrowed ecclesiastical vestments from the monastery; but the night after the performance his house caught fire and was burnt to the ground, with all his books and the vestments he had borrowed. “He, therefore, not knowing in what way he should restore this loss to God and to St. Alban, gave himself up as a whole burnt sacrifice to God, and assumed the religious habit in the house of St. Alban; this was the reason why he afterwards showed such diligence in making rich copes for the choir in the same house, and especially when promoted to be its Abbot.”

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1 Roger de Wendover.
2 Harl., MSS. 688.
3 Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani.
4 Ibid.
During the Feast of the Epiphany with a large number of the principal nobles and persons of the kingdom, who were entertained by him for eleven days at Christmas time in the year 1290, he was present at December 27th, Geoffrey, Archbishop of Rouen,\(^1\) showed by Richard de Noort, Bishop of Lincoln (the Diocesan), Richard de Beaumeis, Bishop of Salisbury, and Randal, Bishop of Durham, consecrated the splendid new Abbey to the service of God, with all the ornate concomitants of the solemn event.

It was during the absence of Richard de Albini that a requisition was sent to the professor for a learned man to succeed to the mastership of the Grammar School, which he was informed had become such an important institution as to warrant this step being taken. In accordance with this, Gaufridi, or Geoffrey de Gorham,\(^2\) came to England, but it was some time before the journey the vacancy in the school was filled by another man. This position appears to have been one of such great consequence that William of Malmesbury waited until there was a fresh vacancy, and accordingly gave lectures over the same. He also composed a very good play entitled "St. Alban's," the history of which its being the first production of the kind in England, covered to some extent of the Passion Play at Oberammergau, in the Bavarian Alps. However, because they consisted of sacred plays and the portrayal of sacred persons from Holy Scriptures, the church being the playhouse, and the actors and scholars the actors. In later days they were called "Mysteries." He says that in the play Geoffrey de Gorham borrowed ecclesiastical vestments from the monastery, but the night after the performance his house caught fire and was burnt to the ground, with all his books and the vestments he had borrowed. "He, therefore, not knowing in what way he should restore this loss to God and to St. Alban, gave himself up to a whole burnt sacrifice to God, and assumed the religious habit in the house of St. Alban, this being the reason why he afterwards showed such diligence in making rich cope for the choir in the same house, and especially when promoted to be its Abbot."\(^3\)

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1. Roger de Wendover.
2. Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albanii.
3. Ibid., MSS. 698.
4. Ibid.
Abbot Richard de Albini constructed a feretry, in which he deposited the relics of the twelve Apostles and Martyrs which St. Germanus had placed in the sepulchre of St. Alban. Upon his return from the Priory of Tynemouth, he also built, in the conventual church, a chapel to St. Cuthbert in thanksgiving for a miraculous cure obtained while assisting at the translation of the bones of that confessor. A council was held at St. Albans, A.D. 1113; and the royal prohibition received against paying "Romescot" for a time.

Geoffrey de Gorham, the sixteenth Abbot, was unanimously elected to fill the vacancy caused by the decease of Richard de Albini in 1119. He derived his name from the Castle of "Gorram" at Mayne, in Normandy, the earliest notice of which (in English records) occurs in 1202, when King John issued a writ for seizing the castle of Gorham. Walsingham tells us that he was "not only endowed with honesty of character, but was also remarkable for the adornment conferred by a knowledge of divinity;" from which it would almost appear that, in those days, scriptural erudition was not absolutely essential in an ecclesiastic. Geoffrey de Gorham greatly improved the internal regulations of the monastery, increased the size of the Abbey buildings, and multiplied its revenues. He seems to have possessed in a large degree that passion for pomp and outward splendour which was so prominent a characteristic in mediæval times, for the services in the church were rendered far more ornate than had been the case previous to his accession. In his time, A.D. 1129, a costly shrine, or feretry, was constructed of gold and silver and ornamented with gems, in which the relics of the Martyr were deposited with great solemnity after they had been removed from the ancient tomb in the presence of the Bishop of London, several Abbots, and other dignified ecclesiastics. Matthew Paris gives an elaborate description of this shrine, and declared it to be more splendid than any other he had ever beheld. De Gorham founded the nunnery of Sopwell, which will be fully described in a subsequent chapter.

The grant of the Liberty of St. Albans was now first made to the Abbot by King Henry I.; this conferred the great civil power of holding pleas and taking cognizance of all lesser crimes and offences which had been punishable in the leets, the

hundred, and the county courts.\(^1\) This charter is among the records in the Tower of London; it is dated at Westminster, the 3rd day of November, 2nd of Edward IV., and is signed by the king himself.\(^2\) The lazar-house of St. Julians was also founded by Geoffrey de Gorham.

The interest evoked in late years regarding that fearful complaint, leprosy, will serve to direct attention more fully to the two ancient foundations which once existed in St. Albans for the accommodation of lepers. This terrible scourge was at one time very prevalent in England, so much so that nearly every place of importance in our land had one or more leper lazar-houses. It has been asserted that the disease was introduced by Crusaders returning from the Holy Land, and the statement is apparently confirmed by the fact that, owing to the cessation of the Crusades and the careful isolation of infected persons, it practically disappeared from our midst. The disease was naturally very much dreaded, not only on account of the fearful malady itself and the intense physical suffering it caused, but perhaps even still more because it resulted in ostracism from society, which often meant the severance of all the bonds of kinship. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries a leper was not allowed to hold property, was deemed incapable of making a will, and lost all the privileges of citizenship. He was hunted from the towns, and driven from the dwellings of men; he was forbidden to drink from the running stream lest he should defile it, and it was unlawful for him to touch things which were used as human food. Indeed, anything was deemed good enough for the leper; for he was scarcely treated so well as a dog, while the hawk that sat upon the fist of the baron, or squire, received far more consideration. His was a terrible doom,—a living death. "Sick and heart-broken and alone," he was condemned to isolation, or to associate only with those who were afflicted like himself. When a man was suspected of leprosy, he was examined by the doctor; if found "guilty," all hope fled from him, and he was compelled to bow to the terrible verdict of banishment from the society of his fellow-men, which the law pronounced necessary for the preservation of the health of the community. He was taken to church, where a fearful and gloomy service,—in some cases the Mass for the Dead,—was performed over him.

\(^1\) Newcome. \(^2\) Clutterbuck, Vol. i., Appendix No. 1.
Of the two leper-houses formerly existing at St. Albans, one was erected upon the piece of land now occupied by a farm which perpetuates its name, St. Julians. The Church belonging to this lazaret-house stood upon the other side of the Watling Street, and was dedicated by Abbot Geoffrey to St. Julian the Confessor, the patron saint of hospitals, who was martyred by fire about the year A.D. 313, having previously been bound upon the back of a camel and scourged. Hence, St. Julian is accounted the patron saint of travellers, wanderers, and lepers. The statutes of the hospital, as they were appointed by a subsequent Abbot, still exist; the charter of foundation and endowment was confirmed by Henry I. and by two Popes, Gregory and Innocent. Henry II. made a perpetual grant of a penny a day to the hospital from the Imperial exchequer, which grant he ordered to be paid by the Sheriff of Hertfordshire. During the four centuries of its existence the hospital saw many varying changes of fortune under different Abbots, its funds and the number of its inmates fluctuating considerably; at the Dissolution, when it fell with the parent monastery, its revenue was about £40 per annum.

Of Ralph de Gobion, seventeenth Abbot, Matthew Paris records, as a circumstance discreditable to him, that he caused a rich chasuble to be burned for the sake of the gold with which it was embroidered, and the Shrine to be stripped of all the plates of gold and jewels in order to purchase the Vill of Brentfield; instead of resorting to such sacrilege, he might have raised the required sum by the sale of the gold and silver cups that were used at his table.

Robert de Gorham, eighteenth Abbot, was the nephew of Geoffrey. The accession of this Abbot marks one of the most important epochs in the history of the monastery, for it was during this period that the reigning Pope, Adrian IV. (better known to Englishmen as Nicholas Brakspear), conferred those privileges which raised St. Albans to the foremost position among English monasteries.

Nicholas Brakspear was born about the year 1090, at Abbot's Langley, five miles from St. Albans. His father was a servitor at the Abbey, and was subsequently

1 Gibbs' Hist. Rec. p. 61.  2 Cott. Lib. Nero, D. i., Fo. 24.  3 Gobion Higham, in Bedfordshire.  4 Newcome suggests that the Vill received the name subsequently, as signifying that it was purchased with burnt or "brent" goods.
admitted as a monk. The son in all probability attended the grammar school, but whether at that time his capacity for learning was limited, or the method of imparting the course of instruction was defective, certain it is that upon Nicholas applying to the Abbot to be admitted into the monastery, he was refused upon the ground of insufficiency of learning. In after days, when an Emperor held his stirrup, he probably regarded with complacency his failure at St. Albans. He went abroad, and by means of great natural abilities, combined with diligence, he acquired a high reputation for erudition. Eventually, he was raised to the chair of St. Peter in 1155, under the name of Adrian IV.; and he is the only Englishman who ever attained to that high dignity. He was "the first that taught the Norwegians the Christian Faith; and repressed the citizens of Rome from aspiring to their ancient freedom." 1 When the news of his advancement reached the monastery, the Abbot repaired to Rome, that he might obtain confirmation of the ancient privileges of this church. He was received kindly by the Pope, who granted all the favours he sought, together with some advantages allowed to no other abbey in the kingdom, the most important being that St. Albans monastery should take precedence of all other monasteries in England, and that the ancient privilege of the Abbey, namely, that of exemption from ecclesiastical jurisdiction except that of the Pope himself, should be restored. About the year 1161, Geoffrey and Robert de Gorham, monks of St. Albans, were sent by their uncle, the Abbot, with a present to Pope Adrian of two candelabra, exquisitely wrought in silver and gold, 2 and in the "Annales Eccles." of Baronius, is printed a copy of a congratulatory letter from King Henry of England to the Pope on his accession. These annals recount particulars of the holding the stirrup of the Pope by the Emperor, and that the Pontiff then, for the first time, admitted this sovereign to the kiss of peace. His death is stated to have been caused "by a fly which flew into his mouth" and choked him. 3 St. Albans has reason to be proud of its association with a man who not only attained the unique position of being the only Englishman who ever became a Pope, but was also justly renowned as a man of the highest character, of a mild and kindly disposition, a good preacher, and a profound scholar.

1 Camden's Britannia.  
3 Ibid. This assertion is rejected by Baronius as false. Matthew Paris believed that he was poisoned.
From this time the Abbots of St. Albans wore the mitre, Geoffrey de Gorham being the first represented with it. The Abbot made a grant of certain land in the neighbourhood of St. Albans to one of his family and name, from which is derived the appellation of Gorhambury. He repaired and re-adorned the Martyr's Shrine, which had been despoiled in the time of the preceding Abbot to buy food for the poor during a famine. King Stephen was right royally entertained at the Abbey during the time of Geoffrey; the Abbot profited by the occasion to obtain permission to demolish a portion of the palace of Kingsbury, adjacent to the monastery, which gave offence to the monks by affording shelter to certain of the royal servants. The Abbot died in 1166. At this period the great contest between Church and State was at its height; Thomas à Becket, at the head of the ecclesiastics, maintained amongst other things the sole right of the Church to appoint its own dignitaries; King Henry II., on the other hand, claimed the royal right to do so without interference from any Churchman whatever, not excepting the Pope himself. In the case of St. Albans the king first kept the abbacy vacant for some time, and then appointed Symon, the prior of the monastery.

Abbot Symon was sent by Archbishop Becket to Henry, the eldest son of Henry II., to endeavour to secure him as a mediator between the crosier and the sceptre, but no substantial result accrued. The king had caused his son to be crowned during his own lifetime, but the prince died before his father. The Shrine of St. Alban was completed during the rule of this Abbot, and the supposed relics of St. Amphibalus were found at Redbourn and brought to the Abbey. The chapel of St. Cuthbert, which had been built by Richard de Albini and stood north of the present rood-screen in the nave, was consecrated by the Bishop of Durham. The Abbot died in 1183.

Warren de Cambridge, twentieth Abbot, was elected by the brotherhood of the monastery. He was clever, but haughty and self-willed; while proud and overbearing
to his inferiors he made every effort to curry favour with the king and his court. By his persecution of the nobler characters under him he succeeded in driving them away, and then filled their places with those who would not oppose him. His chief act was the founding of the second leper-hospital at St. Albans, that of St. Mary de Pretis, the present name of the site being the Pré—a part of the ancient manor of Kingsbury. The building was for female lepers, and the rich endowment by the Abbot of the new church and hospital aroused a great amount of hostile criticism, and caused bitter feeling between the Abbot and some of the monks of the fraternity.

This new hospital was held in high estimation by the rich, and its possessions rapidly increased, some of the subsequent Abbots making costly presents of books, etc., to it. In course of time it ceased to exist as a lazaret-house, and became an ordinary nunnery; it was dissolved by Cardinal Wolsey, and was one of the forty small endowments for which he procured a grant from the Pope in 1526, for appropriating their revenues towards the founding of his new College of Christ Church at Oxford. They all fell into the king's hands when Wolsey was attainted. The rules of the hospital, written in Norman French, are still extant. This Abbot caused a magnificent feretory to be constructed, in which were deposited the relics of St. Amphibalus. A sum of two hundred marks was paid by the monastery in 1194, as a contribution towards the ransom of King Richard I.

John de Cella, the twenty-first Abbot, was elected in 1195. Three places are named as being his birth-place, Markyate Cell in the parish of Caddington, Studham, and Scelford. He obtained his name from the Cell of Wallingford, over which he was placed before his election to St. Albans. His name is connected in an important manner with our present Abbey, as the western portion of the nave is, to a certain extent, his handiwork. He pulled down a large part of the nave and the Norman west front with its flanking towers, and then commenced their re-erection in a most rich and beautiful style of the prevailing architecture, the Early English. His chief fund was a sum of one hundred marks left for the purpose by his predecessor, Abbot Warren, but it was expended before the foundations were raised level with the surface of the ground. He

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1 Cott. Lib. MSS., Nero, D 1. 2 Newcome. 3 M. Paris. 4 Willis' Surv. of Cath. Ch.
then imposed a tax of a sheaf of corn, to be given annually for every acre sown on the Abbey estates, and also obtained money by resorting to the artifice of sending a man through the country who pretended to have been restored to life by St. Alban. In that uneducated, credulous, and superstitious age, the fraud was readily believed, and from the simple-minded people large sums of money were thus collected. But in spite of this pecuniary aid many obstacles arose to interrupt the progress of the building, which was far from being completed when de Cella died.

It was during his abbacy that King John brought upon the kingdom the awful terrors of a Papal Interdict. The thunders of the Vatican shook the land to the very centre, and the silence of the great curse brooded over the awe-stricken people. No services in the churches, no funeral rites over the dead, no priestly order ministering comfort to a nation whose religion was a ruling passion. Only the king himself seemed unaffected, and with high-handed rigour required the Abbot of St. Albans to continue the services and disobey the Interdict. But de Cella was a true servant of the Church, and refused to comply with the royal demand; thereupon he and the whole of the monks were forcibly ejected from the Abbey, whilst the king's officers took possession, and, as a natural sequence, collected the revenues. De Cella was finally reinstated in his former charge, after being mulcted in a fine of six hundred marks. He died soon afterwards, in 1214.

In the year 1213 a representative assembly met at St. Albans for the purpose of debating upon the affairs of the Kingdom; many historians have affirmed that this may reasonably be designated the First English Parliament, inasmuch as it was summoned by the reigning sovereign, and attended by the Lords of the Kingdom and duly-elected representatives of the Commons, thus embodying the essential requisites for a constitutional Parliament. The assertion has been stoutly opposed by other writers, and still remains a moot point; there is the fact, however, that St. Albans shares the claim with Acton Burnel, Oxford, and one or two other towns, of being the place where the great English representative assembly of the three estates in its complete form held its first meeting.

William de Trumpington, the twenty-second Abbot, was solemnly consecrated before the great altar in St. Albans Abbey by Eustace, Bishop of Ely. He continued with

\[1\] Selden, Brady, Tyrrel, etc.

\[2\] Roger de Wendover.
much energy and zeal the rebuilding of the Abbey Church which his predecessor had been unable to complete. But most remorselessly did he alter and curtail the exquisite designs bequeathed to him; wherever alterations, omissions, or additions could be made to lessen the cost of the work, they were recklessly introduced.

During the year 1215, the Abbot, who had been at the Council of Lateran, held a consistory at St. Albans, at which a large number of Abbots, Priors, Archdeacons, and other dignitaries of the Church were present. By his time a crisis had occurred in regal affairs; the barons, exasperated at the treachery, licentiousness, and perjury of the king, had broken into open rebellion, and had solicited the aid of Louis of France. The French prince, nothing loth, was soon in England with a large army. To meet this invasion and, if possible, to punish the barons, King John also gathered a large force, and, marching from London, halted at St. Albans. Here he held a great council of his followers, and probably decided upon that plan of campaign which ended so disastrously for himself and so fortunately for his distracted kingdom. Abbot Trumpington seems to have been possessed of sufficient worldly wisdom to steer clear of the many pitfalls which the troubled times put in his way. The monastery increased considerably under his rule both in extent and in revenue, and he has left a name which is inseparably connected with the great monastic relic remaining to us, St. Alban’s Abbey.

John de Hertford, twenty-third Abbot, had been the Sacristan; he was elected in 1235. We find the question of precedence put to a practical test during his time, for, at the coronation of King Henry III., the Abbot of St. Albans took his place at the head of the mitred Abbots of England. This position of rank and dignity was due to him by reason of the privileges granted by Pope Adrian, and also because of his representing a monastery erected in honour of the British Protomartyr.\(^1\) This priority was lost for a time owing to the action of the Abbot of Westminster,\(^2\) but was subsequently recovered, though at what period is not known. When the Articles of Faith were drawn up in 1536 (temp. Henry VIII.), and the Church dignitaries were required to sign them, the name of the Abbot of St. Albans at that time (Robert Catton) stands at the head of the list of Abbots, followed by the name of William Benson, the Abbot of Westminster.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) Lambeth, Libr. Cod. 589, p. 30.  
\(^2\) Harleian MSS., No. 3775-12, p. 5.  
\(^3\) Cott. MSS., Cleop. E. 5.
John appears to have been on excellent terms with the king, for we find that no less than eight royal visits were made to the town, the presents given to the community in return for this hospitality being both numerous and costly. The eastern portion of the church then terminated in a Norman apse; this appears to have been demolished by the Abbot, and the commencement made of those two beautiful eastern chapels which have seen so many vicissitudes.

Matthew Paris records that shortly after the ancient tomb of St. Alban had been found between the altars of St. Oswin and St. Ulstan, in the year 1257, the Archbishop of York came for the purpose of pronouncing an oration. This must have been Archbishop Gray; and perhaps the former altar might have been adorned with the effigy of his canonized predecessor in honour of the occasion. A difference arose in 1256 between the Abbot and the Pope. About nine years previously, two Friars Minor had been sent to England with the authority from the Pope to collect money for his use; they demanded four hundred marks from Abbot John, which were refused. This claim was raised from time to time, until finally the Pope sent an ultimatum to the effect that if the sum of five hundred marks was not forthcoming before a certain date, the monastery would be suspended from Divine offices and the Abbot excommunicated. Abbot John continued recalcitrant, and the church was accordingly placed under an interdict by the Pope, but was shortly afterwards reinstated to its former position.

Roger de Norton (native of a village of that name near Baldock, in Hertfordshire) was installed in 1260, and a copy of his confirmation to the abbacy by Pope Urban occurs in Rymer's "Foederæ," A.D. 1263. During the earlier part of De Norton's abbacy the country was in a state of anarchy. The discontented barons, under Simon de Montfort, had stirred up the people generally to a sense of their real or imaginary wrongs; this discontent smouldered for a time and then culminated in open rebellion, resulting in the battle of Lewes and that of Evesham, where the regal party finally triumphed. During this period (1258-65) St. Albans was fortified, a strong wall and a ditch being carried round it, of which many traces and vestiges are visible at the present time, and other fragments are being continually brought to light. The dissatisfaction in St. Albans

appears to have been occasioned by the Abbot’s orders that all cloth should be fulled and all corn ground at the monastery mills, and that no appeal should be made from the charges levied by the monks. These arbitrary measures led to a tumult in 1264; the townspeople rose in arms, barricaded the streets, and besieged the monastery, which was stoutly defended by the inmates. While this commotion was in progress, Gregory de Stokes (the Constable of Hertford) rode into the town with three attendants. At once taking part with the Abbot, he appears to have behaved in such a high-handed and insolent manner, that the townspeople, already exasperated by their wrongs and enraged at their repulse from the monastery gates, fell upon them with the greatest fury, overpowered and beheaded them. For this outrage the town was fined one hundred marks by the king, who acted as arbitrator in the dispute, and, although he finally gave his decision in favour of the Abbot, he advised him to be much more moderate in his charges for the use of his mills. This rupture was but the commencement of a long series of unpleasant differences between the monks and the laity in St. Albans. In the last year of the Abbot’s rule, 1291, Edward I. held his court in the spacious precincts of the monastery, and soon afterwards hastened to Scotland. The church and monastic buildings generally were much extended and improved during the rule of Abbot Norton.

John of Berkhamsted, twenty-fifth Abbot, was installed on St. Alban’s Day, 1291. In his time the body of Queen Eleanor, wife of Edward I., rested here in its progress from Hardby, in Lincolnshire, where she died, to the final resting-place at Westminster.

A letter of King Edward I., written at St. Albans in support of the war, is dated 1297. Abbot John was engaged during the major portion of his rule in disputes and compromises with the king respecting the privileges of the monastery, and so well did he maintain his ground that eventually the whole of the charters and grants made to his predecessors were sealed and confirmed. In 1302 the Abbot died, and was solemnly interred in front of the High Altar.

John de Marinis, twenty-sixth Abbot, had been cellarer and prior of the Monastery. In his time the marble portion of the Shrine of St. Alban was erected; this is same structure which was subsequently demolished at the Reformation, and has been so

1 Walsingham Claud, E. 4.
2 Coles’ Add. MSS., 5828, p. 172.
As the Abbot's orders that all ships should be fulfilled
and that no appeal should be made from
those arbitrary measures led to a tumult in 1264;
the abbey ships were arrested in the streets and besieged the monastery, which
was already exasperated by their wrongs and enraged at their
attacks. The monks fell upon them with the greatest fury, overpowered
and defeated them. For this outrage the town was fined one hundred marks by the
Abbot, who acted as arbitrator in the dispute, and, although he finally gave his decision in
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Later it is recorded, twenty-fifth Abbot, was installed on St. Alban's Day, 1261,
in his time the body of Queen Eleanor, wife of Edward I., rested here in its progress from
Madrid to Westminster, where she died, to the final resting-place at Westminster.

A letter of King Edward I., written at St. Albans in support of the war, is dated
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\(^1\) Walsingham Claud. E. 4.  
\(^2\) Coles' Add. MSS. 1848, p. 411.
marvellously discovered and restored in recent years. The ancient tomb and feretrum of the Saint, brought to light in the time of John of Hertford, 1257, were removed upon the occasion of a visit from King Edward II., but probably were replaced.

Hugh de Eversden, twenty-seventh Abbot, had been cellarer for five years before his election in 1308. In the year 1323, on the feast of St. Paulinus, a great disaster happened to the Abbey Church, by the fall of some pillars which formed part of the original Norman Church of Paul de Caen. The Abbot commenced the work of restoration and expended a large sum of money upon it, being aided by local contributions. The eastern chapels were also completed, having been commenced sixty or seventy years before by John of Hertford. In 1313, a large donation of books was received by the Abbey librarian, bequeathed by William de Grenfield, Archbishop of York.

The inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood had long been in a discontented condition, dating from the days of Roger de Norton; they were now beginning to feel their power in the state, and to realise the efficacy of a determined stand against the oppression of the dominant ecclesiastics. Alleging, as a reason for their turbulence, their wish to be subservient to the king only, they attempted to break off their allegiance to the Abbot, and upon two separate occasions blockaded him and his monks in the Abbey. They sent a petition to the king, Edward II., in which they stated that they held their town of him in capite, and had been accustomed, in the times of Edward I. and preceding kings, to give their attendance in Parliament by two burgesses, but that the sheriff had refused to summon the said burgesses. The king granted the townsman a writ, in which he commanded the Abbot to place "all the liberties, privileges, and franchises of the town on the same establishment as was recorded in Domesday Book." The Abbot was obliged to submit to this, and an agreement was drawn up and signed by the contending parties. The remaining years of Hugh de Eversden's abbacy were embittered by the passive hostility of the monks to whom the concessions had been as gall and wormwood. They never forgave him, and although the monastic buildings had grown in extent and magnificence under his rule, yet the burden of debt which the outlay entailed

1 Walsingham.  
2 Coles, Add. MSS. 5828, Fo. 188.  
3 Nero, D. 7.  
4 Godwin, De Præsulisbus Anglia.  
5 Vide Clutterbuck, vol. i., Appendix 3.
pressed heavily upon them, and outweighed the satisfaction of their newly-acquired splendour.

During the abbacy of De Eversden, or that of his predecessor, the Scriptorium of the monastery showed a remarkable degree of activity, for no less than fifty-eight books were transcribed. When the care and attention paid to their work is considered, and the space of time necessarily consumed in the production of even a single volume, the labour of the monkish writers in producing such a number of books is especially remarkable.

Richard de Wallingford, the Leper Abbot, was elected in 1326. By his boldness and indefatigable exertions he regained the whole of the privileges which had been wrested from his predecessor by the townspeople. This is chronicled by Walsingham, and is confirmed by a memorandum at the foot of the agreement mentioned above, where it is recorded that a deputation of the townspeople, on their own petition, surrendered the Charter, renounced all the privileges which it conferred, and prayed that it might be cancelled. From this time it also appears that the ancient parliamentary representation of the town by two burgesses ceased, for no further mention of the latter is to be found, so that it is probable that the Abbot prevailed upon the king to abolish this ancient right. Thus the temporary curtailment of the monastic privileges passed away, and once more the Abbey assumed its former position as the richest and most powerful in the country with precedence of all others, as well as complete civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the town which surrounded it and its numerous possessions in all parts of the kingdom.

Over this great centre of the English Church ruled Richard de Wallingford, an able politician and diplomatist, a man of profound piety and learning, a skilled mechanician and scientist, but—a leper. For a few years after his election he managed to conceal the sad fact from the brethren, but soon unmistakable evidences of the disease became apparent to all. Then the monks under his rule became turbulent, and by various means sought to deprive the Abbot of his supremacy. "One Richard de Ildesle, a monk of Abingdon, informed the Pope, and a bull was issued to the Bishop of Lincoln (in whose diocese

the Abbey then was), directing him to make inquiries as to the extent of the Abbot's infirmity. The king (Edward III.) was applied to, and he at once resented the Pope's interference, this aggression of the court of Rome giving rise to much indignation in the king's council. Notwithstanding the nature of the Abbot's affliction, the majority of the monks at St. Albans still clung to his government, and a determination was said to have been expressed by the brethren to slay Richard de Ildele for his interference, on hearing which he saved himself by flight from St. Albans. Soon after the Pope's intermediation, the Abbot himself suggested that a coadjutor should be appointed, and the choice of the chapter fell upon the Prior, Nicholas de Flamstede, a discreet man, who had been the Abbot's companion when he went to Rome to receive the Papal benediction, and to obtain the ratification of his election. The Abbot died in the prime of life on the 23rd of May, 1335, after enduring many and almost intolerable tribulations by reason of his malady.

"Wallingford was a celebrated astronomer, and among other things constructed a clock, which was as wonderful in its way as the celebrated horological instrument now in Strasburg Cathedral. He called it Albion (i.e., 'All by one'), and it had an upper and a lower dial showing the course of the sun and moon, the motions of the stars, and the ebb and flow of the tide. Like the clock at Strasburg, it stood in the south-east corner of the south transept of the church, and close by it was placed a 'wheel of fortune,' also the work of the same Abbot." In an illuminated manuscript, preserved in the British Museum, Wallingford is represented with mitre and crozier, pointing to his clock, which is very vaguely defined; the artist, with cruel fidelity, has indicated upon the face of the prelate the ravages of the disease from which he suffered. A treatise

1 Cotton. MSS. Nero D 7.
upon horological problems, with diagrams relating to clocks and dials, supposed to be in
the Abbot's own handwriting, is also extant. He likewise possessed great skill in legal
matters, prepared several scientific books, and the chronicler tells us that he was able
by his scientific skill to give weather-forecasts. So great was his sanctity and so vast
his knowledge that even his leprosy did not cause people to shun him.1 In 1334, the
eighth year of his abbacy, a violent storm arose, the lightning igniting the cloister
above the Abbot's chamber, between the chapter-house and the dormitory; it was
promptly extinguished, but the Abbot, weakened by the insidious disease, never rallied
from the shock, and died on May 23rd, 1335.2

Michael de Mentmore, the twenty-ninth Abbot, succeeded Richard de Wallingford.
He carried on the social and religious reforms in the monastery which had been initiated by
the preceding Abbot. These reforms were unfortunately very desirable at that time; the
increase of ecclesiastical wealth, the extent of their civil jurisdiction, the humble obedience
paid to the mandates of the Church by the major portion of the population, all tended
to foster in the prelates and their subordinates an arrogance of demeanour, an overweening
sense of importance, and a feeling of non-liability to punishment, which led to excesses
and outrages of every description being committed under the sacred ægis of the Church.
To the middle of this century must be ascribed the first signs of that dissatisfaction
and distrust among the people, which culminated eventually in the mighty burst of the
Reformation. During the abbacy of De Mentmore the fifth son of King Edward III. was
born at the royal palace of King's Langley, of which but a few remains exist at the
present time. The prince was baptized by the Abbot at the palace, and received the
name of Edmund, June 5th, 1341. His birth proved to be an event of considerable
moment to the state, for, although a younger son, he was the ancestor of the Royal
House of York. His tomb may be seen in the village church of King's Langley, whither
it was removed after the destruction of the conventual church there, in which he
had just been buried. His mother, Philippa of Hainault, subsequently came to the
Abbey of St. Alban, and made an offering of a cloth of gold.

The rebuilding of the south aisle of the nave was carried on at this time, the
vaulting was completed, and three altars were erected there. The cloister adjoining this aisle

1 Gibbs' Leprosy at St. Albans.
was also rebuilt. De Mentmore embellished the feretrum of the saint with an eagle of silver-gilt and two suns, and framed new rules and ordinances for the monastery, the hospital of St. Julian, and Sopwell Nunnery. Fortunately, a copy of the Constitutions for St. Julian has been preserved, for we are thus enabled to obtain a very good insight into the mode of life in a religious house of this kind in the fourteenth century. The Constitutions were confirmed by the Prior and Chapter of the Convent after studious deliberation and careful consultation, and sealed with the common seal in the chapter-house on the same day. They were further ratified by the Master and Brethren of the hospital, who stated their belief that they would prove most serviceable. These documents are reprinted at the end of the second volume of the "Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani," as Appendices B and C.

The "Black Death," which swept with terrible effects over Europe in the year 1349, and made itself so severely felt in London, Norwich, and Chester, laid its awful hand upon the monastery and carried off many of the inmates, the Prior, sub-Prior, and the Abbot himself being amongst the victims of the scourge.

**John de la Mare**, a son of Sir John de la Mare, was the thirtieth Abbot of the monastery. His brother, John, was a monk in the Abbey, and his sister, Dionysia, a nun at the hospital of St. Pré. The Abbot had been Prior of the cell of Tynemouth, in Northumberland, and whilst there received a message from the marauding Scottish chief, Earl Douglas, to prepare a breakfast for him and his men on certain days. The Earl did actually breakfast with the Prior, but under circumstances differing from those he had anticipated, for he was a prisoner, having been defeated and captured at Neville's Cross. The Abbot was in high favour with King Edward III., who appointed him the President of the General Chapter of Benedictines throughout England.

We learn, upon the authority of Dugdale and Newcome, that after the great battle of Poictiers in 1356, the victor, Edward the Black Prince, placed the royal captive, King John of France, in the custody of the Abbot of St. Albans, and he resided in the monastery for a considerable time. The Abbot treated him with gentlemanly courtesy and consideration, which fact the fallen monarch seems to have borne well in mind, for when he had regained his freedom by the payment of a large ransom and was
once more King of France, he released some prisoners solely because they were men of St. Albans.¹

King Edward III. issued a licence to the Abbot and Convent, dated "Woodstock, 17th of June, 1357," empowering them to fortify the monastery with a crenellated stone wall.² During the abbacy of De la Mare over £4000 were expended on the church, and a considerable sum upon the Church services.³ The great gateway of the monastery, which still exists, was built by him, the previous one having been demolished by a gale of wind; it formed, as was usual with the magna portae of monasteries in those days, the prison in which both ecclesiastical and lay prisoners were confined. Abbot John governed the Abbey for forty-seven years, being a much longer period than that enjoyed by any of his predecessors. He was buried at the foot of the High Altar, and his magnificent memorial brass is still carefully preserved.

John de la Moote, thirty-first Abbot, held various offices in the Abbey before being promoted to the highest. He had suffered, too, in the cause of religion, for Walsingham records that Philip de Limbury placed De la Moote, when cellarer, in the Luton stocks, in hatred to the Abbot and utter contempt of religion.⁴ The life, fortunes, and tragic end of the unfortunate King Richard II. appear to have no slight connection with St. Albans. Not only did he visit the town during the stirring times of the great rebellion (as narrated in another part of this work), but the conspiracy which terminated in his violent death originated in St. Albans Abbey. In the early part of July, 1397, one of the younger sons of Edward III., Thomas of Woodstock, Earl of Gloucester, dined with the Abbot (his godfather) at the Abbey, in company with the Prior of Westminster. The question of the utter incompetence of the king to rule was discussed, and an agreement was entered upon by the three; the result of this was shortly afterwards seen in an important meeting at Arundel, in Sussex, when the Duke of Gloucester, the Earl of Derby, the Earl Marshal, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Abbot of St. Albans, and the Prior of Westminster were present, and the council decided that the perpetual imprisonment of the king was necessary for the safety of the State.

¹ Newcome. ² Stevens' Continuation, i., p. 261.
³ Rymer's *Fideira*, vol. v., p. 670. The task of decorating the chapel of St. Stephen at Westminster appears to have been given during this period to Hugh de St. Albans, who also executed work in the Abbey.
⁴ Walsingham, *Hist. Ang*. 
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The great gateway of the monas-

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1 Nowcowe.

2 Stevens' Compendium, i., p. 351.

3 Rymer's Foedera, vol. v., p. 678. The task of decorating the chapel of St. Stephen at Westminster appears to

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4 Walsingham, Hist. Ang.
THE MARKET CROSS AND CLOCK HOUSE.

From an Old Print, circa 1812.
Newcome states that, in 1399, the body of John, Duke of Lancaster, rested at the monastery on the way to London for interment; Henry Beaufort (afterwards Henry IV, King of England), the son of the deceased by Catherine Swynford, being permitted under certain restrictions to perform the exequies in person. In September of the same year, Henry Beaufort, then Duke of Lancaster, was once more at the Abbey, in company with his prisoner, Richard II.; upon the following day they arrived in London, and the king was committed to the Tower. The two Houses then met at Westminster, and the resignation of the unfortunate monarch was read aloud. In all that large assembly only one man was found to champion the cause of his king: This was the Bishop of Carlisle, who rose in his seat and stoutly defended Richard, alleging that there was none in that meeting worthy to pass judgment upon so deserving a prince. Such patriotic conduct roused the ire of the all-powerful Duke of Lancaster, and he commanded that the bishop should be arrested and immured within the prison walls of St. Albans. He remained in custody in the monastery until October 25th of the same year, when he was brought before Parliament for trial. In order to gratify the Pope the new king, Henry IV., signed his pardon, and he was eventually presented to the Rector of Todenham. The fearful midnight tragedy at Berkeley Castle formed the last episode in the life of the dethroned monarch. The body of the murdered king was brought, unattended by any person of note, to the church of the Friars at King's Langley for burial; the Abbot of St. Albans, together with the Bishop of Chester and the Abbot of Waltham, performed the funeral rites. There the body reposed for fourteen years, that is, until the accession of Henry V., when it was transferred to Westminster. This occurred in 1413, when the king in council determined upon its removal, and, with all due honours, masses, and dirges, the royal remains were borne to their final resting-place.

William Heyworth was the thirty-second Abbot. An interesting account of his election is extant, in which is given a list of the names of those who assisted at the ceremony and registered their votes. John of Wheathampsted, the Prior of Tynemouth and the celebrated successor of Heyworth, was a candidate for the post, but only polled four votes to the forty secured by his opponent. John Stoke, who succeeded Wheathampsted, was present at this

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1 Newcome, p. 279.
3 Chron. of Lond. Harleian MS. 565, and Cott. MS. Julius, B.i.
2 Holinshead, Lingard.
4 C. C. C. Library Camb.
election as Prior of Bynham. The Abbot presided over the fortunes of the monastery until 1420. At this time William Heyworth was installed Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, being translated thither from the Abbacy of St. Albans. "Wonder not that he should leave the richest Abbey in England (where he took place of all his Order) and exchange it for a middle-sized bishopric. For first, even those who most admire the holiness and perfection of monastical life, do grant the Episcopal Function above it in all Spiritual respects. Secondly, in temporal considerations, the poorest Bishop was better (and might be more beneficial to his kindred) than the richest Abbot, seeing he by will might bequeath his estate to his heirs, which no Abbot (incapable in his own person of any propriety) could legally do, whose goods belonged to his convent in common."1 Upon his death in 1446, or 1447, he was interred within St. Albans Abbey.2

John of Wheathampsted, thirty-third Abbot, was elected in 1420, and resigned in 1440; was re-elected in 1451, and died in 1464. He was, without doubt, the most illustrious of the long line of mitred prelates who ruled over the destinies of this great Benedictine monastery. His character combined, in a rare degree, courage with discretion, firmness tempered with kindness, and staunch adherence to the faith, without bigotry; he had a keen and earnest desire to advance the fortunes of the Abbey, and succeeded in the course of his long and varied career in not only maintaining the prestige of the ancient fane, but in advancing its claims as a seat of the highest learning, and the embodiment of princely ecclesiastical power. He displayed signal tact in both the peaceful earlier portion of his rule and the stormy and troubled later period. He derived his name from the place of his birth, the small village of Wheathampsted, four miles from St. Albans. His father and mother were Hugo and Margaret Bostock, and as his mother's maiden name was Heyworth, it is not improbable that he was related to William Heyworth, the preceding Abbot.

Boutell, in his "Monumental Brasses and Slabs," describes the memorial of the Abbot's parents in the church at Wheathampsted, and quotes the Latin inscription at the foot of the two figures. By comparing it with a known composition of this Abbot in a MS. copy of "Valerius Maximus," presented by him to the University of Oxford, he

1 Fuller's Church History.
suggests the great probability that the inscription was composed by Abbot Wheathampsted himself:—

"In the eighteenth year of his government, he procured royal grants of land in various adjacent manors; and, in order to secure himself from the accusation of any irregularity, he procured a pardon to be granted him, which, from the many heinous offences it includes, seems rather to portray the enormities habitually committed in those days than the personal irregularities of the Abbot, who certainly could not have been guilty of the murders, insurrections, felonies, rebellions, etc., which the pardon contained." In 1440, Wheathampsted resigned the abbacy, an action which he was possibly induced to take owing to the advice of his friend, Humphrey of Gloucester, who foresaw the evils which were slowly but surely coming upon the land. Seven years later, the duke met with his untimely death.

John Stoke, thirty-fourth Abbot, 1440 to 1451. Of this Abbot but little is known, and no important events happened during his rule except the interment of the Duke of Gloucester in the Abbey. He is credited with having erected the magnificent monument to the duke which still exists, but, both from evidences in the construction and also from the friendship existing between the two, it would seem that Wheathampsted raised it to the memory of his friend.

Wheathampsted was again appointed to the abbacy upon the death of Abbot Stoke, in 1451. He inaugurated his second accession by presenting to the monastery a pair of organs upon which he had expended fifty pounds, and which are said to have been the best in England at that period. But the time was rapidly approaching when the Abbot would be compelled to divert his thoughts from the peaceful quietness of the cloister and the even tenour of monastic life, to temporarily mix in the trouble and turmoil which threatened to overthrow the safety of the state, and which for thirty long years covered the fair realm of England with strife and bloodshed.

1 Nicholson's Abb. of St. Alb.

2 "The duke's second wife, Eleanor Cobham, was imprisoned that same year in the Tower for witchcraft, and did penance through the streets of London on several days" Harl. MS. 565. Cotton. MS. Julius B. r.
CHAPTER V.

THE BATTLES OF ST. ALBANS:

AND THE LATER ABBOTS.

First Battle of St. Albans.—The Wars of the Roses—The Events which led to the Struggle—The Duke of York in Power—His March towards St. Albans—Position of the Yorkist Camp—The Lancastrians occupy the Town—The Barricades—The First Assault—The Attacks Localised—Success of the King-Maker—The Conflict in St. Peter's Street—Its Sanguinary Nature—The King's Forces Defeated—The Pursuit—The Capture of the King—Discrepancies as to the Number of the Slain—Results of the Combat.

Second Battle of St. Albans.—Queen Margaret and Her Army—The Disposition of the Yorkist Forces—The First Onset—The Lancastrians Driven Back—The Strife on Bernard's Heath—Final Defeat of the Yorkists—The Pursuit—The Town Plundered—Ferocity of the Queen—The Departure of her Army—The Number of the Slain.


The causes which led up to the protracted struggle between the Houses of York and Lancaster were various, but the chief factors undoubtedly were the undue influence of the queen's party upon the weak mind of Henry VI., and the insatiable ambition of the powerful Duke of York.

With Queen Margaret were associated the Dukes of Suffolk, Somerset, and Buckingham, and it was this powerful coalition which brought about the downfall and murder of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. This unfortunate prince possessed in a high degree the confidence and esteem of the public, and the ebullition of national feeling consequent upon his death culminated not only in the violent execution of Suffolk (in an open boat at sea, when trying to reach the coast of France), but in a cordial detestation of the queen and her favourites, and in the serious rising of the people under Jack Cade in 1450.

In the lull following these disturbances the Duke of York thrust himself into prominence; by his powerful influence he caused the retirement of the Duke of
Somerset and the elevation of himself to the Protectorship during the temporary imbecility of the king, whilst the revival of his claim to the throne, considered by many to be stronger than that of the reigning monarch, raised the most animated discussions at every fireside in England, and split the nation into the two factions of York and Lancaster.

The king recovered the use of his faculties in 1455; acting under the influence of the queen, Margaret of Anjou, he annulled the Protectorship of York, and, releasing Somerset from the Tower, committed the administration of the affairs of the kingdom into the hands of that nobleman. But the Duke of York would not tamely submit to this reverse of fortune; he had revelled in the luxury of power, and determined to regain it by force of arms. He levied an army in Wales, but without advancing any pretensions to the Crown; he complained only of the king's ministers, and demanded a reformation of the government.1 Passing through the central counties, he reached Ware, at which place he and the two earls, his companions, indited a laborious apology for their arrival in arms "to their most redoubted Sovereign Lord the King." They were "coming in grace, as true and humble liegemen, to declare and show at large their loyalty," and sought instant admission to the royal presence that they might convince him of the "sinister, malicious, and fraudulent reports of their enemies." Hearing of the king's march on Watford, the duke left the direct line of advance on London, and felt his way cautiously along the Hertford and Hatfield Road to St. Albans, at which town he arrived an hour after it had been occupied by the troops of the king. He was accompanied by John Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk; Richard Nevil, Earl of Salisbury; Richard, Earl of Warwick; William, Lord Falconbridge; Edward, Lord Cobham, etc.; his army numbering about four thousand men. Finding the town occupied by the royal forces, he encamped on the open space of land known as Keyfield, lying to the east of the town; the name is still applied to the district, although it is now covered with houses.

The king, or rather the Duke of Somerset, had marched from Westminster on May 20th, and reached Watford the same night. On the 23rd,2 the army, consisting

1 Hume.
2 Various dates in May, 1455, are given by historians, but the best authorities assert that it was the 23rd.
of less than three thousand men, entered St. Albans before seven o'clock in the morning, and occupied St. Peter's Street. With the king were Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset; Humphrey Stafford, Duke of Buckingham; the Earl of Stafford, his eldest son; Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland; James Butler, Earl of Wiltshire and Ormond; John Beaufort, Earl of Dorset; Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke; Thomas, Lord Clifford; the Lords Sudely, Barns, Rosse, and others. The king's standard was set up in that part of St. Peter's Street which then went by the name of Gosselow or Sandiford, and the town defences on the side near the Duke of York's army were considerably strengthened by the erection of barricades, after which the troops dispersed to water their horses and prepare breakfast.

Upon the arrival of the Yorkist army shortly afterwards, the king sent the Duke of Buckingham with other noblemen and a herald, under a flag of truce, to the Yorkist camp; they passed through the barricade erected in Shropshire Lane (now Victoria Street), and, being ushered into the Duke of York's presence, Buckingham inquired of him the reason for his coming with such hostile intentions. The duke replied that he had taken up arms solely for the good of the nation; that he intended no harm whatever to the king, but only desired that the Duke of Somerset (who had lost the most valuable of our French possessions, and had brought the realm to its then miserable condition) should be delivered up to justice, to be condemned if guilty, or acquitted if innocent.

The king's council were assembled in the Moot Hall when the messengers returned, and as the Duke of Somerset was at the head of the council, it was unreasonable to expect that they could agree to the proposed terms. When the duke's demand was made known, for once in his life the saintly king indulged in a fit of passion. "Now I shall know," he cried, "what traitors are so bold as to raise a host against me in my own land! And, by the faith that I owe to St. Edward and the crown of England, I will destroy them every mother's son, to have example to all traitors who make such rising of people against their king and governor. And for a conclusion, say, that rather than they shall have any lord here with me at this time, I will this day for his sake, and in this quarrel, stand myself to live or die." The king, however, fully expected to bring

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1 Hall, Stowe, Hollinshead.
2 Oman's *Warwick*. 
the affair to a peaceful conclusion by parleying; he returned an answer to York that he could not agree to the proposed terms. The duke fully anticipated this reply, and in the meantime had been haranguing his men; he told them "that the king refused all reformation or reparation, that the fate of England lay in their hands, and that, at the worst, an honourable death in the field was better than the shame of a traitor's end, which awaited them if they lost the day."¹

Upon receiving the message he ordered the assault to be made, and, amid shouts and the braying of trumpets, a vigorous onslaught was commenced upon the town defences. "The hour was half-past eleven o'clock, for the interchange of messages between the king and York had consumed four hours of the morning. The royal troops, seeing Buckingham coming and going between the two armies, had believed that an agreement would be patched up without fighting. Many had left their posts, and some had disarmed themselves. When the duke's followers were seen in motion, every man ran to arms, and the bells of the Abbey and the churches ringing the alarm, sent monks and townsman to prayers, in good hope that the shield of their warrior-patron would be stretched over them to ward off the plundering bands from the North, the

"Gens Boreæ, gens perfidie, gens prona rapinæ,"

whose advent always sent Abbot Wheathampsted into an ecstasy of bad Latin verses."²

Taken completely by surprise, the Lancastrian leaders hastened from the Moot Hall and put themselves at the head of their men, who already showed signs of giving way; but now, encouraged by their officers, they repelled the determined efforts of the Yorkists to scale the walls and gain a footing within the town.

From the meagre details of this battle which have been handed down to us, it is difficult to locate the exact positions occupied by the different divisions of the two armies; but it is probable that the right wing of the Yorkists under their leader endeavoured to force the barriers and the town gateway known as Bowgate, or Borough-gate, at the junction of Sandridge Road with St. Peter's Street, and also to surmount the defences reaching from thence to the east side of St. Peter's churchyard. Sir Robert Ogle, who

¹ Oman's Warwick.
² Ibid.
commanded the centre division of the Yorkist army (consisting of the duke's own followers from the Northern Marches), concentrated his attention upon the wall and ditch which ran parallel to the present Marlborough Road southwards towards Sopwell Lane, and was known either then, or subsequently, as the Tonmanditch. Warwick, who was in command of the left division of the Yorkist army, attacked the town gate and barricades at Sopwell Bars (over against the White Lion Inn in Sopwell Lane); and to defend this important post Lord Clifford had been deputed by the Lancastrian leader, who well deserved the confidence placed in him, for "he kept the barriers so strongly that the Yorkists might not in any wise, for all the power they had, break into the streets." 1

The attempts of the attacking divisions were thus at first repulsed with loss; again and again they advanced only to be repelled by the defenders. This stout and determined resistance by Lord Clifford and his men caused Warwick to draw off his soldiers from that point, and induced him to concentrate his force more to the northward; "his quick military eye, now for the first time exercised, had marked that the Lancastrians, though strong enough to hold the barricades, had not enough men to defend the long straggling line of houses which formed the southern extension of the town." 2 Gathering together some of his baffled retainers he finally scaled the walls at a point a little to the north of the New London Road, where, collecting more of his men, he traversed the open space (then occupied by market-gardens) which intervened between Holywell Hill and the town wall, but was prevented from entering the public street by the unbroken line of the backs of the houses in Holywell Hill. Nothing daunted, he ordered some minor parts of the houses to be demolished, and, with his whole division, poured into that part of the hill known as Chequer Street, at a point between the Cross Keys Inn and the Queen's Hotel, formerly known as the "Exchequers." With the blare of trumpets and loud cries of "A Warwick! A Warwick!", they charged into St. Peter's Street, and fell upon the rear of the Royal army with the greatest fury. This sudden onslaught, combined with the terror inspired by the name of Warwick, caused a panic among the Lancastrians, which was taken advantage of by the Duke of York, who made good his footing within the defences and drove his opponents before him into the wide street of

1 Oman's *Warwick*.  
the town, while Sir Robert Ogle at the same time advanced up Shropshire Lane, (now Victoria Street), having overcome the defences there.

Hemmed in thus between three bodies of assailants, the Lancastrians fought with the courage of despair. "For one wild half-hour the arrows flew like sleet up and down St. Peter's Street, and the knights fought hand to hand in the narrow roadway."\(^1\) Under his banner stood the weak and passive king, wholly out of his element in this scene of bloodshed and strife. Abbot Wheathampsted, in his dramatic account of the fury of this street combat, has recorded that he heard sword clashing with sword, and shield striking shield, and that he saw the wounded with the arrows in their throats and the dead with their cloven skulls. The slaughter was so great that (as the old chronicler further remarks) the corpses might be seen lying one without a head, another with an arm lopped off, a third stabbed in the throat, a fourth run through the breast, and the whole street full of bodies of the slain, here, there, and everywhere. It was a stubborn contest. They strove shield to shield, foot to foot, spear to spear, using the sword freely, and for a time it was doubtful how the strife would end.

The Duke of Somerset, the ostensible cause of the battle, was killed early in the fight upon the doorstep of the ancient hostelry called "The Castle," at the upper end of the present Victoria Street; shortly afterwards the Earl of Northumberland, the Earl of Stafford, and the brave Lord Clifford were slain, and when the Duke of Buckingham, with an arrow sticking in his face and his silken surcoat drenched with blood, retired out of the battle and took sanctuary in the Abbey (as also did Thomas Thorp, chief baron of the Exchequer), the Lancastrians found themselves almost without leaders, and, losing all heart, they sought safety in flight in all directions. They ran hither and thither, in gardens and fields, bushes and groves, hedges and woods, desiring for themselves places and retreats where they might lie concealed until the fighting was over. The greater part of the slain were persons of mark, "for, as was often the case in that century, the lightly-equipped archers and billmen could fling down their arms and get away with ease, while the knights and nobles, fighting on foot in their cumbersome armour, could not make speed to fly when the day was lost."\(^2\)

\(^1\) Oman's *Warwick.*

\(^2\) Ibid.
Completely deserted by his adherents, and wounded in the neck by an arrow, King Henry VI. took shelter (according to one historian) in the house of Edmund Westby, a justice of the peace, who lived adjacent to St. Peter’s churchyard (the present “Hall Place”), and whose monument existed at one time in that church. The house where the king took refuge has also been described as that of a baker and of a tanner respectively.

“The Duke of York, having notice of this, posted thither with the Earl of Salisbury, and presenting themselves before him on their knees, told him that since the public enemy was dead, he saw none there but persons ready to obey him in whatever he should please to command them. The king, upon these words, recovered a little from the fright caused by the duke’s approach, and entreated him to put a stop to the slaughter, assuring him that he was ready to give him all the satisfaction he could reasonably desire. Whereupon the duke ordered a retreat to be sounded, and the army was enjoined to shed no more blood.”

With every outward sign of profound respect the duke conducted the king to the Abbey, where Abbot Wheathampsted received him, and, after returning thanks at the High Altar for his safe deliverance from the dangers of the day, he was led to the royal apartment, where he slept for the night. The next day the victor took the king to London with the same outward marks of reverence he had previously shown. The fall of Somerset did not, however, restore confidence. The Parliament met in July, and a general pardon was declared by statute for all those who had taken arms, and all the blame of the “journey of St. Albans” was thrown upon Somerset and his adherents.

Immediately after the termination of the battle the victorious Yorkists began to plunder the town. In consequence of an alarming rumour that the monastery was to be sacked, the judicious Abbot, in order to propitiate them, sent out large quantities of wine and provisions to the soldiers, and by this diplomatic act, supplemented by the com-

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1 Stowe  
2 Hall, Hollinshead.  
3 Rapin.
mands of the Duke of York, the Abbey and monastic buildings escaped spoliation. Perhaps no battle fought upon English soil has had so many mis-statements made concerning the number of those slain in the combat, as the First Battle of St. Albans. Hallam calls it "an affair," adding that "this may seem an improper appellation for what is generally termed a battle, wherein five thousand men are said to have fallen. But I rely here upon my faithful guide 'The Paston Letters,' one of which, written immediately after the engagement, says that only six score were killed. Surely this testimony outweighs a thousand ordinary chroniclers, and the nature of the action, which was a sudden attack upon the town of St. Albans without any pitched combat, renders the larger number impossible. Wheathampsted himself at the time makes the Duke of York's army but three thousand fighting men. This account of the trifling loss of life is confirmed by a contemporary letter published in the 'Archæologia' (xx. 519), where the whole number of the slain was but forty-eight, including, however, several lords." The letter here referred to was written by John Bayley, Esq., of H.M. Record Office, and is copied from a MS. found in the Tower of London amongst the papers of Sir William Stone, who was a steward of the Abbot of St. Albans.

The historian Stowe affirms that five thousand Lancastrians fell, and six hundred Yorkists; Hall records that eight thousand were slain, while Hollinshead places the number at eight hundred. Amid these conflicting testimonies it is difficult to determine the truth, but modern writers generally state that eight hundred Lancastrians fell, and six hundred Yorkists.

The sun shone upon a dolorous sight that Whitsuntide morning, for these things happened in the sacred week of Pentecost; the bodies lay thick in the upper street and at the division of the ways about the market where the Town Hall now stands, and there was none to bury them, for the fear of the duke's anger prevented any one from touching them. Wheathampsted prevailed upon the Duke of York to allow him to pay the last honours to the men of distinction who had fallen, and no less than forty-eight, including the Duke of Somerset, the Earls of Stafford and Northumberland, and* Lord Clifford, were solemnly interred in the Lady Chapel of

* Newcome.
the Abbey, while the remainder appear to have been buried in St. Peter's church and churchyard.

During the same year, at a Parliament held at Westminster, the character of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, was cleared of the charges of treason which had been brought against him; and this declaration was ordered to be read publicly through the kingdom, but especially in the town of St. Albans.¹

The Second Battle of St. Albans was fought on Shrove Tuesday, February 17th, 1461. The Duke of York had recently lost his life at the battle of Wakefield, but his right to the throne, which had now been admitted by Parliament, had devolved upon his energetic eldest son, Edward Earl of March, a brave and handsome youth of nineteen, who eventually became King Edward IV. The old king, although nominally at the head of national affairs, was in reality a mere puppet in the hands of the fiercely-contending factions, and had it not been for his indomitable and high-minded queen, he would have long since given up the contest and disappeared from the scene. But the battle of Wakefield had been for Margaret a triumph, and in spite of the many obstacles in her path she did not despair of finally overcoming her enemies, and once more reigning as undisputed Queen of England.

At this time the Earl of March was in Wales with an army twenty-three thousand strong, and was burning with a desire to avenge his father. The Earl of Warwick held London for him. The queen, with an army of eighteen thousand men, consisting chiefly of wild and reckless spirits from the north of England, "the broken men of the border," and roving bands of Welsh, Scotch, and Irish adventurers,² marched southwards with the idea of entering London, where she imagined she would be received with joy by the citizens. She detached a force under the Earl of Pembroke to engage the Earl of March; but at Mortimer's Cross, in Herefordshire, this Lancastrian army was almost annihilated. The news of the defeat did not prevent the queen from still continuing her march towards London; and to encourage her followers she gave them free permission to plunder the country south of the river Trent.

¹ *Chronicon of Abbot John of Wheathampsted.* ² Stowe, p. 413.
The fearful atrocities committed by this army filled the inhabitants of St. Albans and all the neighbouring district with the greatest apprehension; the Londoners, upon hearing of them, at once threw in their lot with the Earl of Warwick, who advanced with a force of thirty thousand men towards the north to meet the queen, taking the king with him, whom he dared not leave behind in London. He had progressed nearly as far as Dunstable, when, hearing that the Lancastrians were passing from Bedfordshire through Luton towards St. Albans, he retraced his steps, the two armies thus marching in directions parallel to each other. York, entering the town from the Watling Street, by Fishpool Street and Church Street (now called George Street), took possession of the market-place and all the adjacent thoroughfares. "His army was drawn up, not in the great masses which were usual at this time, but in detachments scattered along a front of three miles; the right on a heath called No Man's Land, the left in St. Albans town. The countryside was full of woods and hedges, which were manned by archers, supported by a body of Burgundian handgun-men whom Warwick had hired from Flanders. The position was strong, but the communication between its various parts was bad, and the whole force of Warwick's men seems to have been ill-placed for concentration. Owing to some mismanagement of the officer commanding the mounted scouts, the Lancastrians attacked before they were expected. 'The queen's men were at hands with the earl's in the town of St. Albans while all things were set to seek and out of order, for the prickers came not home to bring tidings that the queen was at hand, save one, and he came and said that she was yet nine mile off!'"¹

The queen, arriving almost simultaneously, rested upon Bernard's Heath for a time, and then marched into the town, the two forces first confronting each other in the market-place. Here a fierce encounter ensued, the greater number of the combatants engaged causing "the steep old streets" on either side to be occupied, and the struggle in a back street leading from the lower end of the town (probably Dagnall Street) was particularly fierce. But the superiority in archery of the Londoners soon began to tell, and "with a storm of arrows which flew as thick as hail" the Lancastrians were beaten back through St. Peter's Street, to Bernard's Heath and the adjoining roads, being hotly pursued by the

¹ Oman's *Warwick*, p. 105.
Yorkists. Here, upon this open space, amidst the falling snowflakes, the fight went on for hours, being maintained on either side with that deadly animosity and bloodthirsty doggedness which so specially characterises a civil war; in addition, the system of retaliation by beheading, which was inaugurated at the conflict at Wakefield, had begun to impart a sanguinary and vindictive character to the strife. Clad and armed alike, the adverse parties could only recognise each other by their different coats-of-arms and their badges,—the red and white roses, the little silver swans of the Prince of Wales, and the white crosses and ragged staves which formed the cognisance of the famous House of Warwick.

The great baron, as usual the very soul of his army, was foremost at every dangerous point, and had he been ably seconded would no doubt have won the day, seeing that his force, in point of numbers, was superior to that of the queen. But Lord Lovelace of Hurley, who commanded one of the wings of his army, either through treachery or for some other reason, did not engage in time; the Yorkists were finally compelled to give way, a panic seized them in spite of their superior strength, and, being utterly routed, they sought safety in flight. The pursuit by the savage Northmen was fierce and relentless; no quarter was given to the unhappy Yorkists, and when no more foes were to be found they turned upon the unresisting inhabitants.

Then came the most terrible and disastrous night that St. Albans has ever seen. The town was delivered over to hordes of half-savage, undisciplined soldiers intoxicated with victory and mad with riot and excess. The accounts of the fearful and hideous atrocities they committed reached London, and evoked such a storm of indignation that the cause of the queen was for ever ruined. When the Yorkists fled from the field the king was left comparatively alone; he sent a message to the northern lords, by Thomas Hoo, an esquire (a man well-read in languages and in the law), which resulted in the king being conducted to Lord Clifford's tent that stood near the place where the Yorkists had encamped. The queen and her son, Prince Edward, who was afterwards so cruelly slain at Tewkesbury, were brought to the tent, and the joy of the old king at once more seeing his wife, and particularly his only son, was intense. He knighted the prince that day, together with about thirty Lancastrians who had distinguished themselves in the battle. Then a procession was formed, and they marched through the corpse-
Yorkists. Thus, upon this open space, amidst the falling snowflakes, the fight went on on the frozen ground, uncontrolled on either side with that deadly animosity and bloodthirsty vengeance which so spectacularly characterized a civil war; in addition, the system of retaliation by half-blood which was inaugurated at the conflict at Wakefield, had begun to impart a propensity and destructive character to the strife. Clad and armed alike, the adverse parties could only recognize each other by their different coats-of-arms and their badges, silver and white being the little silver swans of the Prince of Wales, and the white roses and ruffled sleeves which formed the cognisance of the famous House of Warwick. The great factor, as usual, the very soul of his army, was foremost at every dangerous point, and had he been only seconded would no doubt have won the day, seeing that his force, in ratio of numbers, was superior to that of the queen. But Lord Lovelace of Hurley, who commanded one of the wings of his army, either through treachery or for some other reason did not engage in time; the Yorkists were finally compelled to give way, a panic seized them, in spite of their superior strength, and, being utterly routed, they sought safety in flight. The pursuit by the savage Northmen was fierce and relentless; no quarter was given to the unhappy Yorkists, and when no more foes were to be found they turned upon the unsuspecting inhabitants.

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The Grammar School in the Lady Chapel: St. Alban's Abbey
bestrewn streets and the blood-stained snow to the Abbey, where the Abbot and monks received them with hymns and songs. Thanks were given before the High Altar and at the Shrine of the Saint, and the royal apartments were placed at their disposal.

Margaret was far from using her success with moderation. The Lord Bonville and Sir Thomas Kyriel, a brave old Knight of the Garter who had gained considerable distinction in the French wars, had been entrusted by Warwick with the care of the king, whom they had treated with such kindness and respect that they were persuaded to remain with him on receiving his promises of pardon. "But what are the assurances and engagements of a frivolous and insignificant husband," says an old writer, "when the queen, with all the ferocity of a she-wolf, regardless of her husband’s honour, comes in and orders both their heads to be struck off at St. Albans on Ash Wednesday?" "When brought before her, the queen told them they must die, and sending for her son the Prince of Wales, desired that he should choose their mode of death. And when the boy—he was eight years old—was brought into the tent, she said, ‘Fair son, what manner of death shall these knights, whom you see here, die?’ And the young child answered, ‘Let them have their heads taken off.’ Then said Sir Thomas, ‘May God destroy those who taught thee this manner of speech,’ but immediately they brought out the unfortunate knights and struck off their heads.”

It was fortunate for the town that the queen did not prolong her visit; provisions grew very scarce in her army, and she sent to the Lord Mayor of London for a supply. He did not dare at such a juncture to deny her, and several waggons were accordingly laden with food, but the mob stopped them, and told the mayor they would not suffer provisions to be sent to an army which had come for the purpose of plundering the country. The queen would probably have advanced upon London, had it not been for one of those bold and dashing impulses on the part of the Earl of March,—actions which so often change the fortunes of individuals and nations. The young warrior, then barely twenty years of age, entered London in triumph, as though the battle of St. Albans had been a victory for his party, instead of a defeat. Then the queen thought it judicious

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1 Oman's Warwick.
2 Rapin.
to retreat northwards, and, to the intense relief of the inhabitants, the Lancastrian army, laden with plunder, departed eight days after the battle.

It is a moot point whether the Abbey suffered spoliation or not, during this eventful period. A recent writer says, "We must use Hallam's rule or canon, and be influenced by probabilities rather than by testimony when the historians or chroniclers are prejudiced witnesses, e.g., Wheathampsted, Abbot of St. Albans and chronicler, was a violent Lancastrian at first. After the Second Battle of St. Albans, Margaret and her plundering Northern hordes stripped the Abbey; this made the Abbot as strong a Yorkist. He looked at events through different spectacles before and after his Abbey was plundered." It is fair to assume that Hallam is solely responsible for the statement which avers that the Abbey was despoiled. Certain it is that Wheathampsted was in a very defenceless condition, for his Archdeacon, the Prior, and many of the monks had fled for safety on the approach of the Northern men, and their example had been followed by large numbers of the retainers and the townspeople. Newcome states that "the enemy broke not into the Abbey," and this assertion has been generally accepted by local historians and compilers. It is true that Wheathampsted became a Yorkist, for, soon after the coronation of the Earl of March as Edward IV., we find the Abbot soliciting a charter, which, being granted, added very materially to the civil power of the Abbots, for they obtained permission to pass judgment upon the gravest offences against life and property, and had full power of life and death. This jurisdiction remained in force until the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Henry VIII., and was then reduced to its former and ancient level as defined when the liberty was first granted to Geoffrey of Gorham in the reign of Henry I.  

Similar discrepancies occur with regard to the number slain in the Second as obtain in the First Battle. One historian states that 1,916 men perished, another says 230; but, considering the circumstances under which the contest was fought and the unusually large number of combatants, it seems probable that as many as 2,300 soldiers were killed during the engagement. The only person of distinction who fell in this

1 Oman's Warwick.  
2 Clutterbuck.  
3 Stow.  
4 Hollinshead.  
5 Hall, fol. 184; Dugdale's Baron, vol. i., p. 79.
encounter was Sir John Grey, who, with twelve others in the town of Colney, had been knighted on the day previous to the battle. Sir John was the first husband of Elizabeth Woodville, who afterwards made such an impression upon the heart of the young king, Edward IV., that he married her, in spite of strong opposition, and thus laid the foundation of many subsequent troubles. That so many noblemen perished in the First Battle and only one person of note in the Second, must be attributed to the fact that nearly all the combatants in the former were gentlemen by birth.

The Later Abbots, 1464—1539.

Concerning William Alban, the thirty-fifth Abbot, but little is recorded, which is probably owing to the distracted condition of the kingdom during the period in which he presided over the fortunes of the Abbey (1464 to 1476). A register of his acts is included in the Bodleian Library; it contains records of various kinds, among them being a list of all the members of the monastery at that time.

William Wallingford, the thirty-sixth Abbot, had been Prior and Archdeacon of the Abbey previous to his election. The magnificent High Altar Screen was erected by him,—a monument that will be for ever associated with his name. The Art of Printing was introduced into the monastery under his règime, and formed one of the most important epochs in the history of the fraternity. Wallingford's rule was characterised by prudence and judgment; he was resolute in defending the rights of the Abbey against every suspicion of encroachment, and some claims made by Archbishop Bourchier against him were successfully contested upon appeal to the Court of Rome. The Chantry Chapel, prepared by this Abbot during his lifetime as a final resting-place for his remains, at a cost of £100 sterling, is that which stands on the south side of the Presbytery adjacent to the High Altar Screen, which Chapel, although it passed for many years as that of Wheathampsted, has now been proved to be Wallingford's.

The name of Thomas Ramrugge (the thirty-seventh Abbot) was originally Ramrugge, from a place of that name near Kimpton, in Hertfordshire. He was not appointed

1 Newcome.
until 1492, although his predecessor died in 1484. It is highly probable that Henry VII., following out the well-known avaricious tendency of his nature, appropriated the revenues of the Abbey for his own use during the major portion of this period, an excuse being provided by the fact that Catesby, the great seneschal of the Abbey, was among those who fought against him at Bosworth in 1485, under Richard III. But of this we cannot be sure, for no history of this Abbot has been transmitted to us; it is possible that the usual records were kept, but were confiscated by the visitors and ecclesiastical plunderers at the Reformation. “There is an interesting picture in the collection of MSS. in the British Museum,1 entitled, ‘The Parliament holden at Westminster the fourth of February the third yeare of our Soveraigne Lord Kinge Henry the 8th, A.D. 1512,’ during the rule of Abbot Ramryge, in which the figure and dress of every ecclesiastical dignitary walking in the procession is depicted, each with his coat-of-arms over his head. It commences with Abbots walking in pairs, according to the rank of their Abbeys, the lesser houses preceding. The first pair are the Abbot of Tewkesbury and the Prior of Coventry, the latter being the only Prior in the procession. Many have not their family arms, the sinister being left blank. The Abbots of St. Albans and Westminster are the last pair; the arms of both are given, but there is no figure under that of Westminster, from which we may infer that he was absent. All the Abbots, with two exceptions, have exactly the same dress, consisting of a plain cassock and cap, with an ample robe of purple, having folds behind as a hood; none of the Abbots wear mitres. The Bishops wear the same simple caps as the Abbots, only the Archbishops, who close the procession, wear the mitre.” 2

The date of the Abbot’s death is uncertain; the sole memorial left of his rule in the Abbey Church is the magnificent chantry-tomb upon the north side of the Presbytery.

Thomas Wolsey, the thirty-eighth Abbot, was appointed in 1521, being at the

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2 Nicholson’s Abb. of St. Alb.
time of his investiture Bishop of Winchester, Archbishop of York, Chancellor of England, and the Papal Legate. He held the Abbey *in commendam*, i.e., it was committed to his charge, to fully administer all existing rights and powers, until another Abbot should be appointed; this benefice was granted to the Cardinal by the Pope, and was such a violation of the canon law that it was generally regarded as a portentous omen of coming changes of a drastic nature in the monastic institutions. There is no record extant to show that Wolsey ever came to St. Albans to formally take possession of his charge; he was not, however, oblivious of the revenues of the Abbey, but secured them for the formation of his colleges at Oxford and Ipswich. At his downfall, the whole of his property was declared forfeit to the crown, as he was convicted under the statute of *Præmunire*; he was subsequently pardoned, and was then permitted to retain, until his death, the title of Abbot of St. Albans, the king, meanwhile, appropriating the revenues to himself.

Robert Catton, the thirty-ninth Abbot, was elected in 1430, upon the death of Cardinal Wolsey; the appointment was really made by the king, but an election was formally proceeded with as a matter of policy.¹ The circumstances under which he presided over the Abbey were in strange contrast to those prevalent with the majority of the Abbots who preceded him, for royal agents and ministers were quartered upon him as guests in the monastery, ruling and regulating all the proceedings. Catton, however, does not appear to have tamely submitted to the curtailment of his authority, according to a letter (still preserved) from one of the commissioners, named Petre.² In 1536, King Henry VIII. published certain articles which had been agreed upon by the Upper House of Convocation; in the original document (now in the Cottonian Library³), the signature of Robert Catton stands first of the Abbots of England. In 1538, the rule of this Abbot ended, whether by his death or through being deprived and superseded is not known; it was probably the latter, as the king was eager to seize upon the possessions and revenues of the monastery, and would not tolerate the opposition of the Abbot.

¹ Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*. ² Newcome, p. 439. Cleop. E. 4, fol. 43. ³ Cleop. E. S.
Richard Boreman de Stevenache, the fortieth and last Abbot of St. Albans, was initiated upon the express understanding that he would execute the wishes of the king and the Parliament with a good grace; he therefore surrendered the Abbey on the 5th day of December, 1539, and delivered the conventual seal to the commissioners appointed by the Crown.¹

The possessions of the Abbey were very quickly dispersed among the favourites of the king; the plate, jewels, and all articles of value having been sent off to the royal treasury, the monastery was handed over to the tender mercies of Sir Richard Lee, who at once commenced its demolition; the great gateway and the Abbey were, however, not included in the grant, and the latter was subsequently bestowed by the Charter of King Edward VI. to the inhabitants of St. Albans for the sum of £400, and was made the parish church instead of the church of St. Andrew, which had been destroyed.

Thus came to an end the Great Monastery of St. Albans. With all the faults and drawbacks of its later existence, this famous institution had in earlier times been of immense service to the town and the surrounding district, for, from within its cloistered precincts once emanated all that was best and highest in literature, arts, and civilization. It was the home of learning, and the local fountain-head of religious life; as a foundation which had survived from that semi-mystical, remote, and hazy period when the Saxon Heptarchy ruled the land, it appealed to the susceptible imagination and religious enthusiasm of the community, and for many centuries enjoyed its full confidence and support. It was only when indolence and luxury usurped within the Abbey walls the places formerly occupied by piety and asceticism, that the faith of the people waned. The monastic system, had it been

¹ This seal, which is now preserved in the British Museum, is made of ivory (vide p. 23). Walsingham, writing in the time of Richard II. respecting the affixing of the seal to an agreement between the monastery and the town of St. Albans, speaks of it as being of very high antiquity. Dugdale gives a copy of the original surrender signed by the Abbot (Ricardus Stevynnache), the Prior, and thirty-seven monks; the general form in which these surrenders were written was prefixed by the declaration that "The Abbot and Brethren upon full deliberation, certain knowledge, of their own proper motion, for certain just and reasonable causes especially moving them in their souls and conscience, did freely, and of their own accord, give and grant their house to the King."¹¹ There is also in Dugdale a list of all the lands, manors, rectories, etc., of the monastery, and the values of them at the time of the suppression. A writer in the first part of last century calculated the value of the lands in his time as being likely to produce two hundred thousand pounds per annum,²—at the present period it would be considerably higher.

¹ Nicholson's, Abb. of St. Alb.; Rymer's Faded, tom. 14, p. 604.  
² Stevens's App. to Dug, Monast.
allowed to continue, would indisputably have been destroyed in the religious reforms of Edward VI. and Elizabeth, but the end came before its time, and, like all premature reforms, the Dissolution clashed with the spirit of the age and was regarded by the common people as an injustice, hence their support of the Pilgrimage of Grace. There is no doubt that the monasteries supplied a public want; when they were no longer needed and, having fulfilled their purpose, had developed into abuses, they were swept away—the inevitable end of all institutions which outlive their usefulness.
CHAPTER VI.

ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY.


In simple, yet stately and majestic grandeur, the Abbey Church of St. Alban dominates the hill which, nearly sixteen hundred years ago, was hallowed by the Martyr's blood. The general harmony of its massive proportions at once strikes the observer who views the huge fabric at a suitable distance, and its dignity and aspect of profound sphinx-like majesty never fail to impress the appreciative traveller. And if before his mental vision there pass the scenes and recollections of the many events with which it is associated,
the Roman crowd clustered on the summit of the hill to see the first martyr of Britain suffer; the imposing search by the blood-stained Saxon monarch for the holy relics; the long line of mitred Abbots ruling in regal state; the generations of solemn monks who paced its quiet cloisters; the wealth of knowledge handed down to modern times by its school of historians; the visits of many kings and queens during its long centuries of existence; the ornate ceremonials, gorgeous processions, and solemn rites; its wealth, stateliness, and rank, as the Abbey Church of the chief monastery in England,—it is not surprising that his veneration is aroused and his emotions strongly excited by the noble appearance of the ancient pile.

The site was first occupied by a small structure erected by Romano-British Christians soon after A.D. 305; this fabric was in existence in the time of the Venerable Bede, who describes it as of admirable workmanship and worthy of the Proto-martyr. In this sacred edifice King Offa deposited the bones of St. Alban, and simultaneously repaired it and decorated the interior with pictures, tapestries, and other ornaments.1 As already stated, Offa did not build a church, and, until the Norman structure was commenced during the abbacy of Paul de Caen, this old building ("erected formerly out of the ancient edifices of the heathens")2 was reserved for the use of the monastery. Immense stores of building materials, consisting of Roman tiles, stone slabs and tablets, columns, etc., were obtained from the ruins of Verulam by the Abbots Ealdred and Eadmer, with the intention of ultimately rearing a more commodious and imposing church.

The Norman Church.—In the year 1070, Lanfranc had been nominated to the archiepiscopal See of Canterbury; and in 1077, Paul, of the Abbey of Caen (his kinsman, whom he had brought with him into England), was appointed to preside over St. Albans. The great work of re-edification, on a scale of dimensions vastly exceeding those of the pre-existing church, was commenced by this Abbot, with the assistance and under the auspices of the archbishop, who, it is said, contributed 1,000 marks towards the undertaking. The erection of the building occupied eleven years,—from 1077 to 1088.

The ground-plan of the Norman structure assumed the form of a Latin cross: it consisted of a nave with two aisles, north and south transepts, the presbytery and Saint's

1 Brayley's Hist. of St. Alb.

2 M. Paris.
chapel, having north and south aisles, and an apsidal termination on the site of the present antechapel. The whole structure ended eastwards in seven semicircular apses; four were upon the two apsidal chapels of each transept, two at the eastern extremities of the aisles, and the seventh was the larger one just referred to.

The length of the building was 440 feet. On either side of the west front stood a high, square, flanking tower. The foundations of the Norman building were designed with great care, and in such a manner as to provide for the permanent preservation of the building. Those under the massive tower were constructed of immense blocks of stone laid in regular courses and firmly cemented together; this material must be a portion of that collected by the Saxon Abbots from the ruins of Verulam. The foundations of the remaining Norman walls and pillars consist of courses of flints embedded in mortar, with alternate layers of Roman tiles to ensure the requisite strength. The Norman work visible at the present day comprises the tower, the two transepts with the slype, the presbytery with its aisles as far east as the chantry-tombs of Abbots Ramryge and Wallingford, the choir, six bays on the north side of the nave, and part of the wall of the south aisle of the nave.

The Tower.—Although this prominent part of the Norman structure has at various periods received additions, and, possibly, undergone minor alterations, yet it is generally conceded that its present appearance is substantially the same as when it left the hands of its builders eight hundred years ago; but the turrets or cones, which stood upon the angles, have disappeared. Abbot Trumpington (1214—1235) erected an octagonal lantern upon the summit, which added materially to the strength and height of the upper portion. This lantern was apparently of oak, cased with lead, and when we recollect the beautiful Early English work of the Abbot which is still extant, we cannot doubt that the additional structure considerably enhanced the architectural beauty of the building. In the fifteenth century, under Abbot Wheathampsted, there was substituted for the octagon, with its handsome embellishments and lofty tapering pinnacles, a short spire, which was demolished in 1833. A leaden roof now covers the tower, supported by the massive oak beams which originally upheld the spire. Below the roof is the belfry: the windows here are of peculiar formation, as they
consist of two large semi-circular relieving-arches built of Roman tiles in each of the four sides, while within each window are two arched openings provided with louvres. In order that the sound of the bells may not be impeded, sundry diamond-shaped apertures occur in the walls at frequent intervals, and the spandrels within the larger arches are similarly pierced.

The history of the bells is interesting. The earliest record we have is dated about 1043, when one great bell was presented by Wynfled, wife of Egelwine the Swarte; about 1077, bells were given by Paul, the fourteenth Abbot, to which were added two others, by Litholf and his wife. Litholf was a Saxon nobleman who resided in a woodland part of the neighbourhood, and, having a good stock of sheep and goats, he disposed of some of them, purchasing a bell with the proceeds; as he heard the musical sound of it emanating from the minster tower, he said, "Eya! how sweetly my goats bleat and my sheep baa!" His wife procured another, to be similarly placed, the two bells producing such sweet harmony that the lady remarked, "I do not think this union is wanting of the Divine favour which united me to my husband in the bond of mutual affection." One bell appears to have been given soon after this by John, the rector of Hoddesdon. About 1214, a bell called "St. Mary" was cast by William de Trumpington, the twenty-second Abbot. In 1260, Roger de Norton caused one to be made, named "St. Alban"; a second, "St. Catherine," and a third designated "St. Amphibal," the last being a very large and deep-sounding bell, which he ordered to be struck every night at the time of the curfew. The Abbot destroyed four old bells wherewith to furnish the metal for these three. About 1335, the bell named "St. Amphibal" was broken; Michael de Mentmore, who was then Abbot, caused it and also the bell christened "St. Alban" to be re-cast; he provided another great bell called "Gabriel," and this, together with "St. Amphibal," he dedicated and commanded to be rung at the curfew. In 1451, a new bell, "St. John," was cast by Abbot Wheathampsted upon his re-election, and this is the last of which there is any account. There were five of the old bells remaining in 1698, "Gabriel," the sixth bell, being in the Clock Tower. In 1699, all those in the Abbey were broken up to form (with additional metal) the present peal of eight; their names

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1 Church Bells of Herts.  
2 M. Paris.
and approximate dates of casting appear to have been—"St. Mary" (1214), "St. Amphibal" (1260, re-cast about 1335), "St. Catherine" (1260), "St. Alban" (1260, re-cast about 1335), and "St. John" (1451). The original frame still remains in the belfry. In addition to the present peal there is a "Sanctus Bell," used by the Grammar School during the three hundred years it occupied the Lady Chapel. The tenor bell in the Abbey is estimated to weigh 28 cwt. The second, fifth, and sixth bells were again re-cast during the last century, and the treble in 1845. This peal is considered by experts to be a very fine one, and probably better than any other in the town, though the quality of those in St. Peter's Church nearly equals it. The quarter-chimes of the clock closely resemble those at Westminster. The carillons play one of a set of tunes at every third hour.

The ringing-chamber possesses no special architectural interest, but the gallery to which it gives access is one of the most singular features in the design of the tower. It forms a distinct passage (20⅔ inches wide and 6 ft. 9 in. high) within the thickness of the wall on either side of the tower, and its arcade has always been exposed to the weather. The columns and their various essential parts are of stone, rude in workmanship, and dissimilar in construction and dimensions. The exceedingly primitive character of the whole of the masonry can scarcely be imagined, for the greater part of that which forms the pillars appears to have been set up just as it came from the quarry; the probability is that it was brought with the Roman bricks from Verulam, and, not being applicable to the design, was made available with as little trouble as possible. The winding staircase, leading to the upper parts of the tower, is contained within the north-west angle, and is approached from the clerestory of the transept. The ceiling in the tower is decorated with the roses of York and Lancaster. Four semi-circular arches, resting on gigantic piers, support the superstructure. In 1870, the tower, and consequently all the middle of the church, was saved from ruin by a fortunate and almost providential discovery on the part of Mr. Chappel (then clerk of the works), who, during divine service, heard certain ominous sounds. This immediately induced him to examine the tower.

2 Lord Grimthorpe, St. Alban's Abbey.
3 Gibbs, Gram. Sch.
4 Buckler's Abbey Church.
when he found it in such a ruinous condition that it might collapse at any moment; so, without further delay, he gave instructions to have it shored up with timber. At this time the north-east pier, which was crushed to pieces and bursting out the wall of the presbytery as far as Abbot Ramryge's tomb, was gradually reconstructed, and during the operation that corner of the tower sank an inch-and-a-half, but happily nothing of a more serious nature occurred. A large portion of the south-east pier was also rebuilt, and of the western one a somewhat smaller portion. It was then discovered that the former had been deliberately undermined and propped up with short pieces of timber, doubtless an act of vandalism carried out in the interval between the confiscation of the Abbey and the sale of the church to the town; and the probable motive was that, by the consuming of the wood by fire, the tower should fall with a crash. Very likely this had been done clandestinely by Sir Richard Lee, who obtained all the rest of the buildings as old materials, hoping by this wicked deed to procure the remains of the church into the bargain. The secret, however, was preserved, and the hole never re-filled. The tower is 144 feet in height, its width from north to south is 47 feet, and from east to west 45 feet. Excepting that of Norwich Cathedral, it is the highest Norman tower remaining in England.

The Transepts.—The prevailing characteristics of massiveness and strength are observable in the transepts (both externally and internally) as in the tower. When originally built they were surmounted, as at the present time, by high-pitched roofs with lofty gable ends, at each corner of which rose a circular Norman turret with a conical summit. Two apsidal chapels stood on the eastern side of each transept, in the original Norman church, the longer chapel in each case being adjacent to the presbytery aisle; until the recent restoration under Lord Grimthorpe, traces of the pitch of the roofs of these chapels could be discerned upon the eastern transept walls. The destruction of the apsidal chapels in the south transept seems to have taken place in the time of Edward II., to afford room for a spacious sacristy.¹ The chapels then constructed (under the two original Norman arches, with a wall terminating them externally eastwards) were dedicated to St. John the Evangelist and St. Stephen respectively.

¹ Nicholson's Abb. of St. Alb.
The interiors of the transepts very much resemble those of the Abbey Church of St. Stephen at Caen in Normandy, built by William the Conqueror in 1064. This might naturally have been expected, as Abbot Paul de Caen, the kinsman of the conqueror, raised the present structure only thirteen years after that at Caen had been erected.¹

The original Norman gables were demolished in the fifteenth century; at the same time the high-pitched roofs gave place to the recent depressed ones, embattled parapets were added, and the Norman cornice and buttresses dismembered. The roofs are now high-pitched and covered with tiles; they form part of the recent restoration of Lord Grimthorpe, who has also removed the ancient oak ceilings, replacing them by others of deal.

The North Transept.—The huge wheel-window in the termination of this transept has recently superseded a perpendicular one, inserted there by Wheathampsted.

Many conflicting opinions concerning the merits or demerits of this window have been expressed, the majority seemingly depreciatory. It may, however, be asserted that the wheel-window far excels in durability that of Wheathampsted, and is at least more ornamental than the original blank space which the latter occupied in the Norman design.

The martyrdom of St. Alban is supposed to have taken place upon the site covered by the north transept. In the east wall may be seen the recesses which originally led into the now demolished apsidal chapels; in each recess formerly stood an altar, and a vestige of one of them still remains; the northernmost was dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and in connection with it there had been a guild or brotherhood in honour of the Holy Trinity, possessing books, chalices, and various ornaments for the use of their priest. South of this was the altar of St. Osyth, or Scytha, and, still further in the same direction, an altar consecrated at the instance of William Wynturshulle in honour of Our Saviour, St. Mary the Virgin, and St. Lawrence and St. Blaise; it was also known as that of the "Holy Cross of Pity," and of the "Leaning Crucifix." In front of it were two columns, the shafts symbolically denoting love to God and one's neighbour, one of them being of the colour of the earth to signify humiliation, and the other coloured red to denote the blood of Our Saviour; on these columns were inscribed the emblems of the Passion. The altar of St. Lawrence was surmounted by a pictorial representation of the Passion, over which was a mural painting of the "Incredulity of St. Thomas" (also known by the name of the "History of the Resurrection"), having beneath it the following lines, taken from the prayers after Communion in the Sarum Missal:

Mors tua, mort Christi; fraus mundi, gloria cœli,  
Et dolor interni, sint memoranda tibi;  
In cruce sum pro te; qui peccas, desine, pro me;  
Desine, condono; pugna, juvo; vince, corono.

This painting (which still exists in good condition) portrays our Lord in the attitude of standing, and holding in His left hand a cross-staff with vexillum, while St. Thomas, kneeling, thrusts his right hand into Christ's side. Upon a scroll close to the saint are
the words, "Dominus meus et Deus meus;" and upon another near our Lord: "Beati qui non viderunt et crediderunt." The date of the painting is probably of the end of the fourteenth century, and measures about nine feet in height by about six feet in width. The altars were demolished in the fifteenth century.

In 1872, the two Norman windows in the north wall of the transept were opened, and in the western one a plastered wall, having depicted upon it a vine-pattern in fresco, was discovered, reaching half-way up the window on the inner side, thus converting it into a kind of watching-loft. A rood-screen at one time extended across the transept between the two north pillars of the tower; it formerly stood in the nave, but was removed by Abbot Trumpington.

Until the recent restoration a rude representation of the Martyrdom of St. Alban occupied the central panel of the ceiling; Gough considers it to have been the work of Abbot Wheathampsted, but Clutterbuck remarks that as the arms of the Duke of Somerset (in another panel of the same age, formerly in the north transept) appear with the augmentation granted to that family upon the marriage of Henry VIII. with Lady Jane Seymour, A.D. 1536, the painting must be subsequent to that occasion. The picture is now affixed to the north wall of the south aisle of the presbytery. In the floor of the transept is preserved a number of ancient tiles, many being of great beauty and excellent in design; these were discovered in various parts of the Abbey during restorations, and some of them are the finest examples of ancient tiles that have been found in England.

The ornate pulpit, at the base of the steps leading into the transept in the north-east corner of the tower, is the gift of the Freemasons of England. It is of the Decorated order, and derives peculiar appropriateness from the fact that the original church built by King Offa in the eighth century was erected by him and the "Hond Masons" to the memory of St. Alban. According to the Guild legends, St. Alban himself was intimately associated with this ancient fraternity, and is there claimed as the patron of Freemasons. The earliest mention of St. Alban in connection with Masonry is to be found in the

1 *Antiquary*, Dec. 1880.
2 *Gesta*, I. 159.
3 Nicholson, *Abb. of St. Alb.*
Prose Constitutions, included in the MSS. at the British Museum, of the date 1425, where we read:—"And St. Alban loved well Masons, and he gave them their charges and manners first in England, and he ordained convenient times to pay for the travail."—a tradition repeated and amplified in numerous other Guild legends. In a Lansdowne MS., A.D. 1560, it is stated:—"St. Alban was a worthy Knight and Steward of the King, his household, and had government of his realm, and also of the making of the walls of the said town, and he loved well masons, and cherished them much, and made them pay right good, for he gave them 3 and vid. a week and illid, before that time in all the land a mason took but one penny a day and his meat, till St. Alban mended it, and he gave them a charter of the king and his ‘Counsell,’ for to hold a general assembly, and gave it to name assembly." In the Antiquity MS., of date 1686, is this further statement:—"And he gott them a charter from the king and his ‘Counsell,’ to hold a general ‘Counsell,’ and gave it to name ‘Assemblie,’ theret he was himself and did help to make Masons and gave them charges as you shall heare afterwards."

The South Transept.—In the original Norman design there was no window at the south end of this transept, as the conventual buildings were attached to the church at this point, communication being effected by means of the staircase in the south-west angle. Wheathampsted inserted a large Perpendicular window, which was destroyed by a storm in 1703, and a wooden one took its place. In 1832, the latter was superseded by a stone window of Perpendicular design, which was demolished in 1890. The "Five Sisters" window, recently placed there by Lord Grimthorpe, is more in harmony with the Norman design of the transept than any of those preceding. Externally, the five lancets are of varying height, being carried up into the gable, and lighting the space between the ceiling and the roof; the insertion of black felt prevents the line of the ceiling and the crowns of the interior lancets being discerned from the outside. The central lancet (the loftiest in England) is 60 feet in height. Internally, the lancets bear a striking resemblance to the celebrated "Five Sisters" of York.

1 This storm also destroyed the first Eddystone Lighthouse, erected by Winstanley.
2 In Dickens's Nicholas Nickleby will be found a pretty legend based upon facts concerning the origin of the famous "Five Sisters" window in York Minster.
Under the window, within the transept, is a range of Transition Norman arches, removed from the slype and furnished with new shafts and bases, and below them is a doorway leading into the slype, the exquisite design of which excites the warmest admiration, being the most beautiful example of Norman work now remaining in the Abbey.

The Slype, to which this doorway gives access, was apparently more of a monastic building than an adjunct to the Abbey, inasmuch as it formed a means of communication between the chapter-house and the cloisters; it may, however, have served the purpose of a vestry. The following, quoted by Dr. Nicholson, throws some light upon this interesting structure:—“Between the chapter-house and the south transept of the church there was a narrow apartment or passage; in the Rites of Durham, at which monastery it was used as a passage from the cloister court to the cemetery-garth, it is called a parlour (i.e. the speche or speke-house, from Fr. parler, to speak). There was also a portion of the church used as the sacristy or vestry. This commonly opened out of one of the transepts; in some instances it appears to have been the small apartment between the church and the chapter-house. In Exeter Cathedral this structure is Norman, and bears the name of the Chapel of the Holy Ghost. In Winchester Cathedral it is called the ‘slyp’ or ‘slype,’—a term which is several times employed by William of Worcester in the sense of a narrow passage between two buildings.1 The same construction appears in the remains of the north transept of the Abbey Church, Repton, as also at Fountains Abbey, and in the ruins of Croxden Abbey, Staffordshire.”2

1 Itin. p. 192.  
2 Nicholson’s Abbey of St. Alban’s.
Gilbert Scott, in reference to the slype at St. Albans, says, "One fragment only remains of a richer form of Norman architecture: a small chamber against the end of the south transept which separated the chapter-house from the church. This contains details of exquisite beauty—a work of the middle of the succeeding century (i.e. the twelfth)." 1 Gough states, "At the end of the south transept is a very curious and very antient charnel house or chapel, or perhaps part of the old cloister." 2 It is conjectured that St. Cuthbert's Chapel was of a similar style of architecture. Some of the carvings on the capitals of the slype (now removed into the transept) represent a human mask with stems of leaves issuing from its mouth, others the heads of entwined snakes, while on another are some very grotesque figures—a trio of Bacchantes. 3 The slype has undergone careful restoration under Lord Grimthorpe; six spans of the arcading have been replaced in the south wall, and a large quantity of ornamental architectural relics from different parts of the cathedral have been preserved by being embedded in the new work.

In the angle between the south transept and the south aisle of the choir (at some height from the floor) may be observed the grated window of a watching-chamber, formed by an excavation in the solid masonry of the wall at that point, but filled up with brickwork during the last restoration; the entrance to this chamber was visible outside until the high roof of the aisle was constructed. It was doubtless intended for the occupation of a monk, who could from thence keep a careful eye upon the offerings at the altars opposite. Elias Ashmole (1617—92), when he visited the Abbey, made the following note:—"On the west side of the South Isle [transept] is a place where an Anchorite was mewed up." 4 Gough says: "It is supposed to have been a place where recreant monks might hear service, or perhaps, if the infirmary was over that part of the cloister, it might serve the same purpose for sick monks." 5

Probably the objects of the greatest interest in the two transepts and the tower are the baluster columns in the triforia. The larger number of them are, without doubt, of Saxon origin, and are supposed (by the majority of those antiquaries who have expressed

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1 Restoration of St. Alban’s Abbey, 1871. 2 R. Gough, MS. on Abbey Church.
3 Mason’s Guide to St. Alban’s Abbey. 4 Ashmolean MS., 784.
5 R. Gough, MS. on Abbey Church.
an opinion on the subject) to have formed part of the church which preceded the Norman Abbey. "Several of these columns are circular and several octagonal; some are plain and others begirt with mouldings and bands which in no two instances agree either in combination or position; they all vary in diameter, but some regard has been shown for situation. They undoubtedly claim a date anterior to the Conquest, with the architecture of which era they can have no title to kindred." Their peculiar tube-shaped form may very often be found in Saxon work. The capitals and bases of these columns have been supplied by the Norman builders; all the more curious ones have been arranged on the eastern sides of the transepts. It is interesting to know that these singular relics of antiquity were formed by being turned in a lathe.

The south transept appears to have been assigned to the use of the novices, and to those who had been bled,—two classes of persons who were exempted from attendance at most of the regular services in the choir. The novices, however, were "communicated" with a special small chalice of silver gilt, at the High Altar. Here was a lectern supporting a great ordinal, a book which regulated the whole duty of the canonical hours, called "Liber Minutorum," or "Book of the Blooded." The Chapel of St. Stephen, the more southern of the two upon the eastern side of the transept, is mentioned frequently in the monastic annals. King Stephen heard mass at this altar, on the occasion of his visit during the Abbacy of Robert de Gorham (1151-67); Abbot de la Mare caused glass windows to be inserted in it, and the name of the chapel often occurs in various regulations concerning the discipline of the monks. Between the two chapels was placed a beautiful image of St. Mary, with its appurtenances, the work having been commenced by Abbot de Gorham and completed by Trumpington. "A great beam, with figures of the twelve patriarchs and the twelve apostles, and, in the midst, the Majesty, with the church and the synagogue (made by Adam the Cellarer) which formerly stood over the High Altar, was removed to the south transept," and placed near this image. In the spring of 1872, while the workmen were lowering the floor of the transept, they came upon a nearly circular opening (opposite the spot where

stood the figure of St. Mary), about two feet in diameter and the same in depth, the floor of which was covered with encaustic tiles and the sides lined with flints; it is, however, difficult to say what was the object and utility of this cavity.

The Choir (sometimes termed the baptistery) is that part of the church which extends westward from the tower to the rood-screen; architecturally it is essentially Norman, and consists of a nave and two aisles, being a continuation of the nave proper. The vestibule of the choir occupies one bay to the east of the rood-screen, and is now rendered somewhat dark and gloomy by the organ-loft which entirely covers it. Among the first organs used in the Abbey were those presented by Abbot John Wheathampsted in 1428, which were placed in almost the same position as the present larger and more powerful instrument.

Abutting on the second pillar on the north there was, in monastic times, a staircase leading to the rood-loft, and this part of the choir was appropriated to the use of the Abbot, Prior, and the chief officers of the convent, the stalls for the monks diverging therefrom towards the east as far as the tower. In the midst of the choir stood a lectern, and the requisite illumination was furnished during the night offices by means of two lamps suspended from the roof by brass chains.

The ceiling above presented a beautiful spectacle with its shields-of-arms elaborately emblazoned. It was painted between A.D. 1370 and 1400, and in the seventeenth century was covered with crude imitations of the original designs. During a recent restoration this ceiling underwent some repairs, and, when near completion, a slight accident on the part of a workman caused one of the panels to be rubbed, thereby exposing the older work beneath. The removal of this comparatively modern surface of paint was then skilfully performed, the result being the rescue from oblivion of these magnificent specimens of mediæval decoration. There are sixty-six panels in eleven rows of six each; in every row are three panels, each charged with a shield supported by an angel, alternating with a like number bearing the sacred monogram I.H.S. surrounded by a scroll,—with the exception of two central divisions in the sixth row, which contain representations of our Lord and the Virgin Mary. On those bearing shields are inserted invocations to the Trinity, and the greater part of the "Te Deum" in Latin.
On the remaining thirty-two shields are the arms of a number of kings, princes, and saints, among them being the shields of St. Edward, St. Alban, St. Oswin, St. George, the Kings of England, France, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Hungary, Navarre, the Isle of Man, etc.; there are also the "Shield of Faith" and the "Shield of Salvation." The bosses at the intersection of the ribs proved to be elaborately carved and gilded.

Upon removing the whitewash from the walls, four gigantic figures in fresco were discovered, three upon the north side, coincident with the clerestory stage, and one upon the south, while a painting of the Trinity was also found upon a pier on the north.

The central doorway of the stalls was erected by Bishop Claughton, the first Bishop of St. Albans, to the memory of his son-in-law, Captain Campbell of the Coldstream Guards, who fell in the Zulu War; a beautifully-carved figure of St. Alban surmounts the doorway, and extending to arches on either side are stalls of the Decorated order, which will eventually be continued eastward. The Bishop's throne is of modern construction; it was designed by Mr. L. N. Cottingham, architect, when he restored Rochester Cathedral, from whence it was brought to St. Albans in 1877, on the occasion of the enthronement of the first Bishop of St. Albans, who previously held the See of Rochester.

In the south aisle of the choir, adjacent to the transept, is the Abbot's Entrance, by which admission was gained from the eastern alley of the cloisters. It consists of an elegant arched stone doorway in the Perpendicular style, and beautifully sculptured; the door is of oak, richly carved in a design representing oak and vine leaves, quatrefoils, etc. West of the Abbot's entrance is an arched recess in the Early English style, erected "over the remains of two hermits, Roger and Sigar, who lived in the time of King Stephen, and whose place of burial was visited by numerous devout persons, and even by the Kings of England, who gave precious hangings to ornament the tomb."¹ In monastic times a tablet hung over the tomb, setting forth the marvellous sanctity of these remarkable anchorites. The fragments of an ancient piscina are, at the time of writing, preserved in a stone coffin in this recess; Gough says that the piscina originally stood

¹ Antiquary, Vol. II., No. 12.
against the south-west pillar of the choir. The aisle has undergone careful restoration by Lord Grimthorpe; two stone supporting-arches, carved into diamond-shaped panels, have been introduced beneath the Norman vaulting, and these, besides affording additional strength, serve to relieve the monotony of the white walls and arches; the removal, however, of a painted-glass window has unfortunately dispersed the "dim religious light" which formerly characterised this spot. In the north aisle of the choir stand the two doors which gave entrance to the nave from the west before the last restoration. Here, also, is a picture representing "The Last Supper," the work of Sir James Thornhill, who is said to have vented his ire against a certain judge by delineating, in this painting, the features of that public personage in his representation of Judas.

The Rood-screen (erroneously termed St. Cuthbert's Screen) separates the choir from the nave, and originally formed the division between the church of the monks and that of the laity. It was erected about 1360, and is a good example of Decorated work; although much mutilated, it yet presents an imposing array of richly-sculptured canopies, delicate mouldings, and elegantly-diversified foliage. The extension in stonework to the north through the aisle is due to Lord Grimthorpe's restoration, as is also that in oak towards the south.

Originally the Screen had four altars upon its western face, three of which were consecrated in the time of Abbot William Heyworth (1401-20) by the Bishop of Jaurinum, Lower Hungary. The central altar was dedicated to the Holy Cross, because of its position beneath the Great Rood; under the arch, northwards, formerly stood the altar of St. Benedict, patron saint of the Order, and still further north, in the aisle, was the altar of St. Thomas (à Becket) of Canterbury. In the south aisle the fourth altar stood, that of St. Mary the Virgin. An iron latticed railing surrounded the central altar, and traces of its attachment to the first Decorated pillar (west of the screen) may still be observed. The Great Rood, bearing the figure of Our Lord, was placed upon a transverse beam and towered into the roof above the present position of the organ, and had on either side the images of St. Mary and St. John; this structure was made by Walter of Colchester, then sacrist, in the time of Abbot Trumpington (1214-35). The rood-loft was placed further east, over the western part of the choir, on a level with the triforium, and here
the deacon and sub-deacon took up their positions on high festivals, to sing the Gospel and Epistle; the marks of the stairs by which it was reached on the north side are still discernible in the pier beneath.¹ The doors on either side of the central altar were intended for the passage of processions to and from the nave. The second pillar from the screen upon the north of the nave has been called "The Great Prison Pillar;" the upper portion contains a spiral staircase in it leading from the triforium to the clerestory, and a small opening looks into the church,—the name given to this pillar probably arising from a misconception as to the use of the staircase.

In 1862, a very remarkable series of ancient Frescoes, on the western faces of the Norman piers, were brought to light by Dr. Nicholson. "On the western side of each of the pillars (from the fourth to the eighth, inclusive) were paintings, in distemper, representing our Lord upon the Cross, accompanied, on every pier but the seventh, by St. Mary and St. John, and having beneath them, in the first four instances, paintings illustrating the Annunciation, and, in the last, the Coronation of St. Mary. On the southern face of the fourth pillar may be seen a faint representation, also in distemper, of St. Christopher walking through the water, and bearing on his left shoulder the infant Saviour. On the fifth is a painting of St. Thomas of Canterbury (commonly known as St. Thomas à Becket), who is seen standing upon his shrine, habited in alb, dalmatic, chasuble, pallium, maniple, gloves, and shoes; he holds in his left hand the archiepiscopal cross, and invokes a blessing with his right. This was painted by Robert Trunch, about

¹ Lloyd's Altars, &c.
A.D. 1360, and is Flemish in character. On the sixth pier is a figure in a grey habit reaching to the ankles, the hands raised in the attitude of prayer, and a rosary hanging near the left shoulder: this, in all probability, was intended for St. Dominic, who instituted the rosary. On the seventh is a male figure in a reddish-brown gown, having a gypcière hanging at the right side, and grasping in the right hand a white wand; opposite him is seen a female figure, with the head of a second male between the two. Beneath the design appears the following inscription:

> "Prix pur l’almes de Willeme radiis bal: e Johanne sa femme e pur l’alme Will.”

(Pray for the souls of William, formerly bailiff, and Johanna his wife, and for the soul of William.)

"These ancient distemper paintings are in accordance with the simplest plan of decoration; in a small village church at Ulcombe, Kent, the same plan is followed, viz., on each pier the figure of Christ crucified is repeated in a similar manner. Most probably these paintings indicated ‘stations,’ as now observed in Continental churches, at which prayers were offered up during processions, etc. This accounts for the arrangement, as well as for the repetition of the subject.”

The Font (constructed in 1853) stands in the eastern part of the north aisle, and is a good example of modern stonework; it remained in the south aisle of the choir until 1885. The previous Font, a small marble one of Georgian style surmounting a slender pillar, is still preserved in the building, but the far-famed brass Font of St. Alban’s Abbey perished in the Cromwellian period. Sir Richard Lee is said to have brought away, as spoil from Scotland, a richly-decorated brass Font in which the children of the Kings of Scotland were wont to be baptized, and presented by him to the Abbey Church. Camden, who published his “Britannia” in 1586, speaks of this Font; Norden mentions it, and also quotes the inscription on it; and Weever states it to have been in the church in his time, 1631.

1 *Antiquary*, Vol. II., No. 12. 2 *Nicholson’s Abb. of St. Alb.* 3 *Speculum Britanniae.* 4 The following is the inscription referred to, here reproduced as printed in Norden:— Cum xthu oppidum apud Scots non incelebre et Edinburgus primaria apud nos ciuitas, incendio conflagrarent, Richardus Leus epus auratus me flammas ereptum ad Anglos perdusit. Hucus ego beneficij menor, non nisi Regum liberos lavare solitus, nunc nonne operam stiam infinis Anglorum liberum conferui. Leus victor sic voluit. Anno domini M.D.XLIII. & HENRICI OCTAVI XXXVI.
It was removed during the Civil War by one Hickman,¹ an ironmonger, and a Justice of the Peace, who, in his Puritan zeal, probably smashed it and converted into money the material of which it was made. A wooden font of the same shape² supplied its place until the marble one, above mentioned, was substituted.

Across the eastern end of the aisle, and dividing it from the south aisle of the ante-chapel, is an oak screen, the gift of Lord Grimthorpe. At this spot, previous to the building of the ante-chapel, stood the ancient altar of St. Oswin, at which the matin-mass was said; upon its removal the whole aisle was paved by the Prior of Wymondham. About a.d. 1360, Lord William Clynton was buried in the centre of the aisle at the eastern end, and, in 1872, when the eastern arch of the north presbytery aisle was cleared out, portions of the stone figure of this knight, habited in complete armour, were discovered; further fragments subsequently came to light, which enabled the effigy to be rendered almost perfect.

The Table Monument standing below the iron grille of the Saint's Chapel was formerly more to the west of its present position, and upon the south side of the aisle; the upper slab is incised with five crosses,—corresponding in number with the five wounds of Our Lord,—which indicate that it was formerly either an altar or the monumental slab of a benefactor who had bequeathed gifts to be distributed at his grave. The iron grating above is considered to be of a more ancient date than the monument of Duke Humphrey, of which it now forms a part; it was erected with the intention of affording pilgrims and visitors to the Abbey a view of the Shrine of St. Alban. West of the doorway leading to the Saint’s Chapel is an altar-tomb, and over it are quaint poetical inscriptions to the memory of members of the Maynard family, some of whom represented St. Albans in Parliament during the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth.

¹ Newcourt’s Repertorium. ² Fuller’s Worthies.
CHAPTER VII.

ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY (Continued).


Early-English Period.—The portion of the Abbey dating from this period did not increase the size of the building, but merely replaced demolished Norman work. Abbot John de Cella (1195 to 1214), the first Abbot who undertook extensive alterations in the church, completely demolished the Norman west front with its great flanking towers, and also the western portion of the nave, although the work must have been substantial, remembering that but little over a century had elapsed since its original erection. Even in the comparatively brief period just referred to, a remarkable change occurred in the style of ecclesiastical architecture,—probably the most astonishing revolution in that direction ever recorded. The square and bulky Norman pillar gave way to a beautiful grouping of slender columns; the round arch became the pointed; the flat expanse of unadorned and almost unbroken wall-space was superseded by a delicate arrangement of Gothic arches and clustering shafts in clerestory, triforium, and bays, among whose exquisite mouldings and enrichments light and shade play with delightful effect.
John de Cella conceived the project of heightening the church by lowering the floors of the entrances in the west front. He commenced the erection of that part of the structure in a most elaborate style, as shown by the magnificent porches, which were all that he really accomplished of the original design; for, as Matthew Paris says, he was forgetful of the admonition mentioned in the Gospel to him who is about to build, viz.:—to first compute the cost, lest "all begin to jest at him, saying,—‘This man began to build, but was not able to finish;’" and thus, after laying the foundations, he found himself without means to carry on the work. He was apparently victimised by his architect, or master-builder, who expended the whole of the money the Abbot had collected before the western front had risen many feet above the ground. We learn that this first builder, Hugh Goldcliff, was a man deceitful and false, but an excellent workman. Subsequently three successive architects were employed, and by dint of the most strenuous exertions to obtain funds, the Abbot managed to raise sufficient money to complete the three beautiful portals in the west front, with their exquisite marble columns and carved capitals. The work of this well-meaning and much-esteemed Abbot remained for many centuries a splendid specimen of Early English architecture, and was celebrated far and near; but, as time progressed, the porches, being structurally weak, had to be continually strengthened by fresh additions and alterations, not always of a judicious character; consequently, for a considerable period before their recent demolition by Lord Grimthorpe, the original beauty had been almost obliterated. Nevertheless, so recently as 1871, Sir Gilbert Scott remarked of them:—"I doubt whether there exists in England a work so perfect in Art as the half-ruined western portals of St. Albans. I venerate the architect who designed them, who, I believe, was Abbot John de Cella's second architect, Gilbert de Eversholt. His work is contemporary with two others, which are as fine as almost any in existence; the western porch at Ely and the choir of St. Hugh at Lincoln."¹

For nearly twenty years the rebuilding of the west front and the western part of the nave remained in abeyance; upon the death of John de Cella in 1214, Abbot Trumpington re-commenced the work, and carried it on with much energy and determination.

¹ Sir G. Scott's Restoration of St. Alban's Abbey.
Under his supervision the west front was completed, and five bays of the nave were erected on the south side, and four on the north. In every respect Trumpington was a better man of business than his predecessor, but he lacked that delicate sense of the beautiful in Art which so strongly characterised de Cella. He remorselessly cut down the details of the previous design; columns with bases for eight shafts were reduced at the capitals to four; the marble bandings prepared for the larger number were roughly altered to suit the reduction; while the marble lavishly used or contemplated by the one is almost wholly omitted by the other. It is a strange thing that in all parts of the church the work appears to have been begun in a most elaborate style, and then to have degenerated as it proceeded. The great west window of Trumpington was removed by Abbot Wheathamsted (1420—1440), who inserted a huge Perpendicular one, which was carved in the North country and brought and placed in position at a cost of £28 15s.

At the time when Lord Grimthorpe undertook the restoration of the west front but little remained to indicate the minute details of de Cella's and Trumpington's work. He decided to completely remove the whole front, and to re-erect it in a manner approaching (as nearly as could be ascertained) the original design. Upon the low level first contemplated by de Cella the present west front was built, as much as possible of the old material which showed any characteristic features being incorporated with the new.

A Latin inscription internally under the great west window records that the Courts of Justice were adjourned from London to this town in the reign of Henry VIII., and again in that of Elizabeth, on account of pestilence raging in the capital; this is confirmed by Fabyan,¹ who states that "Terme" was not kept at London, but "was removed to Saint Albones, and there kept," in 1543; Clutterbuck quotes from a corporation book an entry for "nayles for the work" in the church for the Assizes, in 1589. On the north side of the north aisle was formerly an arcade, with a door leading into the Chapel of St. Andrew; the latter was the parish church in pre-Reformation times for the inhabitants of St. Albans, and portions of its foundations are still visible;

¹ New. Chron. of Eng. and Fr.
it consisted of a nave and two aisles, and contained three altars. At the north aisle door is a beautifully-carved stoup for holy water, carefully restored according to the original design. The walled-up arch upon the south side of the south aisle is supposed to have originally led to the southern Norman flanking-tower; it subsequently afforded an entrance from the church to a room in the monastery called "the outer parlour,"—an apartment in the Abbot’s house where guests of the fraternity were first received and the object of their visit ascertained. The steps across the nave form a unique feature in the church by reason of their rising to the level of the floor; in many churches they descend; all traces of the original steps had disappeared, but, during the recent restoration, pieces of pavement were discovered at the present low level at the entrance.

At the west end of the nave the five bays on the south and four bays on the north are Trumpington's work (1214—35); they form one of the finest specimens of Early English architecture in this country. It is believed that these bays are de Cella’s work up to the string-course, as above it the modification and curtailment of the design by Trumpington are strongly apparent. That it was intended to vault the nave (probably in a similar style to that in the presbytery) is evident from the presence, at intervals, of slender Purbeck-marble shafts by which to support the weight. The junction of the
Early-English architecture with the Norman is worthy of notice; it occurs at the fourth arch where the clustered pillars of the later style spring directly from the massive Norman pier, while one window, instead of two, appears in the new clerestory. It has been suggested that Trumpington’s veneration for the subject of the fresco beneath caused the sudden arrest of his work at the upper portion of the pier. Upon a small bracket attached to the west side of this pier rested, in monastic times, the image of St. Richard of Chichester; and near this spot one of the “stations,” or pauses, was made when the Shrine of St. Alban was carried in procession.

The epitaph to Sir John Mandeville will be found upon the second pier on the north side, the inscription being as follows:

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Siste gradum properans, requiescit Mandevil urnâ,
Hic humili; nonunt et monumenta mori.”
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"Lo, in this Inn of Travellers doth lie,
One rich in nothing but in memory;
His name was Sir John Mandeville; content,
Having seen much, with a final continent,
Toward which he travelled ever since his birth
And at last pawned his body for ye earth
Which by a statute must in mortgage be,
Till a Redeemer come to set it free.”
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To the west of the fifth pier on the south side stood the altar of “St. Mary at the Pillar,” erected and enclosed within iron railings by William Wyntyrshulle (chaplain to Thomas de la Mare), who is interred in the centre of the nave to the north of the site of the altar. The distemper painting upon the pier may still be indistinctly traced; it represents the “Adoration,” or “Offering of the Magi,” and served the purpose of a reredos to the altar.

Other Early-English structural work exists in the Abbey, but most of it is either partially or completely obliterated by additions of a later period; the most important are the foundations of the eastern chapels and part of the presbytery or sanctuary.

1 The following extract from John Norden’s Speculum Britanniae, 1596, appears to indicate that at one time a statue, bust, or some similar representation in marble of the distinguished Knight, stood in the Abbey church, to which I believe, no other historian has referred. “In this Abbey church lyeth buried famous Sir John Mandeville likely formed in a marble stone: whose traunyes in forraine regions and rare reportes, are at this time admired through the world.”
The Decorated Period is prominently represented in the Abbey Church, and embraces some of its most beautiful architectural features. The five magnificent bays on the south side of the nave belong to this period; they were commenced by Hugh de Eversden (1308-1326), the clerestory being completed later. The Norman arches, which preceded the present structure, fell down in 1323, of which catastrophe Walsingham has left the following interesting and graphic account:—

"After the celebration of the Mass of the Blessed Virgin, an accident occurred of so horrible a kind that no earlier misfortune could be compared with it. For when a great multitude of men and women were gathered together in the church, praying and listening to the mass, on a sudden two immense columns on the south side of the building, as if broken off at their foundations, fell one after another with a horrible crash and ruin to the earth; and while the great crowd, both of monks and laymen, struck dumb by the disaster, were collected to gaze upon the ruin, scarcely an hour had passed when, behold! the entire wooden roof built above the columns, with the arched beams, a part of the southern aisle, as well as nearly the whole of the adjoining cloister, fell likewise to the earth." The rebuilding was commenced at once, though it was not completed until the Abbacy of Michael de Mentmore (1335-49). It is remarkable that, although a lavish profusion of ornament distinguishes these five bays, yet they harmonise most marvellously with Trumpington's earlier style, showing that the later architect modified his designs in order that they should agree with the older and simpler work. But the difference of age cannot be mistaken; in Trumpington's design we find the effective "dog-tooth" ornament, combined with plain and simple mouldings; the "ball-flower" and rosette supersede the "dog-tooth" in the later style, while the mouldings are augmented in number and deeply undercut, terminating (in the outer ones) in stone carvings of human heads, sculptured in bold relief. Of the latter, the first occurs upon the sixth column from the west end, and represents an abbot (probably Paul de Caen) with a shield above charged with fleurs-de-lys; the second, a king with the three crowns of Mercia above, would seem to indicate Offa; the next, a queen with three lions passant, may be Editha, wife of Edward the Confessor; it is doubtful for whom the fourth, a bishop, is intended, surmounted as it is by a shield charged with a cross between five martlets,—the arms both of Edward the Confessor and of the Abbey of Westminster. The pillars, more slender than those of Trumpington, were
found by Lord Grimthorpe to be simply thin shells of stone filled with bad rubble,—a fact apparently indicating that the builders had not taken warning from the fate of the preceding columns; and many new stones have had to be inserted in them and the centres made good. The massive pillar which marks the junction of Trumpington's work with that of Hugh de Eversden is remarkable for combining in itself three styles of architecture; the centre is Norman, the west face Early-English, and the east, Decorated.

At the western sides of three of these Decorated piers stood, in mediaeval times, three altars, dedicated respectively to St. Mary the Virgin, St. Benedict, and St. Thomas of Canterbury, the last being subsequently moved to the western face of the rood screen. A large number of interments occurred in this portion of the nave and the adjacent aisles in the monastic period, more than forty being recorded by John de Amundesham.1

The whole of the structure of the three eastern Chapels of the Abbey, with but few unimportant exceptions, belong to the Decorated period. John de Hertford (1235—1260) laid the foundations of the Chapels after demolishing the Norman apse, and a part of the Ante-chapel was built by Roger de Norton (1260—1290); these portions must therefore be referred to the Early-English period. The following particulars respecting the erection of these Chapels are worthy of quotation:—

"There was a certain clerk named Master Reginald, receiving the best corrody and fee from the House of St. Alban, who, being inspired with the love of God, gave helping hands to finish the said work. But when the clerk aforesaid, being continually occupied, delayed at the Court of Rome, the progress of the work was, owing to his absence and the slothfulness of his agent, intermitting, slow, and tardy. When at length, after much delay, it had been finished as far as the top of the walls, the clerk yielded to fate, leaving by his will two hundred marks for the work before mentioned. The Lord Abbot Hugh, receiving this money, laboured so earnestly for the completion of this work that in a short time he had, to the honour of the glorious Virgin, finished the roof with choice timber and an arched vault, and most beautiful glass windows,—a magnificent sight; Walter of Langleie and Alice his wife helping the Abbot in the cost. Moreover that place contiguous, in the shape of a square chapel separating the Presbytery from the said chapel, with a ceiling, in the midst of which the Assumption of the

1 Annals, Annales, Vol. I.
Blessed Virgin is figured (wherein now the Shrine of Amphibalus is placed), he at the same time took pains to finish."  

The Lady Chapel, or Chapel of the Virgin, has been many times designated as one of the loveliest and most beautiful examples of architecture remaining to us from the remote period to which it belongs. During the twelfth century a great change was made in the method of celebrating the services to the Virgin Mary; these became of such an elaborately-ornate and gorgeous character as to lead to the construction almost everywhere of much more splendid chapels dedicated to her than had formerly existed. The details of the windows are rich almost beyond description, and are decorated principally with numerous small statuettes and ornaments peculiarly characteristic of fourteenth-century work. The eastern window has been described by Sir Gilbert Scott as a singular combination of tracery with tabernacle work, and that in the easternmost bay on the south side as "an exquisite window consisting of a richly-traceried circle placed within a curvilinear triangle, beneath which is a splendid range of niches, and beneath them again a gorgeous range of sedilia and piscinae," while the window-tracery in general he stated to be here carried to higher perfection than in any other work of which he was cognisant. The lower portion of the Lady Chapel was built by Abbot John of Berkhamsted (1291—1301) upon the foundations laid by John of Hertford (1235—1260), though Roger de Norton may have contributed some part of the work; the beautiful wall-arcading which was once a feature of this part of the chapel had, in the course of centuries, almost disappeared. From the window-sills upwards the work is that of Hugh de Eversden, and partakes of the same beautiful character as the Decorated bays erected by him in the nave. Until recently the roof was groined in oak, and had been extensively repaired. The restoration of this chapel by Lord Grimthorpe is now completed, and to those who knew it in its former ruinous condition, everywhere barbarously mutilated and disfigured during the centuries it served as a Grammar School, the change is certainly striking. The wooden floor has given place to black, white, and red marble flags, placed diamond-wise throughout the length of the building; the sedilia and piscinae at the eastern end of the south wall have been carefully restored, whilst

1 Lloyd's Altars, &c.
highly-wrought arcading (following closely in design that which preceded it, and of which a few remains existed as a guide for subsequent restoration) now embellishes the walls. Some of the finest examples of carving executed in the Abbey during recent times are to be found in the corbels of this arcading, consisting principally of natural groupings of flowers and fruit indigenous to Hertfordshire; the "string-course" above the arcading is also well conceived and carried out. The excellence of the designs, as well as of the technique, is due to Mr. John Baker, who is personally responsible for most of the artistic work of this character in connection with the restoration by Lord Grimthorpe. The windows have not needed any additions, as they underwent very careful restoration at a comparatively recent period, but the wooden roof (which had probably lasted over five hundred years) has been entirely removed, and is now superseded by stone vaulting which considerably enhances the beauty of the chapel. That the building was originally intended to be vaulted in stone is evident from the depth of the buttresses.

In Pre-Reformation times an elaborate Screen divided the Lady Chapel from the Ante-Chapel. At the eastern part of the Lady Chapel stood a high altar, to the north of which was an image of St. Mary; there was also an organ in the chapel, where mass was daily celebrated with musical accompaniment. Before the altar were buried the Duke of Somerset, the Earl of Northumberland, Lord Clifford, and other distinguished nobles who fell in the First Battle of St. Albans, 1455. The "Chapel of the Transfiguration" (also called "The Chapel of the Visitation of St. Mary") upon the south side of the Lady Chapel was built by Thomas Westwode, precentor, and dedicated in the year 1430 by the Bishop of Chester.

The Ante-Chapel to the Lady Chapel, the Retro-Choir (or, as called in modern times, the Chapel of Saint Amphibalus, because of the presence in it of the shrine of that saint), is approximately of the same age as the Lady Chapel, and was evidently originally intended to be as elaborately sculptured and decorated. Begun in the Early-English period, it was finally completed, though greatly modified, by Abbot Hugh de Eversden nearly one hundred years afterwards. It appears to have had wooden ceilings from the earliest time, but many additions and repairs rendered them most unsightly until they were recently restored. The Ante-Chapel was used partly as a playground for the boys of the Grammar School in
the Lady Chapel since 1553, and a public path (called the Abbey Cloisters), constructed in the same year, led from the north to the south side of the building, thus effectually separating the scholastic from the ecclesiastical portion of the Abbey. The three tall pointed arches between the Ante-Chapel and the Saint's Chapel were blocked up, thus forming one side of the public way, while upon the opposite side a brick wall shut off the view of the Lady Chapel. This abomination existed until 1874, when the passage was closed, but not without violent remonstrance on the part of some of the inhabitants. The condition of the Chapel, upon the removal of the obstructing wall, was simply deplorable; subscriptions were soon forthcoming, however, and the various necessary repairs immediately commenced, although the major part of the restoration has since been effected and completed by Lord Grimthorpe. With the idea of forming a Chapter-house for a prospective Chapter, as well as a Consistory or Diocesan Court when required, the three lancet arches previously mentioned have been opened, and a thick, dwarf wall substituted. Upon the eastern side of this wall is an entirely new arcade, the arches in which form sedilia looking eastward (for the Bishop, Chancellor, or other officials), stone and marble having been used in them with excellent effect. In order to procure an uninterrupted view of the Lady Chapel, the shrine of St. Amphibalus has been removed to the north aisle of the Saint's Chapel, its ultimate destination being problematical. The floor of the Ante-Chapel is now paved with black and white marble slabs, similar to those used in the Lady Chapel, while the arcading in the walls is of such an elaborate nature as to eclipse all similar work in the Abbey. The ceilings have oak groining in the aisles and flat panelling in the centre; this flat ceiling replaces that put up by Sir Gilbert Scott, who found it necessary to remove the ancient ceiling of Hugh de Eversden, and to substitute a replica of it. At the eastern extremity of the south aisle of the Chapel stood the altar of "St. Mary of the Four Tapers," so called because of
the four wax tapers that were daily lighted there; among other adornments a costly chalice of gold stood upon it, and an ornate reredos in a wooden frame formed a fitting background. Near the last step of the altar was buried, in 1260, the heart of Abbot Roger de Norton, under a small marble effigy of the Abbot bearing a heart in his hands. During the restoration of 1875 the workmen discovered, at this point, a cylindrical hole in a block of stone, in which were the remains of a small wooden box about five inches in diameter, having on the lid some Oriental characters of rich design and workmanship; this receptacle, which is now in the possession of the Venerable Archdeacon Lawrance, may possibly have been that in which the Abbot's heart was enclosed. To the west of the column, between the aisle and the Chapel, once existed the altar of St. Peter, while a corresponding altar upon the north side was dedicated to St. Edmund, king and martyr; both columns still retain traces of colour. In the centre of the Chapel stood until recently the pedestal of the Shrine of Saint Amphibalus, which was erected by Ralph Witechurch, sacrist, during the Abbacy of Thomas de la Mare, 1349–96; the structure itself was originally in the Saint's Chapel, near the altar of St. Hugh. The Shrine, the fragments of which were discovered in 1872, is in a much more imperfect condition than that of St. Alban; it is composed of Totternhoe stone, carved into fretwork, and bears the initials "R. W." upon the north and south faces, together with fleurs-de-lys; its eastern front was originally adorned with images and plates of gold and silver, while upon the summit rested the portable shrine or
A small altar stood at the west of the Shrine, at the foot of which William, Bishop of Chester (formerly William Heyworth, Abbot of St. Albans), was interred in 1447; at the eastern extremity of the north aisle of the Ante-Chapel was the altar of St. Michael and St. Catherine, with the images of those saints; the window above the altar represented the history of St. Catherine, and here was distributed the newly-consecrated oil for anointing the sick upon the first Sunday after Easter.

The Saint's Chapel is not distinguished by many remarkable structural features. The three tall lancets upon the eastern side (opened during the last restoration) are filled in their lower parts with stone carvings gleaned from different parts of the Abbey, and inserted in that situation to ensure their preservation. A stone and marble pavement has also been laid in the Chapel, the previous pavement having been in a very bad condition. The general architecture is of the same character as that of the presbytery, of which it formed a part before the erection of the High Altar screen. Here, undoubtedly, is the most attractive memorial of the past—the far-famed Shrine of St. Alban; it stands in the centre of the Saint's Chapel, in the very heart of the old Abbey. This remarkable Shrine is especially interesting not only on account of its intrinsic architectural value, but also by reason of the marvellous vicissitudes it has undergone. It originally consisted

1The "Invention" of Saint Amphibalus occurred during the Abbacy of Symon (1167-83). Amphibalus is said to have escaped into Wales after the succour afforded him by Albanus; a detachment of Roman soldiers pursued and captured him, and returned with their prisoner on their way to Vendalamus as far as Redbourn, when, apparently fearing a rescue, they killed him, together with other captives, and interred the bodies on the spot. Nearly nine centuries had passed when Abbot Symon, under the supernatural guidance of St. Alban, discovered the remains of the martyr, who is described by Matthew Paris as "lying between two friends, side by side with them...two great knives were found, one in the skull, and another near the heart, confirming the truth of that which is contained in the book of his Passion, written in old time as St. Alban's. The others lay slain with swords, but he lay...pierced with spears and knives and finally shattered with stones, so that scarcely one of his bones remained entire, whilst those of his friends remained uninjured...All these relics were brought to St. Albans, and the convent went forth from the town, taking with them the feretrum of the Proto-martyr, and met the relics of St. Amphibalus and his friends at the place whereon was built soon afterwards the church of St. Mary de Pratis, or Des Pres."  

1 M. Paris.
of two portions, the feretrum, or Shrine proper, which contained the bones of the Martyr, and the substructure, or pedestal, upon which it was placed.

About the year 1847, the Rev. Dr. Nicholson (then Rector of the Abbey), whilst opening the northern and, subsequently, the middle blocked-up arch at the east end of the Saint's Chapel, discovered several pieces of carved Purbeck marble, which he believed to have formed part of the Shrine of St. Alban. No further search was made at the time; but the correctness of Dr. Nicholson's surmise, that many of the remaining portions of the structure existed in the neighbourhood, was verified in February, 1872, when a quantity of material, closing up a Perpendicular doorway and screen in the south aisle of the presbytery, was removed, together with the contents of the southern arch in the eastern front of the Saint's Chapel, and one of the arches at the end of the north and south presbytery aisles. This operation brought to light more than two thousand fragments of Purbeck marble and clunch (chiefly the former), which, when fitted together, were found to compose the pedestal or substructure whereon had rested the feretrum or shrine (properly so called), containing the bones of the Proto-martyr. It is this pedestal of rich, early fourteenth-century work which is again reinstated upon its ancient site in the Saint's Chapel, east of the High Altar screen. The great interest evoked by the discovery of the Shrine is sufficiently testified by the following contemporary letter signed by the Rev. Edmund Venables, and published in the Times:—

"Few archæological discoveries of late years have equalled in interest that of the Shrine of St. Alban now being made in the grand Abbey Church of that name. I say 'being made' advisedly, for the fragments into which the Shrine of the Protonmartyr of Britain was shivered at the Reformation were built up in the walls then erected to cut off the Lady Chapel from the Church, and are gradually brought to light as these walls are demolished. The first portions

1 Nicholson's Abb. of St. Alb.
were discovered about three weeks ago. Since then scarcely a day has passed without large additions being made to the fragments thus unexpectedly rescued after three centuries' concealment, and reasonable hopes are entertained of the recovery of the whole and the restoration of the Shrine in its integrity. When I was there last Wednesday, the workmen were continually bringing in fresh pieces of carved work, which Mr. Chapple, the clerk of the works under Mr. Gilbert Scott, was fitting together with consummate skill, and a Cuvier-like discernment of the precise place in the complete design each was to occupy. Some fragments fitted together during my short visit formed a bas relief of the Martyrdom of St. Alban, representing the executioner with his drawn sword, with which he had just cut off the falling head of the kneeling saint. Another relief, which escaped me, depicts, I am told, the scourging of St. Amphibalus, apocryphal saint, manufactured by medieval martyrologists out of the cloak (amphibalium) of St. Alban. Another represents Offa holding his Church.

"By Mr. Chapple's directions a core of brickwork has been temporarily erected, round which the recovered fragments are being built-up. Each of the longer sides is pierced with four niches, the shorter with two. These niches seem not to have come down to the ground to form kneeling recesses, as was usual with the Shrines of Saints, to enable the votaries to place themselves, as it were, immediately under the healing virtues of the relics encased in the feretrum above, but to have been closed by panels of elaborate tracery to the height of 2 feet from the ground. The upper story of the Shrine was formed of richly-grained canopied niches, under delicately-carved pediments, the whole finished with a highly-wrought cornice. The whole height, excluding the feretrum or Shrine proper, containing the saint's relics, which being of precious metals is hopelessly lost, was about 8 feet. Some twisted pillars have been found, reminding one of those at Edward the Confessor's Shrine at Westminster, but without mosaics. These seem to have stood detached, and may have borne tapers. The material of the monuments is Purbeck shell marble, with the exception of the groining of the niches, which is of clunch, richly painted and gilt. The whole Shrine was elevated on low marble steps, much worn with the knees of the votaries.

"The archæological world is watching with the deepest interest the completion of this novel work of restoration, of which every day sees a fresh feature, and which, when finished, will be unrivalled in England."

The Shrine of St. Alban was originally erected by Abbot John de Marynis (1302-8) at a cost of £106 135. 4d. At the west end stood, in monastic times, a small altar dedicated to the Saint at which mass was said daily, and upon this altar was a silver paten with an accompanying basin of the same metal. Within the niches of the pedestal of the Shrine gleamed the jewels which had been presented by rich devotees, together with many objects fashioned out of the precious metals. The Shrine proper, or feretrum, rested upon the upper portion of the pedestal; the bones of the Saint were enclosed within an inner chest of wood, two sides of which were ornamented outwardly with gold and silver plates representing (in repoussé work) a series of scenes from the Martyr's life; at the east end the Crucifixion was shown, and upon the west a representation of the Virgin Mary with the infant Saviour. The whole of the chest was embellished with numerous gems; it had

1Lloyd's Altars, &c.
a pointed roof with a cresting and four turrets at the angles; an eagle of silver gilt, with
two suns profusely encrusted with jewels, surmounted the Shrine, which was portable,
being borne by four men in the processions. An outer Shrine, also embellished with gold
and jewels, enclosed the smaller one, whilst over all, suspended from the roof, hung a
gorgeous canopy of silk with rich embroidery. Round the Shrine stood six tapers supported
on twisted columns of marble, while the floor was decorated with an elaborate pavement.

The account of the Martyrdom of St. Alban has been so frequently written, especially
during late years, that we revert with a feeling of freshness and pleasure to the
original history as given by the Venerable Bede, which contains all that is known with
certainty respecting the Saint. The following is a free translation:—

"During the time when the cruel mandates of the perfidious princes against the Christians were most severely
enforced, St. Alban, while yet a pagan, received into his house a certain cleric who was fleeing from his persecutors.
When he saw his guest constant in prayers and vigils day and night, he himself, touched by the grace of God, began to
follow the example of his faith and piety, and, after receiving, little by little, full instruction from his salutary exhortations,
he left behind him the darkness of idolatry, and with his whole heart became a Christian. 'When the said cleric
had been for some days his guest, it came to the ears of the wicked prince that a confessor of Christ, to whom the time
of martyrdom had not yet come, was lying hid under the care of Alban. Therefore he sent soldiers to make diligent
search for him; and when they came to the Martyr's cottage, immediately Alban showed himself to the soldiers dressed
in his habit, that is to say, in the cloak which his guest and master used to wear, and was led bound before the judge
in his stead.' It happened that the judge, at the time when Alban was brought before him, was standing at the altar
offering sacrifices to the Dæmons; and as soon as he saw Alban he fell into a rage because he had ventured to present
himself to the soldiers in the place of his guest, and ordered him to be dragged before the images of the Dæmons.
'Since you have chosen to hide this blasphemer rather than to deliver him to the soldiers that he might pay the
penalty of his blasphemy as a despiser of the gods, you yourself will have to bear the punishment that was his due, if
you try to evade the worship prescribed by our religion.'

"But St. Alban, who had, of his own accord, declared himself a Christian to the persecutors of the faith, feared
not at all the threats of the prince, but, girt with the arms of spiritual warfare, openly declared that he would not obey
the command. Then said the judge, 'Of what family and of what race art thou?' Alban answered, 'What signifies it
to thee of what family or race I come? But if thou desirest to know the truth as to my religion, know that I am a
Christian, and am bound by my duty as a Christian.' Said the judge, 'I ask thy name; tell it me without delay.'
'Alban,' said he, 'my parents call me; and I adore and ever worship the true and living God, who created all things.'
Then the judge, filled with anger, said, 'If thou wishest to enjoy eternal life, delay not to sacrifice to the great gods.'
Alban answered, 'These sacrifices which are made to Dæmons avail nothing; yea, rather he who makes them
shall receive the eternal pains of hell for his reward.' The judge then, roused to fury by his words, delivered the holy
confessor of God to the tormentors, hoping by stripes, as he could not by words, to weaken the constancy of his heart;
but, sharp as were the torments, he bore them with patience, yea, even with joy, for the Lord. But when the judge
perceived that with no torments he could be overcome, or brought back from the Christian religion, he ordered him to be beheaded.

"Then when he was being led to execution, the whole city, scarcely any, of whatever rank, age, or sex, being left behind, poured forth as by divine impulse to do him honour, and so thronged the bridge over the river which ran between the city of Verulam and the place of death, that it would have been scarcely possible to pass over it before nightfall. St. Alban, therefore, being greatly desirous of coming sooner to his martyrdom, drew near to the bank of the stream, and raising up his eyes to heaven, its bed thereupon became dry, and he saw the water cease to flow and a passage made for his feet. But when the executioner himself, who was to slay him, saw this, he hastened to meet him at the place appointed for his death, and, moved doubtless by divine impulse, threw away the sword which he held drawn in his hand, and fell at the feet of the Martyr, earnestly desiring that either with or instead of him whom he had been ordered to slay, he himself might earn his own death. While thus he who was a persecutor had become a companion in the true faith and the confessor of God, full of reverence, went up the hill with the crowd, ... and having reached the top, he prayed to God for water, and immediately a spring burst forth at his feet. ... Then this brave Martyr was beheaded, and received the crown of life which God had promised to those who love Him. But he who laid impious hands on the neck of a good man was not permitted to exult, for as the head of the Martyr fell to earth, so at the same time fell the eyes of the executioner." Bede then relates the beheading of the soldier who had refused to slay the holy confessor of God, and continues: "The blessed Alban suffered on the 10th of the Kalends of July (June 22nd) near the city of Verulamium, which is now by the English people called Verlumaceastir or Vaetlingaceastir, where afterwards, when a time of peace and rest arrived for the Christians, a church, admirable in workmanship and worthy of his martyrdom, was built."  

In our Prayer-books (owing to a mistake of the printer, who took an 'x' for a 'v') the Saint's day is set down as the xvii., instead of the xxii. of June. The year was most probably 303,—the date of the persecution of Diocletian; but some authorities say that St. Alban suffered death in 286.

The scourging of St. Alban and the miracle of the executioner's loss of his eyes are shown in sculpture on the Shrine of the Saint, and on Abbot Ramryge's Chapel to the north of the High Altar, where he is depicted holding a sword in his left hand and pressing the crucifix to his breast. In mediaeval representations of St. Alban he is portrayed as wearing a mantle or toga, as indicated on the seal of Abbot John de Hertford and on the brass of Abbot Thomas de la Marc.

The rear of the High Altar screen forms the western side of the Saint's Chapel; within the niche in the centre probably stood, at one time, the great silver-gilt image representing St. Alban, given to the monastery by King Edward I., while in the recess below it were sedilia.

1 H. H. Gibb's High Altar Screen.
Upon the north side of the Chapel stands an elaborate oaken structure known as the Watching Tower, or Chamber of the Shrine Keeper, in which a monk was posted who was designated the "Custos Feretri." ¹ In "Cotton M.S. Nero D 7." (being a catalogue of Benefactors to this Abbey), mention is made of Robertus de Trunch (whose name occurs in a list of monks of this Abbey living in the year 1380) as "Custos Feretri Sæi. Albani;" and among the persons present at the second election of John of Wheathampsted was Nicholas Geywood, who had the same occupation. The shrine of Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey was furnished with a similar protection. On the frieze of the structure, which is supposed to have been erected circa 1400, will be found a series of carvings, representing among other subjects the memorable events of St. Alban's history; on the upper part were shields-of-arms, many of which have disappeared, while those that remain are much mutilated; fortunately there exist very accurate drawings of them, from which they could readily be restored. Gough remarks that the device of a corn-harvest in the upper fascia seems to indicate that it was the work of Abbot Wheathampsted.

Beneath are almeries, or lockers, where the reliquaries and sacred vestments were deposited, but now containing various objects of interest disinterred or discovered in the Abbey at different times.

The magnificent tomb of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, occupies the southern portion of the Saint's Chapel. By some the design is attributed to Abbot Stoke, while others assign it to Wheathampsted because the tomb bears his arms and the wheat-ears with which that Abbot invariably distinguished his work. The roof of the canopy is richly groined, and in the arches are ten shields of the duke's arms, with those of France and England in a border. "In the broad moulded cornice, between the canopies (now

destitute of figures) and the principal arch, are seven shields. The centre and two intermediate shields are surmounted by a helmet and cap of maintenance, the others by a cap of state, or coronet. The intervals between these shields have been occupied by antelopes,—the badge of the duke. Attention has been drawn to the daisy-flower (Marguerite) in the sculptured coronet of the duke, as being the device which had been chosen by the Queen Margaret, in allusion to her name, and which is still to be found in the margins of books illuminated for her." The seventeen figures in the niches on the south side are supposed by Sandford, in his "Genealogical History," to be statuettes of the duke's royal ancestors, but most likely they were intended to represent the Kings of Mercia. One of them bears in his hand the model of a church, and this was no doubt meant to indicate King Offa, as the founder of the Abbey.

Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, was one of the younger sons of King Henry IV., and, after the untimely death of his brother, Henry V. (the hero of Agincourt), was proclaimed Protector of the Realm and guardian of the young king, Henry VI. The duke's troubled career is said to have been terminated by the machinations of Queen Margaret, in conjunction with her aids and abettors, whose animosity against the duke knew no bounds; upon a totally unfounded charge of conspiring to kill the king, he was arrested at St. Edmundsbury, but the people, believing him to be innocent, imagined that he would exonerate himself. However, he was allowed neither time nor opportunity to make his defence, for on the morrow he was found dead in his bed in St. Saviour's Hospital, St. Edmundsbury, without any visible signs of violence. The people were convinced that he was murdered, and suspicion fell upon Pole, then Duke of Suffolk. His body, after being seen by many nobles and others, was encased in lead and then enclosed in a coffin of poplar-wood; by easy stages it was conveyed to St. Albans, and buried in the vault which had been prepared for him during his lifetime, on March, 4th, 1447.

The duke appears to have been a man with singularly rare talents, combined with an unfortunate fatality for getting constantly into trouble; his career, both private and public, was a stormy and chequered one. As the founder of the Bodleian Library and

1 Nicholson's Abb. of St. Alb.
the Divinity School at Oxford, he will ever be remembered. In reference to the duke a recent writer says:—“The most liberal donor to the public store of books at Oxford was that unquiet prince the Duke of Gloucester,—miscalled ‘Good Duke Humphrey.’” An ill friend to England, Humphrey was nevertheless a sincere and ardent patron of learning; not only did he give money, but he amazed the University by an enormous present of books, a thousand pounds' worth and more, insomuch that the joy of the clerks of Oxford burst out in the form of a letter to Parliament, beseeching it to thank him publicly. Unfortunately, the whole of these books, with the exception of two, were destroyed in the time of King Edward VI. Sir Thomas More records an instance of the duke’s sagacity. “The king coming one time in Progress to St. Albans, a beggar born blind, as he said, recovered his sight at the Shrine of St. Alban. The miracle being noised about, the duke being there with the king, desired to see him; the beggar being brought, he asked him whether he was born blind? He answered ‘Yes truly.’ ‘And can you now see?’ says the duke. ‘Yes, I thank God and St. Alban,’ replies the beggar. ‘Tell me then,’ says the Duke, ‘what colour is my gown?’ The beggar readily told him the colour. ‘And what colour,’ says the duke, ‘is such a one’s gown?’ The beggar likewise told him; and so of several others. ‘You counterfeit knave,’ says the duke, ‘how came you, that were born blind, and could not see till now, so suddenly to know the difference of colours?’ And thereupon, instead of an alms, ordered him to be set in the stocks.”

Upon the demolished east wall of the south aisle of the presbytery there was formerly a Latin inscription in honour of the duke, composed by John Westerman, head-master of the Grammar School in 1625, in which reference was made to this story of the blind man; Shakespeare alludes to it in “Henry VI.” (Part 2, Act ii., Scene 1.)

The liberality of the duke is quite at variance with the idea generally entertained of his meanness, which apparently is deduced from the well-known saying “to dine with Duke Humphrey,” which implies having little or nothing to eat. This expression arose from a popular misconception that the duke was buried in the nave of St. Paul's Cathedral, but the monument there, said to have been erected to his memory, was in reality

1 Quarterly Review, October 1891.
2 Rapin.
that of John Beauchamp. Loungers and others who tarried in St. Paul's after the general crowd had left were supposed to be so busy looking for the duke's monument that they disregarded the dinner-hour.—hence the saying.

"In Queen Anne's time (1703), while they were digging a grave for a member of the Gape family who lies between the site of St. Alban's Shrine and Duke Humphrey, was found the vault of the duke, and in a leaden coffin full of pickle was the corpse entire, with a beautiful crucifix painted against the east wall at his feet, which is yet entire; but the body is now decayed."¹ These remains were treated with scanty respect for some time after the discovery, and many of the smaller bones were taken away by visitors as relics; eventually, however, those which survived such sacrilege, together with the remnants of the original lead coffin, were enclosed in a wooden case, which may be seen by visitors through an iron gate at the entrance to the vault.

The use to which the Abbey was put during the Civil Wars of the seventeenth century may be gleaned from the following inscription (evidently carved with a knife), which can still be deciphered upon the south side of the north doorway of the screen. "Hugh Lewis soldier in his Maj's Army, taken prisoner at Ravensfield, Northampton—scr y—day June, 1645."²

The Presbytery, which includes that part of the church between the High Altar Screen and the eastern arch of the tower, is rich in historical monuments and other memorials of the past. Foremost of these is the Screen itself (or, as it is often termed, the Wallingford Screen),—one of the most beautiful and interesting structures in the Abbey Church, and forming a magnificent example, probably unsurpassed, of early Perpendicular work. The front consists of three divisions,—a centre and two wings; a cruciform space monopolises the middle portion, upon which, in monastic times, was placed a crucifix, said to be of silver gilt; at the Reformation, as well as at later periods, the Screen suffered spoliation, and the crucifix and figures were demolished. It would appear from Stukeley that a fresh crucifix was subsequently placed in position,³ for it is shown in his engraving of the Screen; but the probability is that he filled up the blank space as he conceived it to have been originally occupied.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, various additions, chiefly of plaster ornaments, were made to the Screen, which entirely spoilt the character of the work; these, however, were removed in 1832, when the true nature of the design became apparent. It had been much defaced to allow of the introduction of inappropriate portions that had been made; two fragments only of the original statues remained, and many details of other important parts were missing. It was in this condition when Mr. Henry Hucks Gibbs (of Aldenham House, Elstree) decided at his own expense to undertake the task of restoring to its original magnificence this splendid Screen, which, notwithstanding the deplorable state that the vandalism of past and apathy of recent generations had allowed it to fall into, was universally acknowledged to be the most wonderful specimen of fifteenth-century stone-work in the world. It was originally designed by Abbot John of Wheatampsted, and carried out by his successor, William of Wallingford, in the reign of Edward IV. In the days of Abbot Ramryge, a writer (in a MS. still preserved in the British Museum) refers to the Screen as "that most ornate, sumptuous, and lofty face of the High Altar, which greatly beautifies the church, gratefully feasts the eyes of those who look upon it, and to all beholders appears the most divine spectacle in this kingdom." It was probably commenced in A.D. 1464, and we have Prior Ramryge's authority, under seal of that date, for saying that it was finally finished on the 8th of August, 1484, at a cost of 1,100 marks.

The entire height of the Screen is just over forty-two feet, while the finials at the ends measure three-and-a-half feet higher, and the width is within a few inches of thirty-nine feet. There are sixty-five niches in the main façade, including the two on the raking flanks, three at either extremity, and five on the eastern side, making seventy-six niches in all. These are now each occupied by figures, the execution of which, to say nothing of the general restoration of the fabric itself, has been a gigantic undertaking.

The work of restoration was commenced in 1884 by the well-known sculptor, Mr. Harry Hems, of Exeter, and the undertaking fairly monopolised the time and attention of himself and a clever staff of assistants for a period of eight years. The late Mr. John Chapple, J.P., acted as the supervising clerk-of-the-works, and Sir Arthur W. Blomfield, A.R.A., as consulting architect. Mr. Chapple unfortunately died early in 1887, and
since then all that has been done was from Sir Arthur's drawings or suggestions. The most important of these latter works, perhaps, is the treatment of the plain space forming the central cross, and for which—as designed by Sir A. W. Blomfield—Mr. Gibbs obtained a faculty to enable him to erect a plain cross, a tilli with letters I.N.R.I. upon it, and a foot-rest at the base of the cross, all in yellow Mansfield stone. This is supported by a somewhat plain column of clunch stone, while over the head of the cross and beneath a projecting canopy appears a crown of glory; at the termination of the arms of the cross are sculptured (in clunch stone, like the column and crown) administering angels with wings extended, and having chalices in their hands. Including these two angels, there are seventy-eight figures altogether. The attitudes of the angels convey at once the feeling that they are ministering spirits, full of wonder and giving glory to God; but, as they at present attend a mere empty cross, the whole conception appears, to the eye of the ordinary spectator, to be very much like that of a superb frame minus the picture; or, an exquisite niche without its accompanying statue.

Much diversity of opinion exists as to which are the most successful, of the many statues placed in the numerous niches of the Screen, but where all are so beautiful it may seem invidious to make distinctions. Perhaps, however, the Blessed Virgin (as represented both in the Annunciation and as the bereaved Mother at the foot of the cross), the angel Gabriel, the Venerable Bede, St. Hugh, St. Amphibalus, St. John, and St. Benedict find the most favour. These figures are each six feet high, and, like all the others on the Screen (save Our Lord in Majesty and the Twelve Apostles, which are of pure white alabaster), are sculptured from blocks of yellow magnesian limestone,—an exquisitely-tinted material, as hard and as costly as marble itself.

There has always been a certain amount of rivalry between St. Albans and Winchester with regard to their respective screens. That at Winchester measures just under 44 feet high, and is 39½ feet wide—i.e., one foot ten inches lower than the highest point of the St. Alban's Screen,—while the latter is nine inches narrower than the former. In the number of statues Winchester falls behind St. Albans considerably, as on the former screen there are only fifty-six figures; further, the statues in the Screen at St. Albans are all of the hard magnesian limestone, from the celebrated Mansfield Woodhouse (Notts).
quarries, or of pure alabaster, while those at Winchester are of ordinary soft Caen (French) stone.

For the recess over the Altar, Mr. Alfred Gilbert, R.A., is preparing a group representing the sacred body of the Lord as taken down from the Cross, attended by His Mother and the two Mariæ, with soldiers and other figures in the background; it will be carved in wood, properly coloured and gilt. ¹ The Altar is approached by four steps of Purbeck marble, which have superseded steps of stone; that the material was originally marble is proved by the existence of an ancient step near the chapel of Abbot Ramryge.

Within the Sacramentum (i.e., the space before the High Altar screen) a beautiful pavement of ancient Purbeck-marble slabs, re-polished, has been laid, while the patterns of the ancient tiles found in the Presbytery during successive restorations have been faithfully reproduced and placed where required. At the foot of the Altar steps four abbots were buried, viz.—Hugh de Eversden, Richard Wallingford, Michael de Mentmore, and Thomas de la Mare; the splendid brass of the latter Abbot was removed from its original site with a view to its preservation, and now lies in the adjacent chantry-tomb.

¹ Gibbs's *High Altar Screen*, 1890.
The famous de la Mare brass is thus described by the Rev. Charles Boutell, M.A., in his work on "Monumental Brasses":—

"The brass of Thomas de la Mare, by far the finest existing specimen of an ecclesiastical brass, was formerly attached to the surface of a large slab of Purbeck marble, still lying immediately at the foot of the steps to the altar, on the south side of the choir (i.e., the presbytery) in the Abbey Church of St. Alban; but having been for some reason removed from its original slab, and seriously, though it is to be hoped not irreparably, injured, it has now been placed for security within the adjoining chantry of Abbot John of Wheathampsted, from which the brass of that eminent personage had been abstracted and his tomb destroyed.

"The magnificent production of the art of engraving, prepared under his own superintendence for his monumental memorial, represents the prelate in full eucharist habit of a costly richness, suited to the superior of the Church and Monastery of the British Proto-martyr. His amice, alb, stole, maniple, tunic, dalmatic, and chasuble are all wrought with the purest taste, combined with the most elaborate splendour. His hands crossed, and tending downward in all humility, are covered with jewelled gloves; his feet are encased in richly-embroidered sandals; on his head is the 'mitre preciosa' and on his left arm rests his splendid pastoral-staff, while the calm and dignified countenance conveys the very impersonation of solemn repose. The effigy, placed upon a field of exquisite diaper, is surmounted, or, rather, enclosed by a canopy—itsel a wonderful work of Art. On this canopy, divided throughout into minor canopied compartments, in the uppermost central part is represented the Saviour enthroned, having on either side two angelic figures; and beyond these are seated on either side the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul; below, on either side of the head of the Abbot, stand St. Alban, leaning on a sword and his left hand grasping a cross, and Offa, King of Mercia, the founder of the church and monastery, crowned and holding a spear; below these on either side are six double canopies surmounting figures, of which six represent the Apostles John, Andrew, Thomas, James the Great, Bartholomew, and probably Philip; in the other six figures apparently are represented saints or prophets, or possibly benefactors to the church. These six last-named effigies wear crowns or other head-coverings, while
the head of each of the apostolic figures is encircled by a nimbus, and the figures themselves present a more majestic aspect. The entire work is completed by a broad fillet having at its angles the evangelistic emblems, and in the midst on either side in a quatrefoiled panel a shield bearing on a bend three eagles displayed. The upper portion and somewhat more than half the left side bear, in Longobardic characters of unsurpassed boldness, the commencement of a never-completed legend, running thus:—'Hic jacet Dominus Thomas quondam Abbas hujus Monasterii.' Of the identity of the individual, thus, it is to be hoped, imperishably commemorated, notwithstanding the omission of his surname in the inscription, there can be no doubt. The few brasses which yet remain in Flanders confirm the theory which assigns a foreign origin to those examples in our own country which are worked on large unbroken sheets of metal, these foreign brasses being invariably executed in the same manner."

Towards the centre of the Presbytery are the resting-places of four other Abbots of the monastery, John de Marinis, John of Berkhamsted, Roger de Norton, and John Stoke. Around the brassless stone of John of Berkhamsted (ob. 1301) is an inscription in Norman-French, which has been thus translated: "The Abbot John lieth here: may God have mercy on his soul: ye who pass by here say a Pater and an Ave for his soul: and all who shall pray God for his soul shall have forty years and forty days of pardon." The mutilated slabs of Abbots Norton and Stoke are still to be seen, but that of John de Marinis, who was buried in a marble tomb by the Abbot of Waltham in 1308, has entirely disappeared.

There are other monumental stones and brasses in this part of the church. One of these is a brass figure of a knight in armour, a son of an Earl of Kent; another brass is to the memory of a monk, Robert Beauner, A.D. 1470, which represents him supporting a heart between his hands, and has an extract from the Psalms and a record of his services in the monastery for forty years. Adjacent to it is a stone which once exhibited the figure of a monk kneeling at a cross, but it has been despoiled of all except the legend (taken from the Salisbury breviary) which issues from the mouth of the suppliant; near it, on another stone, are the figures of a lady and of a gentleman in armour, but the inscription, bearing the

1 Lloyd's Altars, &c.
names of "Bartholomew Halsey and Florens his wife," has disappeared: the lower half of this brass is preserved in the reputed tomb of Abbot Wheathampsted. Near the last-named memorials are the almost brassless remains of what was originally a splendid sepulchral slab, the matrix of which represents the figure of an abbot wearing a mitre and holding the pastoral staff; some portions of the inscribed border are extant, and at the foot is a Latin inscription which has been thus rendered:—"One is here covered with earth, paying the debt of sin, whose name is not placed on this record. May it be written in the Book of Life." It has been conjectured that this may be the slab of Abbot John Moot, originally placed over the grave of that Abbot in the Chapter-house, and subsequently removed to this position. The lower part of the brass is interesting by reason of its being a palimpsest, for upon the back of the plate may be discerned the lower part of a female figure, with a dog crouching at her feet.

Upon the north side of the Presbytery and adjacent to the High Altar screen is the beautiful monument of Abbot Ramryge, the sculptured portions of which are extremely fine and generally in good preservation, although a great deal of the ornamentation is exceedingly minute. The roof is delicately groined in rich fan-work, with pendants of quatrefoils and circles of the same; there are three large niches at each end, with rich canopies, the insides of which are adorned with quatrefoils, and several smaller niches run up between them, with towers over the canopies. Below the niches is a cornice of foliage, with human and animal heads at the angles; from one of the heads emerges the stem of a vine, the tendril issuing from the mouth. Beneath the cornice, at each end, are three shields-of-arms with rams in bold relief wearing collars, on which are the letters R.P.H.E., thus forming a rebus upon the name of the Abbot. On each side of the monument is a double range of narrow arches, and below is a variety of minute ornaments in relief, sculptured on the square extremities of an embattled cornice. One of these ornaments represents an old man's head and body united to the tail of a fish, and leaning on a crutch: the letters R.P.H.E. are repeated here. Over the door that opens into the monument from the Presbytery are several small sculptures, and in the spandrels of the arch is a mutilated representation of the martyrdom of Saint Amphibalus. In places

Nicholson's Abb. of St. Alb.
are various shields-of-arms, with flowers, foliage, vine-tendrils, etc., together with a shield of the "five wounds"; others display the instruments of the crucifixion, while an inscription in Latin is round the upper part of the chantry. "Within this monument, which was erected about 1522, have been buried several members of the Faringdon family of Lancashire, and the date, 1678, on the door probably records the time of the first interment."¹ The incised slab of Abbot Ramryge, with his effigy and an inscription, has been restored to its proper place on the floor of the chapel, after having lain in the south presbytery aisle for many years.² The narrow door opening into the chapel is of oak, and the carved panels exhibit a splendid example of the design known as the "linenfold."

The monument or Chantry Chapel commonly assigned to Abbot Wheathampsted, which occupies the lower portion of one of the great arches on the south side of the Presbytery and adjacent to the High Altar screen, is built on a very simple, but elegant, plan. The lower part is a canopy opening by an obtusely-pointed arch with a fretted roof, above which is a rich cornice containing the Abbot's arms (three ears of wheat), several times repeated, and the words VALLES HABUNDAVANT in relief on each side of the monument. The following inscription appears on the wall above the Chapel on its south side:—

"Johannes De Loco frumentario,
Quis facet hic? Pater ille Johannes nomina magna
Cui Whethamstedi parvula villa dedit:
Triticeæ in tumulo signant quoque nomen aristæ
Vitam res claræ non monumenta notant."

Considerable uncertainty exists with respect to this Chantry Chapel in consequence of an entry in an appendix to the "Registrum" of John Wheathampsted, recording the work of Abbot William Wallingsford (1476—92), which is as follows:—"Also for the building of his chapel and tomb in the south part of the church close to the High Altar, with its most suitable iron railings and marble slab having his effigy superimposed, and for the rest of the ornaments of this chapel, he paid one hundred pounds sterling."³ This extract seems to point conclusively to the chapel being that of

Wallingford; the wheat-ears upon it have always been considered as the device of Wheathampsted, but they may also be found upon the High Altar screen, which was undoubtedly erected by Wallingford; their presence upon the latter has been commonly explained by the supposition that Wheathampsted designed the structure and that Wallingford built it. Against the surmise, however, that it is Wallingford’s chantry-tomb, may be cited the fact that the words “Valles habundabunt” have been indisputably proved to refer to Wheathampsted; the wheat-ears seem also to point to the same conclusion, and a Latin inscription painted in the chapel in seventeenth-century characters, stating that John of Wheathampsted lies below, indicates the belief then existing. No evidence is obtainable from the slab, which is broken and despoiled of its brass.

In monastic times an altar, having a frontal of wood and metal most artistically designed, stood before the High Altar screen; two great candlesticks were placed in front, and upon it was laid the “Book of Benefactors.” High Mass was celebrated daily at the altar, to which was assigned a gilt chalice with paten, two handsome cruets of beryl, and a basin and ewer of pure silver. To the north of it stood the “great candlestick for holding the paschal taper of wax, weighing three hundred pounds, which was lighted with great solemnity every Easter Eve and continued in use until Ascension Day.” Below the steps on the north, and adjacent to Abbot Ramryge’s chapel, was the Abbot’s seat, with a brass lectern before it supporting the Book of the Gospels, and opposite upon the south side were sedilia for the priests. The Easter Sepulchre stood near the Ramryge Chantry; it was elaborately worked in white silk with costly embroidery in silk and gold; close by were two silver crosses, and around burned twelve tapers in candlesticks. Over all was visible the beautiful ceiling of Abbot John Wheathampsted, still in an excellent state of preservation, while the carved and gilded Rood-beam, of which a portion may yet be seen embedded in the wall, extended across the western entrance of the Presbytery, between the two eastern piers of the Norman tower.

In the north aisle of the Presbytery is some fine early Decorated arcading which has been extensively repaired, many large fragments of it having been found buried in the

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1 This work is now in the British Museum, and is catalogued as “Nero D. 7.”
aisle. Some years since a doorway, filled with rubble-work, was discovered in the north wall, the inner arch of which had been distributed in fragments in various parts of the Abbey; it has since been repaired and restored to its original position. The roof of the aisle is stone-vaulted, and decorated with the initials F.B.C.

In pre-Reformation times this part of the church was termed "The Deambulatory," and within it, "before the Altar of St. Katherine and St. Michael, lies buried under a hard stone Alan Ryxtone, one well disposed to this monastery," and near his tomb, "beneath the surface of the pavement, lies Sir William Elys, knight, of the County of York; he, whilst journeying towards Calais, was cut off by sudden sickness, in this town, in the hospice of Corner-Halle, in the time of Dom John Moote, Abbat." In the same place, opposite the door leading into the Saint's Chapel, Thomas Fayreman, bailiff of the town, was buried in 1411; his memorial brass, which also bears the figure of his wife, is still preserved in the Abbey.

The western portion of the south aisle of the Presbytery shows distinctly its Norman origin in the vaulting, the relieving arch and doorway in the south wall, and the exposure of Roman bricks in various places; the doorway originally led into the Vestry or Treasury,—the double-storied building which succeeded the apsidal chapels of the south transept. Upon the north wall facing the doorway is fixed the central panel from the old ceiling of the north transept, representing the Martyrdom of St. Alban, to the east of which, and also affixed to the wall, is the quaintly-carved figure of a pensioner, executed about a century ago by a sexton of the Abbey, and which is generally the object of much curiosity on the part of visitors. In the south wall, nearly opposite this small figure, is a doorway which originally conducted to the stairs leading to the upper chamber of the vestry. At the base of the steps is another doorway, in the Perpendicular style, restored by Lord Grimthorpe; it led in monastic times to a small building known as the Chantry Chapel of Duke Humphrey, the foundations of which were discovered and exposed in 1872; it now, however, affords egress to

the enclosed grass plot lying to the east of the south transept. This chapel, which is described as "outside the wall," was erected in 1429 by Abbot John Wheathampsted during his first Abbacy, as a place for his own burial. The open, pointed, stone screen, as observed in the wall above the steps, would admit of the Proto-martyr's Shrine being seen by those within the chapel, besides affording a view of Duke Humphrey's chantry. A part of the arcading in front of this screen-work has been restored.

Eastward of this is a doorway forming the entrance to the church from the Sumpter Yard; on either side of the interior are the remains (discovered in 1846) of another chapel of late Perpendicular work; the building of this chapel has also been attributed to Wheathampsted, "who expended on a new little chapel in the church over against the Shrine seventy-four pounds." When first disclosed the colour and gilding upon the walls were very apparent; the inscription "Domine Miserere" was detected, which seems to prove that the chapel was Wheathampsted's work, as those words occur in other parts of the Abbey in connection with the lamb and the eagle, the Abbot's distinguishing marks, while the style of decoration (five roses springing from a single stalk) appears to be intended as an allusion to the Wars of the Roses; until the restoration by Lord Grimthorpe, the stone-work could be seen from without. When the chapel was laid open a stone-lined grave was found in the centre of the structure, and as it contained no human remains it is probable that, upon the destruction of the chapel when the Abbey became a parish church, the occupant of the grave was removed to a second resting-place within the walls.

**Successive Restorations**—This brief account of the Abbey Church of St. Alban would be incomplete without an allusion to the successive restorations it has undergone from time to time. We find that, since the dissolution of the monastery, the Abbey has at intervals received contributions of money for repairs and restorations, and the following has special reference to the circumstances attending each of these important undertakings.

In A.D. 1612, James the First took a personal view of the structure as he made his progress into the North, "and out of his princely zeal and pious inclinacion to preserve so antient a monument and memorable witnesse of the first conversion of this kingdom

\[\text{1 Nero D 7, fo. 27.}\]
from paganism to Christianity, granted a Brief for collections to be made throughout England and Wales, for the speedy repair of the same; and about two thousand pounds were thus collected, which was most justly and truly expended."

In 1681, in the reign of Charles the Second, a brief was granted. The east window bears date “1683” in stained glass, in record of the expenditure upon the building in that year; at the same time the escutcheons of certain nobility and gentry, who contributed, were suspended at the foot of the groining of this part of the church.

1689. William and Mary, by grant out of certain Ecclesiastical Funds.

1721. George the First, by brief.

1764. George the Third, by brief, on the petition of the Minister and Churchwardens, the Archdeacon, Mayor, and others; stating, amongst various particulars, that the south wall, together with the great window, had become very rotten, and was in considerable danger of falling into the church. On this occasion the window of the south transept was framed in wood.

1832. William the Fourth, by voluntary contributions, chiefly in the County of Hertford. Great repairs and improvements were effected by Mr. Cottingham, the architect. These included the entire restoration of the great south window in stone (in conformity with the opposite window in the north transept), the opening of all the windows in the clerestory of the nave, and the removal of the belfry, the floor of which was constructed between the clerestory and triforium of the tower.

On the 5th of April, 1856, a public meeting of the County of Hertford was held at the Court-House, St. Albans, the Earl of Verulam (Lord-Lieutenant) in the chair, to consider the best means of restoring and upholding the Abbey Church, and of obtaining for it the dignity of a Cathedral. At the Lord-Lieutenant’s request, a report on the state and capability of the church, which had been drawn up by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Gilbert Scott, the eminent ecclesiastical architect, was read; resolutions were unanimously carried to the effect that the permanent restoration of the building would be secured, and the spiritual interests of the country greatly promoted, by its being made the centre of a Bishop’s See; and that subscriptions be forthwith collected with a view to the entire restoration of the church and its adaptation to the purposes of a Cathedral. Subsequently,
when the Committee appointed by the meeting to confer with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and Her Majesty's Government, and to receive subscriptions and apply them, was given to understand that there was no present hope that the resolutions of the meeting would be acceded to, it was determined that the existent subscription list should be cancelled and another opened for the exclusive purpose of sustaining and repairing the building. The amount of this second subscription enabled the Committee to purchase a plot of ground on the north side of the church, thereby rescuing it from the desecration of cottages proposed to be built closely adjacent to the whole range of the north walls. During the years 1860-1, very important works were carried out by Sir Gilbert Scott, of which the following tensive excavations were made in the ground which had been purchased, so as to open out the level, the earth having been found to be ten feet in front of walls the earth had been accumulated against them. The walls were carefully re-dations underpinned; at the same constructed at the time an air-flue was opened out. The works thus completed were all of great importance to the stability of the building, while the appearance of the whole north elevation and of the interior of the church was very considerably improved.

To receive the water conducted from the roof by pipes, drains were formed, by which it was conveyed into a main sewer (now first constructed), which discharged into one of the town sewers. The roof of the north aisle of the nave was renewed in its whole length. At the east end the buttress of the choir aisle (which was giving way) was thoroughly restored, and a Perpendicular doorway (which had been walled up) was opened out. The works thus completed were all of great importance to the stability of the building, while the appearance of the whole north elevation and of the interior of the church was very considerably improved.
In August, 1870, when the great tower of the Abbey was found to be in a dangerous condition, effectual measures were at once taken to avert such a catastrophe as its fall, and the consequent destruction of the church. The Abbey Reparation Committee was soon afterwards formed, and, in 1871, Sir Gilbert Scott presented a report to the Chairman of the Committee (the Earl of Verulam), in which he estimated that a sum of at least £26,000 was required for immediate and absolutely necessary structural repairs, while a further sum of £20,000 would be necessary for the proper reparation of the Abbey, exclusive of any internal fittings or restorations. In June of that year a very influential meeting was held in London under the presidency of Lord Verulam, when eloquent appeals were made on behalf of the Reparation Fund by the late Bishop Wilberforce, the late Dean Stanley, the Marquis of Salisbury, the late Earl Stanhope, and others, who urged that the work of preserving St. Alban's Abbey ought to be regarded as a national undertaking.

Some time afterwards, the Marchioness of Salisbury, the late Countess of Essex, the late Countess of Verulam, and the Countess Cowper formed a Committee of Ladies, in order to obtain means for the rescue of the Lady Chapel from the ruin and desolation which had overtaken it: and a special report upon its history, condition, and the required restorations was presented by Sir Gilbert Scott to Lady Salisbury. The restoration of the Abbey proceeded by slow degrees, Sir Gilbert taking the most scrupulous care to preserve or reproduce every ancient feature, however minute or apparently insignificant. The objects he religiously set before him were:—“to retain every fragment remaining of ancient work, to obliterate not one scrap of ancient wrought surface, to insert no new stone which is not essential, and so far as possible to repair the ancient structure without in any degree infringing on its antiquity.” The tower was made safe and stripped of its external plaster, thus exposing to view the Roman tiles of which it is composed. The whole fabric of the eastern portion of the church (including the choir, presbytery, transepts, aisles, and Saint's Chapel) was strengthened, while the restoration of the Lady Chapel and the ante-chapel was also carried out as far as the funds permitted. When part of the south side of the nave (the clerestory and triforium), which, for some time, had been inclining more and more outwards, was found to be in actual danger of falling, Sir Edmund Beckett generously came
to the rescue (the Reparation Committee having no funds for this purpose), and the work of shoring it up was quickly carried out. In 1876, the Reparation Committee was reconstituted; a new faculty for repairs was obtained, the old low-pitched roof of the nave was raised clear of the walls by means of screw-jacks, and the five south bays were successfully restored, chiefly by means of hydraulic power, to their original vertical position,—a perilous and difficult undertaking. The roof was then replaced, and the arcade strengthened by means of flying buttresses and groining. Sir Gilbert Scott died in March, 1878, leaving incomplete the great work to which he had devoted himself with singular ardour and enthusiasm. A great controversy then arose upon a proposal to substitute for the flat roof of the nave a roof of the original pitch, as indicated by the weathering on the tower. Sir Gilbert had intended, if
possible, to effect this particular alteration. The opponents of the change argued that the new roof would dwarf the tower, and contended that the western part of the roof was reconstructed of a low pitch after the recorded fall of a portion of it in the year 1323, the remainder being reinstated early in the fifteenth century. Mr. Street, however, assigned the date of the western part of the roof to the close of that century. This so-called “battle of the roofs,” after being fiercely contested, resulted in the victory of those who favoured the “high pitch.”

In 1877, a Faculty was granted by the Diocesan Court to repair and restore the church and fit it for Cathedral and parochial services, but the Committee soon afterwards found themselves £3,000 in debt, and it was at this critical juncture that a new Faculty was granted to Lord Grimthorpe (then Sir Edmund Beckett, Q.C.), by which he acquired unlimited powers to “restore, repair, and refit” the Abbey at his own expense. There was no alternative open to the Committee but to accept what must under the circumstances be considered as an extremely generous offer, notwithstanding the stringent and unalterable conditions imposed by the benefactor. For thirteen or fourteen years his Lordship has sedulously carried out the requisite work, expending annually a sum estimated at £10,000. His method of procedure, however, evoked considerable adverse criticism from those interested in the Abbey, who protested vigorously against the ruthless effacement of many notable features that were inseparably connected with the past history of the ancient building. The new west front and the windows inserted in the terminations of the transepts appear to be the chief points for divergence of opinion, and those of a thoughtful and artistic temperament have reason to regret that absence of sympathetic treatment with respect to the more interesting architectural features, the antiquity and integrity of which Sir Gilbert Scott endeavoured most conscientiously to retain. But, whatever may be the merits or demerits of the method pursued by Lord Grimthorpe, the incontrovertible fact remains that to him St. Albans owes the preservation of her famous Abbey Church, which would undoubtedly have fallen into hopeless ruin but for his timely and princely munificence.
THE REMAINS OF ST. ALBAN AND OTHER SACRED RELICS.

We learn from ancient writers that when Germanus arrived in Britain (A.D. 401) the remains of Albanus were exhumed, and, having been enclosed by him with great solemnity in a wooden coffin, together with other holy relics, they were restored to the earth amidst the prayers and lamentations of the people. On the invasion of the Saxons, however, all trace of the Martyr's resting-place became lost until its discovery by Offa, in the presence of whom the body of Albanus, together with the relics, was found practically uninjured in the coffin as Germanus had there placed them three hundred and forty-four years previously. Unqualified praise is undoubtedly due to the artificers of that early date for their unprecedented success in constructing a casket which defied the destructive effects of Time for so long a period. The relics were deposited in the small building which afterwards served as the church of the Monastery until the Abbey was erected, and, upon the completion of the latter, the bones of Albanus (who, by this time, had been promoted to the dignity of a Saint) were transferred thereto with every possible mark of veneration and respect.

The Canonisation of Saints was an ancient and very frequent practice in the Romish Church, and so liberally does the honour appear to have been bestowed that, as early as A.D. 794, the Council held at Frankfort-on-the-Maine prohibited the worship of "new saints," or the erection of chapels in their honour, until at least the authenticity of the facts of their martyrdom or the holiness of their lives had rendered them worthy of reverence by the Church. So numerous, indeed, were the claimants to sanctity in the above year that they exceeded twenty-five thousand. It therefore seemed reasonable that Britain's Proto-martyr should be justly entitled to the honour of canonisation, and to be recognised by the Church. In past ages it was also customary for the people to worship holy relics (real or supposititious), and even now such religious fervour is by no means extinct, as those who are familiar with certain Continental towns are able to testify.

In the year 950 (the time of Vulnoth, the fourth Abbot), the Danes came to the Abbey, broke open the tomb of the Saint, and carried off some of the remains to their own country, where they were deposited in a costly shrine that lay in readiness for
them at a house of the Black Monks. Less than a hundred years afterwards the remaining bones were again destined to be disturbed. In 1041, the Danes renewed their invasions, when Abbot Ælfric resolved that no further portion of these relics of the Saint, nor any fragment of the Shrine, should again fall into the hands of the marauders, and, in order to successfully carry out this intention, he expounded a scheme to a few select confidants in the monastery, who lost no time in putting it into execution. The Shrine containing the real relics was first concealed in a hole in the wall especially prepared for it, under the altar of St. Nicholas, and when this was satisfactorily accomplished, the bones of an ordinary monk were placed in a very rich chest. The ingenious Abbot then openly expressed to all his coadjutors the fears he entertained for the safety of the relics, and proposed that the monks of Ely should temporarily take charge of them, thereby according them greater security from the attacks of robbers by reason of the quantity of water and marsh-land which surrounded their abode. In order to complete the success of his stratagem the Abbot added to the consignment of bones a very rough and ragged old coat, which was commonly represented to be the very coat worn by Amphibalus when he converted Albanus. The monks of Ely readily accepted the charge, and promised faithfully to return the precious relics whenever desired to do so. Fortunately for Ælfric's peace of mind the Danish king fell into the sea and was drowned, and, all fears of the invasion being over, the Abbot requested the monks of Ely to restore to him the casket with its precious contents. This, however, they absolutely refused to do; Ælfric reminded them of their promise, but Ely determined to retain possession of the relics. The Abbot then threatened to inform the king of this breach of trust, and to appeal to the Pope; so, by means of such menaces, he caused the defaulters to deliver to the rightful owners the old coat and the chest, the latter (as it remembered) containing only the spurious relics; even these were not original, for the Ely monks (similarly ingenious in their turn) had previously removed the bottom of the chest and again substituted ordinary human bones. Upon the arrival of these at St. Albans, Abbot Ælfric calmly and unostentatiously buried the sham consignment from Ely, and, aided by his assistants, withdrew the genuine osseous fragments from their hiding-place in the wall and safely restored them to the Shrine in the church.
The monks of Ely could not, however, long retain the secret of their clever manoeuvre, and soon acknowledged the ruse of which they had been guilty. Ælfric at once informed Edward the Confessor, who, being satisfied that the fraud had taken place, was much angered thereby, but, with Ælfric's consent, decided to leave the Ely monks in peace. Thus matters continued for a century, when Robert, eighteenth Abbot, became annoyed at the boast of Ely that the bones of the Saint were in their possession, and, availing himself of the opportunity afforded by a visit to his friend Pope Adrian, he explained to his superior all the facts of the case. The Pope appointed a commission of three English bishops to institute inquiries, which resulted in the retractation by the Ely monks of everything they had said in disparagement, so that the authenticity of the relics at St. Albans was at once admitted to be incontestable.

At about this period (1151), a life-sized figure of St. Alban, clothed in a magnificent robe, was occasionally carried by the monks in procession to the Market Cross, where, after an address had been delivered to the assembled multitude, the signal was given for the Saint's removal, whereupon commenced the miracle which was intended to astonish every one present. In spite of the monks' endeavours the effigy remained immovable, nor could it be induced to stir, until, duly armed with mitre and crozier, the Abbot appeared on the scene, and, after placing the emblem of his office upon the rebellious image, said, "Arise, arise, St. Alban, and get thee home to the Sanctuary"; whereupon (so runs the legend) the pseudo-saint realised his responsibilities and returned to the spot from whence he came, much to the amazement and edification of all beholders.

Geoffrey de Gorham, sixteenth Abbot (1119—1146), presented a handsome vessel for the reception of relics then belonging to the Abbey, and described as those of the martyrs St. Bartholomew, St. Ignatius, St. Laurence, and St. Nigasius. August 4th, 1129, was an important day in the history of these saintly mementoes. Rumours having been circulated that the Saint's bones were still scattered, some being in Denmark and others at Ely, it was determined to examine the Shrine in the presence of witnesses. This was accordingly effected, under the presidency of the Bishop of Lincoln, assisted by the Abbot of Ensham, Robert of Thorney, and other Abbots, together with the inmates of the monastery; but everything was found intact except that the left scapula
ST. ALBAN HISTORICAL AND PICTURESQUE.

The monks of Ely could not, however, long retain the secret of their clever stratagem, and were acknowledged the roses of which they had been guilty. Ælfric, the abbot, who, being satisfied that the fraud had taken place, took much part in the ceremony, was, with Ælfric's consent, decided to leave the Ely monks in peace. Thus, the monks, after a century, when Robert, eighteenth Abbot, became annoyed at the push of the bones of the Saint were in their possession, and, availing himself of the opportunity afforded by a visit to his friend Pope Adrian, he explained to the Pope all the facts of the case. The Pope appointed a commission of three men to inquire into the relics of the abbot, who had said in disparagement, so that the authenticity of the relics at Ely should be admitted to be incontestable.

In the year 1151, a life-sized figure of St. Alban, clothed in a magnificent mantle, was brought by the monks in procession to the Market Cross, where, after the obelisk had been delivered to the assembled multitude, the signal was given for the removal of the obelisk, upon which the miracle, which was intended to be witnessed, took place. In spite of the monks' endeavours the effigy remained unaltered on the scene, and, after placing the emblem of his office upon the obelisk, the legend) the pseudo-saint realised his responsibilities and returned to the abbey, where he was much to the amazement and edification of all beholders.

The second Abbot, sixteenth Abbot (1119—1145), presented a handsome vessel for the possession of relics then belonging to the Abbey, and described as those of the twelve apostles, St. Ignatius, St. Laurence, and St. Nigiasius. August 4th, was an important day in the history of these saintly mementoes. Rumours having been circulated that the Saint's bones were still scattered, some being in Denmark and others at Ely, it was determined to examine the Shrine in the presence of witnesses. The visit accordingly effected, under the presidency of the Bishop of Lincoln, assisted by the Abbot of Risham, Robert of Thornley, and other Abbots, together with the monks of the monastery; but everything was found intact except that the left scapula
(or shoulder-bone) was missing. About two years afterwards two monks arrived at the Abbey from the monastery of Naumberg in Germany, who declared that they possessed the missing scapula, which had been brought to them direct from St. Albans by King Canute. Strange to say, this statement proved to be true, so the newly-discovered fragment was added to the rest with great jubilation, in which the poor people of the town participated, three hundred of them being relieved at the gate of the monastery. The priests performed four Masses, and the remaining brethren sang fifty Psalms by way of rejoicing.

Abbot William de Trumpington added to the Abbey collection a valuable relic which had been surreptitiously acquired by him in the manner following. He accepted an invitation from his old friend Sylvester (then Bishop of Worcester) to be present on the occasion of a solemn translation of the body of Wulstan,—a former bishop of that diocese and a strenuous defender of the Church in the time of William the Conqueror,—to a more dignified resting-place in the cathedral. During the ceremony Trumpington contrived to appropriate one of the deceased prelate's ribs, afterwards conveying it to St. Albans without his host's knowledge or consent; it was then enclosed in a case of gold and deposited on a special altar erected to Wulstan in the Abbey. Trumpington also obtained a small cross constructed from the wood of the real cross, the arm of St. Jerome (of whom the Romish Church at one time possessed two bodies, four heads, and sixty-five fingers), the staff of St. Jerome and a portion of his clothing. He also purchased, in 1223 (from a traveller who had just returned from the Holy Land), two fingers of St. Margaret, and was persuaded to invest in another cross upon which St. Alban was said to have suffered, although he must have been well aware of the fact that the Saint was decapitated. He wrote a service in honour of all these relics and their owners, which was regularly conducted and accompanied with great solemnity by music of his own composition.

An extraordinary discovery was made in the time of John de Hertford, 1256, by the disinterment of the undoubtedly genuine bones of the Saint from underneath an ancient tomb in the Abbey. These were brought to light in the presence of the Abbot, the Bishop of Bangor, Philip de Chester, and Matthew Paris; the latter relates the
incident, the accuracy of which derives confirmation from the fact that two boys were raised to life, and many persons cured of blindness and the palsy, through the instrumentality of the Saint's remains. Some persons, however, maintained that the former relics were the authentic ones; so, in order to conciliate both parties and to surmount the difficulty, the Abbot judiciously mixed the various fragments together and thenceforth claimed the whole as genuine.

But with the invention of Printing the renown of the relics began to decrease; human intelligence developed, superstition had somewhat weakened its hold on the imagination, and, as a natural consequence, the Saint's bones no longer continued to inspire that awe and reverence which had formerly existed. So they gradually ceased to attract, and their alluring charms faded away before the rising star of the Reformation, being utterly extinguished on December 5th, 1539, when the Abbey was surrendered to the spoilers. The relics probably suffered the fate of the Shrine, and were scattered in all directions. In a scarce black-letter tract¹ (dated 1502, and dedicated to Henry VII. by the Abbey and convent of St. Pantaleon at Cologne) it is asserted that the body of St. Alban reposes in that institution, though the bones of the thighs, legs, and feet still remain in the Monastery of St. Albans,—a statement which is partly corroborated by Buckler,² who relates that, as troublous times were anticipated, the relics were conveyed to Rome and from thence to the Theresian convent at Cologne, where, in the church of St. Mauritius, may still be seen the reputed Shrine of St. Alban of England.

[For many of the above particulars I am indebted to a paper read before the members of the British Archæological Association by Mr. Henry H. Holt, in 1869, on the occasion of their visit to St. Albans.]

¹ The title of the tract is as follows:—*De inditi et gloriosi Proto-martyris Anglie Albani: quem in Germana et Gallia Albinum vocant: conversione passiona, translatione, et miraculorum choruscatione.* Colon. 1502. (4to, 12 pages).

² Buckler's *Abbey Church of St. Albans.*
CHAPTER VIII.

THE PEASANT REVOLT, AND THE GREAT GATEWAY OF THE MONASTERY.


The Great Gateway of the Monastery, where the ancient Grammar School has been located since 1870, is the only monastic building in St. Albans (the Abbey excepted) which, having escaped destruction at the Reformation, has been preserved to us almost in its entirety. The building possesses, in spite of its somewhat unpicturesque contour, a stately grandeur of its own. For many generations it has been a relic honoured by the townspeople as a venerable link between the present and the eventful history of the past. Fortunately, I am enabled to invest this ancient pile with a new interest,
which may perchance eclipse in some minds all other associations relating to it, for its intimate connection with one of the greatest intestine revolutions which shook England to its very centre, has not hitherto been comprehensively dealt with by any historian, chiefly by reason of the uncertainty which has prevailed as to the exact time when the Gateway was built. The correct assignment of this date has the most important bearing upon its historical interest. It was erected during the Abbacy of Thomas de la Mare, who ruled over the destinies of the Abbey from 1349 to 1396. Newcome states that it was built in the reign of Richard II. (1377 to 1399); subsequent writers (quoting from him) assert that the building dates from the latter years of the Abbot, and one of them even affirms the date to be 1399,—that is, after his decease!

The previous Gateway had been destroyed by a high wind, and the terrific gale that raged in the early part of the year 1361-2 may, with every show of probability, have caused the mischief. Ancient chroniclers agree in their descriptions of the devastation caused by this fearful visitation, which commenced about Vespers on 15th January (St. Maur’s Day), A.D. 1361-2. Adam Muremuth (Dean of St. Paul’s, 1320-80) tells us that it demolished “many houses, towers, steeplers, and other strong edifices;” the annals of Bermondsey state that the gale was most destructive in the eastern parts of England; Stowe says that it lasted five days, and from Blomefield’s “History of Norfolk” we learn that it blew down the spire of Norwich Cathedral. To prove that Hertfordshire was visited by the tempest it may be mentioned that the spire of Ashwell Church was prostrated by the same gale, whilst strong evidence that St. Albans suffered severely is furnished by a significant proclamation issued in the town during that year—that tilers should not advance their wages, and that tiles should be of the same price as they were during the corresponding portion of the previous year.

The fact that no detailed description of the building is extant may perhaps be accounted for by the probability of its being contemporary with, or directly following upon, the erection of the fortifying wall round the Monastery under the Charter of Edward III., 1359. This stone wall, which was crenellated for the discharge of arrows and other

missiles, passed along the southern boundary of the monastic enclosures, parallel with and not far from the river, and then turned up Holywell Hill approximately on a line with the present rear garden-walls; from near the upper part of Holywell Hill to Romeland it practically appears to have bisected the gardens of the present houses; at Romeland it diverged southwards, and, following the line of the front walls of the dwellings now standing on the bank, eventually joined the west front of the Abbey at its northern tower. From the southern buttress of the main entrance in the west front the wall extended to the Great Gateway, where its junction at a point a little removed from the centre of the eastern wall may still be seen. It is hardly to be conceived that so great an undertaking as this wall could be finished in the short interval of time between the granting of the Charter and the great gale, so there is every reason to think that both fortifications were portions of the same work, and contemporaneous.

The urgent necessity for such a building as the Great Gateway, in its dual capacity of prison and fortress, would compel its speedy re-erection; I therefore assign the date of the commencement of the building to 1362, and its probable completion (remembering that there is no elaborate stone-work in its construction) to 1365 or 1366,—that is, during the reign of King Edward III. The site occupied by the structure appears to be of larger area than that of its predecessor, for the House of the Almonry, erected in 1333 by Richard Hetersete, the Almoner (containing a Hall, Chapel, Chamber, Kitchen, and Cellar, with Houses for the Masters and Scholars connected with the Pre-Reformation Grammar School), was wholly or partially demolished to afford the necessary space for the new Gateway. 1

The great rebellion of 1381 was the culmination of many long years of discontent. The oppression of the landowners, the evils of villeinage, the regulations by which the wages of labourers were fixed, the comparatively high price of commodities, and the exaction of heavy taxation were some of the causes which led to the outbreak, whilst the spread of Lollardism opened the eyes of the masses to church corruption and oppression. The poor dwelt in a narrow world of hunger and toil, and in their poverty could see no future promise of contentment and rest; with no middle class for a connecting link, they were far removed from the gay and dissolute nobility who

1 Gesta II. 282; Registrum J. de Wheathamsted, I. 459
squandered in reckless wantonness the money ground out of the poor, never stretching a hand to help those who toiled for them. As the State became aware of this slumbering dissatisfaction, sterner laws were passed to repress it; as the Church found its hold on the people relaxing, she sought to stifle the new movement by her old weapon of persecution. In 1380, a tax was levied which pressed upon a class that had hitherto escaped, namely, the humbler village labourers, smiths, and builders’ workmen; its imposition and subsequent method of collection were the causes which goaded into action the seething discontent, and roused the villeins of England from sea to sea.

For many years previous to the outbreak the populace of St. Albans had been in a state of ferment; constant disagreements were taking place between the religious and secular inhabitants, and many legal contests had occurred between the Monastery and the borough. Thus the townspeople had a long list of grievances, and it was but natural that they should embrace an opportunity to annul them; at the same time the many itinerant preachers who came into the town, inculcating the doctrines of Wyclif and pointing out the natural equality of manhood and the tyranny of artificial distinctions, served to foster the wrath of the people, until they were raised to a veritable pitch of madness. When the signal of rebellion was given in the early part of 1381, and Wat Tyler occupied Blackheath with a hundred thousand Kentish men,¹ the streets of St. Albans at once swarmed with crowds of rioters armed with every variety of weapon. Reinforcements poured in from the whole of Hertfordshire, and then this motley rabble, in obedience to a command from Wat Tyler, marched towards London and encamped at Highgate, the malcontents from Essex at the same time occupying Mile End. A deputation to the rebel leader was formed under the direction of one Gryndcobbe, who is stated to have been a debtor to the Monastery,² and therefore, no doubt, doubly embittered against the fraternity. Wat Tyler, hearing the grievances of the men of St. Albans, advised them to return and redress them as forcibly as they chose, promising to come himself and exterminate the whole community of monks, together with the Abbot, if the townspeople failed to do so.³ Armed with this authority the rioters retraced their steps; tidings of their coming reached the Monastery, and the prior and

¹ Green's History of the English People. ² Newcome, p. 258. ³ Walsingham.
some of the brethren, probably feeling that their courage was not quite equal to the occasion, promptly fled for safety. Matters then looked very serious for the Monastery, for the returning rioters were joined by a large body of insurgents under Jack Straw, fresh from St. Edmundsbury and Cambridge, where they had burnt all the charters and records and committed many excesses.

This great multitude poured into the town, and in conjunction with the inhabitants "mad thei gret distructione in housing [of houses], brenninge [burning] dedis and chartoris; all clausures of wodis [all wooden enclosures] thei destroyed; bokis and rolles of cortis and obligationes thei rent and brent." Trees, shrubs, crops, and sheepfolds were also ruined, and many outbuildings burnt; then, in a vast crowd, the infuriated and reckless rioters made their way towards the Abbey. The central part of Romeland was at that time unenclosed; in this open space they assembled and made a vigorous attack upon the Great Gateway,—the actual structure, doubtless, which now exists. Whether the monks and the retainers made any resistance is not known; if they did it was of no effect, for the building was captured and all the prisoners in its rooms, dungeons, and vaults at once released. Flushed with their success the insurgents poured into the Great Court to which the Gateway gave access.

The Monastery at this time was in the very zenith of its splendour. The habiliments were of the most costly and gorgeous kind; the cups and other vessels were of gold or silver, curiously wrought; the crosses were set with the most precious stones, and the altars well furnished with rich vials and patines; in fact, every method was then employed to render the celebration of divine worship attractive by its brilliancy and impressive from its magnificence. Actuated thus by cupidity and a deep sense of their wrongs, real or imaginary, the utter destruction of the whole Monastery appears to have been within measurable distance, but at this critical moment the news arrived that Wat Tyler had been slain by Walworth, the valiant Lord Mayor of London.

Considerable consternation seems to have followed this announcement, and, instead of immediately attacking the main buildings, the rioters held a consultation. The trembling monks appear to have profited by this lull to have their dinner, which, judging from what

1 Capgrave's Chronicle of England.

2 Brayley.
Walsingham says, was not a particularly cheerful meal, for they "ate the bread of affliction and their drink was mingled with tears." Early in the day the warlike Abbot de la Mare had received the following communication from the king, which was brought to him by Richard de Wallingford:—

"Very dear in God,

At the petition of our beloved lieges of the town of St. Albans, we do will and command that certain charters, being in your keeping, made by our progenitor King Henry, unto the burgesses and good folks of the said town, of common and of pasture, and of piscary, and of certain other advantages expressed in the same charters, as they say, you do cause to be delivered unto the said burgesses and good folks, the which law and right require; that so they may have no ground for making plaint from henceforth unto us for such reason. Given under our signet at London, 15th day of June, in the fourth year of our reign." ¹

This was one of the many letters of pardon and emancipation which the king and his advisers thought good policy to issue at such a crisis; but the Abbot ignored it, and made every preparation to resist. Meanwhile the news of Tyler's death and the arrival of a king's messenger with a promise of pardon to all who would lay down their arms, abstain from future violence, and return peaceably to their homes, had damped the ardour of many of the rebels, who forthwith departed. One body, however, headed by Gryndcobbe and Cadyngton, and augmented by fresh arrivals from Luton, Watford, and Barnet, overcame the defences and forced their way to the Abbot's presence; here they demanded the charters which bound the town in bondage to his house, and promised to disperse peaceably if they were given up. If this request were not acceded to, they threatened to loot the Abbey and destroy all the buildings of Kingsbury. The Abbot was thus forced into a predicament, but still would not yield; his decision was hastened, however, by the work of destruction which resounded from the adjacent cloisters.² In a suit-at-law between the Abbey and the townspeople some years before, the ecclesiastics were successful, and they had triumphantly placed a number of millstones in the cloisters as an emphatic intimation that no townsman could grind corn within the domain of the Abbey save at the Abbot's will. Theburghers had now burst into the cloisters, and, as a dog rends the lash with which he has been whipped, so they in their wrath tore the millstones from the pavement and smashed them to fragments, carrying off the pieces that each

¹ Gesta (by Riley), III, 326.

² A portion of the cloisters still survives in the rich blank arcading on the south wall of the nave.
Midsummer Rose was not a particular grateful task, for they "ate the bread of affliction and sorrow of the soul, and more.

Early in the day the warlike Abbot de la Mare received the following, emanating from the king, which was brought to him by the Bishop of Rochester:


This was one of the many letters of pardon and emancipation which the king and his advisers thought good policy to issue at such a crisis; but the Abbot ignored it, and made every preparation to resist. Meanwhile the news of Tyler’s death and the arrival of a king’s messenger with a promise of pardon to all who would lay down their arms, abstain from future violence, and return peaceably to their homes, had damped the ardour of many of the rebels, who forthwith departed. One body, however, headed by Grynecobbe and Cadyngton, and augmented by fresh arrivals from Luton, Watford, and Barnet, overcame the defences and forced their way to the Abbot’s presence; here they demanded the charters which bound the town in bondage to his house, and promised to disperse peaceably if they were given up. If this request were not acceded to, they threatened to loot the Abbey and destroy all the buildings of Kingsbury. The Abbot was thus forced into a predicament, but still would not yield; his decision was hastened, however, by the work of destruction which resounded from the adjacent cloisters. In a suit-at-law between the Abbey and the townspeople some years before, the ecclesiastics were successful, and they had triumphantly placed a number of millstones in the cloisters as an emphatic intimation that no townsman could grind corn within the domain of the Abbey save at the Abbot’s will. The burghers had now burst into the cloisters, and, as a dog rends the lash with which he has been whipped, so they in their wrath tore the millstones from the pavement and smashed them to fragments, carrying off the pieces that each

1 Gorton (by Riley), III, 368.
2 A portion of the cloisters still survives in the rich blank arcading on the south wall of the nave.
might have something to show of the day when their freedom was won again. "The townsmen demanded from the Abbot an ancient charter of liberties, and when he denied its existence, the ribalds, entering the cloister with weapons in their hands, took up, from the floor of the entrance to this parlour, hand-mill stones (which formerly, in the time of Abbat Richard de Walyngford, had been there laid down as a memorial of an ancient plea between the villeins and the Monastery), carried them away to the commons, and there broke them in pieces, giving a fragment to each one, like as the hallowed bread has been accustomed to be divided and bestowed in parish churches on Sundays, in order that, in truth, they, seeing these same pieces, might know amongst themselves that they had previously been victorious in that cause against the Monastery. This act of violence was committed in spite of concessions promised by the Abbat in his own person, standing at one time in 'Le Romeland' and at another in a pulpit, placed for this purpose in the midst (or nave) of the church." De la Mare capitulated, and, to save the Abbey and its possessions, promised to accede to their demands. The triumphant rioters rushed from his presence, and, with loud shouts, summoned their comrades who were looting part of the town.

Then ensued one of the strangest sights that this locality has ever witnessed. The insurgents by hundreds thronged the Great Courtyard, Romeland, and the adjacent open spaces, whilst ale in abundance was sent out from the monastic cellars and loaves of bread were distributed from huge tubs. The multitude feasted and made merry, the trembling servitors of the Abbey promptly supplying their every want. The unlimited potations of ale gave rise to a dangerous "Dutch courage" in the rioters, but a townsman succeeded in diverting their attention from the monks, and they expended their renewed energy in violence in the town. The Abbot, finding all further resistance useless, granted them a general acquittance for everything except debt, and a bond securing to them all the liberties they had asked for; a number of the rebels stood by with naked weapons until the deeds were drawn, signed, and sealed. By these documents the people were permitted to have hand-mills for private use, were allowed to hunt and fish in various parts of the neighbourhood, and a quantity of land was granted for cattle-grazing. Similar requisitions were made by the Abbot's tenants in the parishes of Barnet, South Mimms, Watford, Cashio, Rickmansworth, Tring,

1 Gesta, III. 309.  
2 Lloyd's Altars, &c.
Redbourn, etc., either at that time or very shortly afterwards, which were granted by the Abbot.

The fall of Tyler was apparently a death-blow to the Rebellion. The majority of the great masses of assembled peasants dispersed to their homes under the impression that they were safe from punishment by reason of the universal pardon which had been granted; but no sooner were they scattered than the nobles took courage, and, with their followers, swooped down upon the disbanded forces of the insurgents, and bloodshed raged throughout the land. Richard II., revoking all the charters and pardons he had bestowed, raised an army of 40,000 men (chiefly horsemen), and spread terror by the ruthlessness of his executions as he marched in triumph through Kent and Essex. At Waltham Cross he was met by the display of his own recent charters and a protest from the Essex men that "they were, so far as freedom went, the peers of their lords." But they were to learn the worth of a king's word. "Villeins you were," answered the youthful monarch, "and villeins you are. In bondage you shall abide, and that not your old bondage but a worse." ¹ However, the temper of the people was aroused, and fierce resistance met the king; the might of the royal arms, nevertheless, prevailed, and seven thousand men are said to have perished that summer and autumn on the gallows or the field.

The insurgents of St. Albans held the town with a high hand, and the king anticipated much trouble in taking it. At this juncture Sir William atte Lee offered to proceed thither in advance of the king and endeavour to pacify the townspeople. Accordingly, with a small force of only fifty bowmen, the knight appeared before St. Albans and encamped in a field called Derfold.² The townspeople went out to meet him in large numbers, whereupon Lee harangued them and tried to bring them to a due sense of their iniquities. Apparently succeeding in his endeavour, he next repaired to the Abbot, and sent for some of the chief townsmen to meet him there. When they were assembled, Sir William showed himself in his true colours; drawing a huge sword, ensanguined by some recent fray, he swore that, unless the charters which had been extorted from the Abbot were at once returned, not a man should leave the place alive. Then, appointing a guard over his prisoners, he went out into the streets, and by his eloquence caused the

¹ Walsingham.
² Newcome.
townsmen to denounce their leaders, the jury confirming the names of the three men accused, viz.: William Gryndcobbe, William Cadyngton, and John the Barber. These men were arrested and lodged until the next day in the Great Gateway, but in which portion of it we are, unfortunately, not informed. The town that night was in such a state of discontent that Abbot de la Mare thought it advisable to send to all the neighbouring knights and esquires, asking them to hold themselves in readiness to succour him in case of an attack upon the Monastery. But the hours of darkness passed away quietly, and the following morning the three prisoners were conveyed to Hertford, where the judges on circuit then happened to be, probably under a special commission for the trial and punishment of the rebels. Gryndcobbe was admitted to bail, perhaps through the intercession of de la Mare, who advised moderation; the others were committed to prison. But the king now arrived in person to inquire into the troubles at St. Albans; he came in great state, with a numerous retinue, chiefly men-at-arms and bowmen.

Richard II. was at this time only fifteen years of age; his illustrious descent as the son of the gallant Black Prince, and his ready wit and courage at the time Wat Tyler was slain, had raised the hopes of England that in this proud and handsome boy the glory of the Nation would not be diminished. At the great west door of the Abbey the royal visitor was received by the Abbot and the monks, and, after visiting the Saint's Shrine, the royal apartments were placed at his disposal.

On the next morning the Chief Justice, Sir Robert Tressilian (who had gained a notoriety for cruelty subsequently equalled only by Judge Jeffreys), took his seat in the Moot Hall, the building which stood (and probably still stands) at the junction of Dagnall Street with the Market Place. Here the three ringleaders (for Gryndcobbe had been re-arrested), together with many other prisoners, were arraigned for trial; but it was only by threats of imprisonment and death that the judge could induce the jury to bring in verdicts of guilty against the offenders. Gryndcobbe was offered a free pardon if he would persuade his followers to restore the charters that had been wrung from the monks; this, however, he refused to do, and, turning bravely to his fellow townsmen who thronged the Hall, bade them take no thought for his trouble. "If

1 Chauncy, p. 274.
I die,” he said, “I shall die for the cause of the freedom we have won, counting myself happy to end my life by such a martyrdom; do then to-day as you would have done had I been killed yesterday.” The law knew no mercy on this occasion; sentence of death was passed upon the three ringleaders and fifteen of their followers, while eighty-six others were committed to prison. The notorious John Ball, an insurgent priest released by the Kentish rebels from Canterbury gaol, had been brought from Coventry to be tried at St. Albans, and he also was sentenced to death.

Only one or two days were granted to the condemned to make their peace with the world; on Monday, July 15th, 1381, the wretched men were brought out from the dungeons of the Great Gateway and suffered the extremity of the law with all the attendant horrors of the age. John Ball had been sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered; accordingly, after suspension on the gallows, his body was publicly divided into four parts, dipped in boiling pitch, and sent to four cities of the realm as a warning to intending malefactors. The other sufferers were also hanged, and their bodies allowed to remain upon the gallows, which are said to have been erected in the meadows that lie between the town and Sopwell, possibly on the land (still partly vacant) to the south of Sopwell Lane. St. Albans has from time to time witnessed many strange events, but it is questionable if anything more horrible or disgusting could be imagined than these barbaric executions and the revolting scenes which followed them.

At this time a statute was passed annulling all the charters extorted during the rebellion, and all feoffments and seizures that had been granted were declared null and void. The following proclamation was also made through the counties of Hertford and Buckingham:

"That all and every person and persons that ought to do any manner of service or duty to the Abbot and convent, whether they were bondmen or freemen, should do and perform the same in such manner as they had used to do, before the late troubles, upon their faith and allegiance to the king, upon the forfeiture of all they had to lose, and if any refused to do the same that the commissioners should commit them to prison till further order for their punishment.”

One more remarkable incident in connection with the Peasant Revolt occurred on St. Margaret’s Day in the same eventful week that saw the execution of the rioters. The whole

1 Green’s *History of the English People.*
2 Chauncy
3 Urwick’s *Noncon. in Herts.*
4 Walsingham.
5 Chauncy.
of the commons of the County who were between the ages of fifteen and sixty were summoned to appear before the king at St. Alban's Monastery; here they assembled in their thousands and thronged the Great Courtyard, where an oath was administered to them in Richard's presence that "they would be from henceforth faithful subjects to him and never to rise or make any commotion to the disturbance of his peace, and rather die than consent to any rebellious persons, whom they should to the uttermost of their powers apprehend and deliver to prison that they might be forthcoming."¹

Many a bitter thought must have arisen in the minds of the people as they passed from the king's presence under the massive arch of the grim Gateway; their blood, and that of the thousands who had fallen, had been shed in vain, and nought but the same servitude and wretchedness as of yore appeared in the future of their hopeless lives. The king sojourned in the Monastery eight days, and left for Berkhamstead on July 15th, 1381.

In the meantime the bodies of the dead malefactors that were suspended near the town began to prove a source of great annoyance as they decomposed, and the nuisance eventually became so unbearable that some of the townspeople took them down from the gallows and conveyed them a considerable distance. This came to the ears of the king, who was hunting at Easthampstead in Windsor Forest; he was greatly incensed at the liberty which had been taken, and sent a writ (dated August 3rd, 1381) to the bailiffs of the borough, commanding them at once upon receiving it to have chains made and the bodies suspended in them upon the gallows once more, "there to remain while one piece stuck to another."²

The bailiffs dared not disobey this injunction, but neither persuasion, threats, nor payment would induce any of the townspeople to go near the bodies of their late companions, who had now been dead about three weeks; the loathsome task was therefore undertaken by the bailiffs themselves.

Before relinquishing this subject, allusion must be made to the subsequent career of the high-handed young king who appears so prominently in the present history. As his character developed, the early promise was in every respect unfulfilled; weak, irresolute, tyrannical, and false to all around him, he (in 1399) fled from the exasperated nobles. Edmund of Langley (Duke of York, and uncle to the king) tried to shield his nephew, and, with this object in view, summoned to St. Albans all those faithful to the royal cause; but,

¹ Chauncy.
² Chauncy.
although forty thousand men flocked to his banner, he was compelled to fly with his forces to Oxford and Bristol, while the triumphant Henry of Bolingbroke (afterwards King Henry IV.) entered the town at the head of sixty thousand men, with the miserable Richard a prisoner. The townspeople had not forgotten what had occurred sixteen years before, and the execrations lavished upon the fallen monarch were as hearty as the shouts of welcome that were accorded to his captor. The shrieks of agony and heartrending cries for mercy at Berkeley Castle two years later formed the closing scene in the life of the unhappy and degenerate son of the hero of Cressy and Poictiers, the gallant Black Prince.

The Great Gateway is only mentioned occasionally by historians between the period of the events just narrated and the Dissolution. The judicial sway of the Abbots appears to have been a kind of palatine jurisdiction, such as is still, or was until recently, retained in part by the Sees of Durham and Ely. The Abbots had full power of life and death, and authority to try even the higher kind of offences, like treason. It is questionable, however, if the enormous fines which were usually inflicted in the most important cases went to swell the income of the community; these were probably handed over to the State, and simply the minor fines and fees were appropriated to the monastic revenues. The lower portions only of the building appear to have been used for the purposes of a prison up to the Reformation. In the twenty-fourth year of King Henry VIII. an act was passed which restricted the judicial authority of the clergy and made the sessions the only criminal court for the district, the justices being appointed by the king. This first blow to the authority of the Abbots was soon after followed by the dissolution of the Monastery in 1539, whereby it ceased to exist altogether.

When the Monastery was demolished by Sir Richard Lee the Gateway was saved from destruction for the purpose of serving as a gaol for the borough; the charter of King Edward VI. (dated 12th May, 1554) gives the right to the Liberty magistrates to have their gaol in the borough, and to hold their sessions as before. "And the place where the said sessions had been ever held and continued to be held was the great room over the Gateway; and here also sat the steward and convened his court of assize and general commission of oyez and terminer." This room was used for all session business until the year 1651, when

1 Newcome, p. 374.  
2 Brayley.  
3 Gibbs' Corp. Rec  
4 Newcome, p. 376.
the justices purchased it, together with the whole of the upper portion of the building, and converted it into a House of Correction; up to this period only the lower part had belonged to the Liberty. The justices who made the purchase were Sir John Wittewronge of Harden or Harpenden, William Leman of Northaw, Henry Ewer of Watford, John King (afterwards knighted) of St. Albans, Alban Coxe of Beaumonts, and John Marsh of Shenley; they acquired it from Godfrey Ellis and Griffantius Phillips of Glo'ster. The sessions were from that time held in the Moot Hall.

In 1651, the entire premises appear to have consisted of the Great Gateway, one building, a stable adjoining it on the west side, and a small garden. The office of gaoler or porter was undertaken by a man named Sturgeon: in 1695, a William Morris was appointed, and, in 1702, letters patent were granted to Ralph Kentish "to hold, exercise, and enjoy during his natural life, together with the ancient fee or salary of £11 1s. 4d. per annum, payable as formerly by the Receiver-General of the county of Hertford." A room for the gaoler's lodging in the building was provided, and Newcome (writing in 1795) states that "the patent hath been renewed at divers times," and "William Kentish by patent dated June 29th, 1787, is the present gaoler and porter of the Great Gate so appointed." An old print shows the building in the latter year with two structures (apparently cottages) erected on either side of the archway on the south, while another engraving (dated 1816) represents the road through the building as a country lane with old palisades on either side, and brambles and nettles growing freely, the mediæval doors being still in position.

In the year 1815, the Liberty gaol consisted of that part of the building nearest the Abbey, the gaoler being appointed by the Lord-Lieutenant of the County. There was a spacious courtyard for the use of the prisoners, whose daily allowance of food amounted to a pound-and-a-half of bread for each person. No firing was allowed in winter, and the inmates endeavoured to alleviate their pitiful condition by begging from passers-by. Their method of collection was generally by means of an old shoe attached to a string, which was lowered from one of the upper windows, and any money collected in this extraordinary manner from sympathetic persons was invariably spent in the purchase of firewood. During the French war under Napoleon Buonaparte some prisoners-of-war were incarcerated within the

1 Newcome, p. 376.
building, and it is stated that one of them effected his escape by a desperate and perilous leap from one of the windows of the room over the great archway. The remaining part of the edifice on the other side of the road was the House of Correction, to which vagrants were committed until they could be forwarded to their respective parishes. The gaoler was appointed by the Corporation, who had a few years before effected the purchase of some of the adjoining land, for the benefit of the offenders who were sentenced to hard labour.

In 1868, the Monastery Gateway proved to be too small for accommodating the number of prisoners, and a new gaol was accordingly erected near the Midland Railway Station. The old building was then purchased by the Governors of the Grammar School for £1,100, the school being transferred from the Lady Chapel of the Abbey to its present quarters in 1870.

The Great Gateway is of unusually large dimensions. The ground-plan is an oblong divided into two portions by a public road through the centre. In the walls, which are exceedingly thick and strong, may be found Roman tiles and irregular blocks of stone, as well as the predominating flint. The windows are Perpendicular and generally of modern construction, as only a few of the original ones remain. There is a lofty entrance-arch on the south and a smaller one on the north with a postern; the roof of the archway is groined in stone, and is considered a good specimen of fourteenth-
The two projecting turrets on the south front contain spiral staircases affording access to the various rooms; and there is evidence that similar turrets once existed on the north side. On the ground floor are several apartments with stone walls and groined ceilings, presenting many points of interest. Buckler describes them as "four avenues, two on either side of the archway incorporated with the present edifice; one of those on the west side is of the age of the thirteenth century and extremely elegant." This would seem to imply that the latter is a part of the first Gateway; on the other hand there is the statement that de la Mare built the present structure "from its foundation."  

Below the ground floor are the dungeons, now difficult of access; one of them on the east side of the archway is of considerable size, occupying half of one of the so-called avenues, and extending vertically to the second floor of the building, where four rooms are found similar to those below. Above the archway is the large room in which the sessions were formerly held, and this is flanked by two rooms of almost similar dimensions on either side. The ceilings are supported by massive oaken beams resting upon stone corbels, carved into heads and other devices; as the latter are placed without regard to symmetry of design it is probable that they formed a part of the earlier building, and they are therefore specially interesting on that account. Some ancient fireplaces of peculiar design still exist; one of them bears a crude representation of the royal arms, the initials C.R. for "Carolus Rex," with the mottoes, "God Save the King" and "Dieu et Mon Droit,"—the whole being executed in stone and plaster dating from the time of the first Charles.

In bringing to a conclusion this account of one of the most interesting historical buildings to be found in St. Albans, a considerable degree of pleasure is experienced in the thought that this monastic relic will, in all probability, be preserved to us for many years to come as the home of the ancient Grammar School, and thus perpetuate not only its intimate connection with the greatest conventual fraternity that ever flourished upon English soil, but the vicissitudes it experienced during the troubled times of the great Peasant Revolt.

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1 Newcome, p. 268.
CHAPTER IX.

ST. ALBANS AND ITS FAMOUS ENGLISH HISTORIANS.

The Scriptorium of the Monastery—Early Writers—Skill of the Copyists—The Office of Historiographer—The St. Albans School of History—Roger de Wendover and Literary Labours—Matthew Paris—His Extraordinary Talents—The Sources of His Information—Royal Patronage—The Conscientious Nature of His Writings—Rishanger and the Period He Lived In—Walsingham and His Annals—St. Albans and the History of the Middle Ages.

Sufficient prominence has not hitherto been given locally to the fact that England owes to the indefatigable historians of St. Albans the chronicles of many of her kings and queens, the descriptions of her great battles, the accounts of the successive steps by which her people acquired a settled constitution, and, in brief, the record of the multitudinous ingredients which make up the history of a great nation. The Scriptorium of the Monastery was founded by Abbot Paul de Caen; William, a monk (the first of a line of historians), commenced his labours there in 1170, and Walter, another monk of some fame, in 1181. Both of these are mentioned as famous Benedictine men of learning, though the results of their industry are now either scanty or have altogether disappeared.

The Scriptorium of the Great Monastery was at once the printing-press and the publishing-office, for it was the place where books were written, and from whence they issued to the world. With the traditional exclusiveness of the older monasteries, there was, no doubt, less desire to diffuse and disperse books than to accumulate them, although their composition and multiplication were always going on. The Scriptorium was also a great writing-school, and the rules for calligraphy laid down there were so rigidly and severely adhered to that, to this day, it is not difficult to decide at a glance whether certain volumes were produced in St. Alban's or some other Abbey. Sometimes as many as twenty writers were simultaneously engaged, and besides these there
were occasionally supernumeraries, who, as professional scribes, received payment for their services; but nothing short of perfect penmanship (such trained skill, for instance, as characterises the manual dexterity of an expert engraver) would qualify a copyist to take part in such finished work as that which the reproduction of important books required.

About a century after the foundation of the Scriptorium, when the library had assumed imposing dimensions, Abbot Simon bestirred himself, and a new office was created in the Abbey—to wit, that of Historiographer. In modern times such a functionary is known by the more dignified title of “Professor of History,” but in the twelfth century he was called by his proper name, signifying “a writer of history;” indeed, at this period a systematic recording of historical facts commenced after a certain authorised method, and thus originated what has been deservedly designated “The St. Albans School of History.”

In the early part of the thirteenth century Roger de Wendover began his labours; his comprehensive records give copious information concerning the epoch in which he lived, and to no other historian are we so deeply indebted for the details of that great constitutional struggle between the barons and King John, which ended in the famous victory at Runnymede. Roger de Wendover possessed strong royal and ecclesiastical sympathies, and therefore his writings, as might be expected, are somewhat biased. “He did good work, and laboriously epitomised, supplemented, and improved, but he was a mere literary monk after all; a student, a bookworm, simple, conscientious, and truthful; a trustworthy reporter, ‘a picker-up of learning’s crumbs,’ a monkish historiographer in short; but by no means a historian of large views and of original mind. He died in 1236,” and his mantle fell upon Matthew Paris, the most renowned and brilliant historian of which England could boast at that period.

Matthew Paris, a monk in St. Alban’s Monastery, had acted as editor or assistant to Roger de Wendover until the death of his tutor, when he took up the important work with such avidity that he speedily became renowned. Being entirely free from the prejudices that had warped and blinded his predecessor, he threw into his writings a fervid patriotism which is remarkable for one in his position. “He was a universal

1 Dr. Jessopp’s Studies by a Recluse.  
2 Ibid.
genius; he could do whatever he set his hand to, and better than any one else. He could draw, and paint, and illuminate, and work in metals. Some said he could even construct maps; he was versed in everything, and noticed everything, from 'the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop upon the wall;' he was an expert in heraldry; he could tell you about whales, and camels, and buffaloes, and elephants: he could even draw an elephant, illustrate his history, in fact, with the elephant's portrait,—the first elephant, he says, that has ever been seen in our northern climes."¹ "He had a vast capacity for work, and was a courtly person, possessing the gift of tongues, and had been a great traveller; he was sent by the Convent to study at the University of Paris, and, wherever he went, he was the man to make friends. He had his correspondents all over Europe, and that he sifted the evidence as it came to him we know. Wherever there was any great event that deserved a place in the Abbey Chronicle,—some splendid pageant to describe, some battle or treaty, or pestilence, or flood, or famine,—straightway tidings came to the vigilant historiographer; there was a comparison of the evidence brought in, and some testing of witnesses, and finally the narrative was drawn up and incorporated into Matthew's History. Again and again it happened that a great personage, who, while himself making history, was anxious that his own part in a transaction should be represented favourably, would try and get the right side of the famous chronicler, and would furnish him with private information,—in other words, such personage was not averse to being interviewed."²

A large circle of correspondents—bishops like Grosseteste, ministers like Hubert de Burgh, officials like Alexander de Swereford—furnished Matthew Paris with minute accounts of political and ecclesiastical proceedings. Pilgrims from the East and Papal agents brought news of foreign events to the historian at St. Albans. He had access to, and quotes largely from, state documents, charters, and exchequer-rolls. The frequency of the royal visits to the Abbey brought him a store of political intelligence, and Henry III. himself contributed to the great chronicle which has preserved with such terrible exactitude the memory of his weakness and misgovernment. On one solemn feast-day the king recognized Matthew, and, bidding him sit on the middle

¹ Dr. Jessopp's *Studies by a Recluse.* ² *Ibid.*
step between the floor and the throne, begged him to write the story of the day's proceedings. While on a visit to St. Albans he invited him to his table and chamber, and enumerated by name two hundred-and-fifty of the English baronies for his information. But all this royal patronage has left but little mark on his work. "The case," as he says, "of historical writers is hard, for if they tell the truth they provoke men, and if they write what is false they offend God."

With all the fulness of the school of court historians, such as Benedict or Hoveden, Matthew Paris combines an independence and patriotism which is strange to their pages. He denounces with the same unsparing energy the oppression of the Papacy and the king. His point of view is neither that of a courtier nor of a churchman, but of an Englishman, and the new rational tone of his chronicle is but an echo of the national sentiment which at last bound nobles and yeomen and churchmen together into a people resolute to wrest freedom from the crown. To his prodigious industry we are indebted for his great History, which covers the period from 1066 (the date of the Norman Conquest) to 1259,—the year of his death. There are also the "History of the English," the "Lives of the Earlier Abbots," and many literary productions which first saw the light at the Scriptorium of St. Alban's Monastery. In order to devote the requisite time and attention to his undertaking, he declined the honour of the Abbacy, offered him at the time when John of Hertford was elected. In 1259, Matthew Paris, "the pride and glory of the Monastery," expired, and was interred within the Abbey precincts.

Rishanger, who succeeded Paris, was historiographer to Edward I. and Edward II., and died in 1312. Extant history from his hand deals comprehensively with the short period between 1259 and the death of Henry III. in 1272, his work after that date consisting only of disjointed fragments. He continued the remarks which, originated by Wendover, had been faithfully added to by Matthew Paris, but only civil and state

1 In 1872, the first volume of the Chronica Majora appeared in the "Rolls Series." In 1884, the seventh and final volume was issued, containing the learned editor's last preface, glossary, and emendations, with an index to the whole work, extending over nearly 600 pages.1

2 Newcome, p. 172.

1 Dr. Jessopp's Studies by a Recluse.
events seem to have been noted.\textsuperscript{1} These, however, have proved of the greatest service to subsequent historians, and, for facts relating to this period, Rishanger may be noted as the authority generally quoted by them; nevertheless there is a strong contrast between his scanty and lifeless jottings (enlarged though they are by his fragment on the Barons’ War) and the vivid beauty of the word-painting of his immortal predecessor, the “last of the Great Chroniclers.” The latest editor of Walsingham’s “History” (Mr. Riley) is, however, of opinion that the portion of that record which deals with the time when Rishanger was living may be attributed to the pen of that monastic historiographer.

There appears to have been no break in the succession of historians between the time of Rishanger and Walsingham, but they had degenerated into mere annalists whose unsympathetic efforts hardly comprehended more than was apparent within the monastic walls of the Abbey.

THOMAS WALSHINGHAM was a native of Norfolk, and a monk of St. Albans during the reigns of Henry IV. and Henry V. He collected the whole of the annals which had been jotted down in the monastery after the demise of Matthew Paris, and compiled them in his “Historica Anglicana,”—a book whose history is given in the prefaces to the “Chronica Monasterii S. Albani” (Rolls Series). To Walsingham cannot be ascribed the same impartial judgment and freedom from bias that distinguished Matthew Paris. The violent Lancastrian sympathy shown in his records of the times in which he lived has made his writings less reliable than they might otherwise have been; but he is, to all intents and purposes, the great source of historical information for more than one hundred-and-sixty years of English history, and may certainly be regarded as the second famous historian of St. Albans. I find no authentic record of his death, which probably occurred between 1420 and 1430. With him ends the list of historians connected with this great Benedictine community, but, as already indicated, the Scriptorium did not cease to be of vast utility to humanity.

From this narration of the lives and labours of the famous English historians of St. Albans it will probably be acknowledged that the town occupies the foremost place in its intimate association with the earlier historical records of England. It has been aptly remarked

\textsuperscript{1} Newcome.
that "the history of St. Albans is the history of the country;" in a certain sense this is true, for he who is thoroughly acquainted with the rise and progress of this ancient town, and its connection with constitutional and other events in past ages, will immediately recognise it as a convenient key to English history. But when, in addition, the important fact is remembered that, but for St. Albans, the records of the middle ages would be almost unknown, this remarkable Hertfordshire town assumes a position which is certainly unique among English cities.
CHAPTER X.

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.


The history of this venerable foundation presents many points of the greatest interest, not only to the citizens of St. Albans, but to all English-speaking people. For here glowed the first embers of the great educational flame which gradually spread throughout the kingdom in the form of Grammar Schools, slowly during the dark ages but greatly accelerated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the Charters of King Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth. From the very foundation of St. Alban’s Monastery (at which time Offa, the royal founder, established a school in Rome for English youths) until the time of its dissolution, this great Benedictine community honoured wisdom and learning, and encouraged by every means in its power the acquisition of knowledge. The Monastic School at St. Albans, for the education of the monks chiefly in religion, was doubtless contemporary with the foundation, being similar in that respect to other religious communities; but of the establishment of a grammar school in any part of England for secular instruction, no evidence is afforded by ancient testimony prior to the existence of St. Alban’s Grammar School.

Elsewhere in the present work reference is made to the probability that the School was founded during the time of the Saxon Abbot Ulsinus, in the reign of King Edred
THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

(946 to 955). The establishment of the University of Oxford by King Alfred, and the general encouragement given to education by him and some of his successors, would inevitably stimulate such men as Ulsinus to promote the great work by founding minor seats of learning in their own immediate vicinity. There is every likelihood that the Abbot of St. Albans, who loved knowledge for its own sake, would consider a school an absolute necessity for the immigrants from the neighbourhood whom he had induced to settle in the town by building churches, establishing a market, and making gifts of material for erecting their homes.

The supposition that the Grammar School was founded at such an early date is strengthened by the fact that, in the Abbacy of either Paul de Caen or Richard de Albini, a man of the standing of Geoffrey de Gorham was induced to come to England for the purpose of conducting it, when, finding that a master had been installed there in the meantime, he was content to wait for the vacancy. Geoffrey de Gorham, who claimed descent from an illustrious family, was celebrated for his erudition, so that the School must have been an important one if it attracted him. When the slow growth of institutions at that time is considered, it is not unreasonable to suppose that a hundred or a hundred-and-fifty years had elapsed before it was brought to such a degree of excellence. De Gorham did not become master of the School because the higher dignity of Abbot was conferred upon him in 1119, but it was doubtless in a great measure to his fostering care, and subsequently to that bestowed upon it by the three abbots who succeeded him, that the extraordinary success of this famous seminary may be attributed.

In 1195, when Warine de Cambridge was Abbot, his nephew (also named Warine, or Garine) was head-master of the Grammar School, which then “had the greatest number of scholars of any in England.” Alexander Nequam (who was born in St. Albans in 1157, and received his education at the School) testifies to its success and popularity;¹ he had charge of the establishment for several years before Warine, but relinquished his duties there in order to undertake those appertaining to the mastership of the Priory School at Dunstable. A number of documents relating to this early

¹ Newcome.
School were in the chest of the Grammar School on March 18, 1328; the following is a list of them:

1. A grant by John de Langeleye of a house on Hockerhulle for the use of the Grammar School, together with free education for five years of sixteen poor scholars who were to live in the Almonry outside the Monastery and shave their heads after the manner of choristers. This document is undated, but is considered to have been drawn up about 1309.

2. A Charter of Hugh de Eversden, Abbot of St. Alban’s Monastery, granting extraordinary powers to the master of the School. He was authorised to “suppress, annul, destroy, and eradicate all spurious schools within the territory or jurisdiction” of the monastery, and “to forbid all persons under pain of excommunication from resorting to the said schools, or presuming to hold them.” Dated June 19th, 1310.

3. A document emanating from John Passevant, Archdeacon of St. Albans, increasing the powers of the master, and giving him authority to try and adjudge all cases concerning infringements of the rights of the School, quarrels between the scholars and the bachelors (ushers?), or violence of the laity against the scholars or others connected with the School. Dated June 22nd, 1310.


The statutes and regulations by which the foundation was governed are given in detail, and are most interesting as showing the organization of a public school at that remote period. To lessen the probability of serious consequences resulting from the numerous “town and gown” disputes which occurred, the scholars were forbidden to carry arms, or to wander aimlessly about the streets; it was also contrary to the laws to fight amongst themselves, to strike a master, or to show bad temper, the latter regulation applying to the masters also. The scholars were of two classes,—ordinary and poor; the latter (sixteen in number) resided in the Almonry—a building contiguous to the Great Gateway, and probably on the site of the new chemical laboratory of the Grammar School. The scholastic buildings at that time are supposed to have been situated in the grounds of the present Romeland House, for, on the authority of certain passages in the “Amundesham Annales” (vol. ii. p. 262), we learn that the School was next the tenements in the corner opposite the Great Gateway.

In the chest were likewise found a folio Latin Grammar (the only one for the use of the School), two mitres, an episcopal staff, and two wax tapers. Mr. Riley, in his Introduction

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1 Appendix C. to Vol. II. of the Registrum Abbatiæ Johannis Wheathamstedæ (Rolls Series); also Gibbs's Hist. Records.

2 Gibbs's Hist. Records.
to the "Registrum" (vol. ii.), states his belief that the mitres and episcopal staff were probably used at the ceremony of the election of the "Boy Bishop." This mockery of episcopal dignity began (December 6), in many colleges, schools, and churches, annually on the feast of St. Nicholas, patron saint of children and scholars and lasted until Innocents' Day (December 28). The impious celebration consisted of dressing a boy in episcopal vestments, with mitre and bishop's staff, who was accompanied by juvenile deans, canons, chaplains, and prebendaries in solemn procession to the church, where they performed all the offices of their seniors,—preaching, celebrating Mass, and singing Vespers. The "Boy Bishop" of Salisbury is actually said to have had the power of disposing of such prebends there as happened to fall vacant during his episcopacy. If he died during the time of his office, the funeral honours of a bishop, together with a monument, were granted him. After service in the church the boys paraded the neighbourhood, collecting money from door to door, which was not asked as an alms, but demanded as a bishop's subsidy. This practice of electing a "Boy Bishop" was common at grammar schools, those of Eton, Wye, and St. Paul's being particularly mentioned. The money thus collected was probably put into the chest of St. Nicholas (mentioned in the rules of the School), in which also were possibly placed the School fees and voluntary offerings.

No notice of the School is extant between this period and the Reformation; one record of its existence, however, is found in the reference of Wynkyn de Worde to the school-master-printer of St. Albans (1480). Among the distinguished persons who were natives of St. Albans, and who are either known or presumed to have had their education at the pre-Reformation School, are the following:—

Alexander Neeham, or Nequam, born in St. Albans in 1157. He was foster-brother to Richard Cœur de Lion, being born on the same day, and his mother being nurse to the young prince. After receiving his education at the Grammar School he became its master for a time, and then accepted the charge of the Priory School at Dunstable. In 1180, he was professor at the University of Paris; he afterwards entered the Augustine Order and was appointed Abbot of Cirencester. Nequam was well versed in the learning of his age, and compiled a book entitled "De Naturis Rerum," which, though of little value to the student of science, is

1 Brand, p. 230.
2 Gibbs's Hist. Rec.
3 Ibid.

X 2
interesting enough for its curious stories, odd guesses at truth, and the many items of information concerning mediæval life, manners, and opinions. He died in 1217, and was buried in the Abbey.¹

Matthew Paris, the great English historian, received his primary education at the School; he entered the monastery in 1217 as a novice, being then about fifteen years of age. His life and labours I have already dilated upon.

Sir John Mandeville was born in St. Albans about the beginning of the fourteenth century, and attended the Grammar School. He studied medicine for a time, but on Michaelmas Day, 1322, he set out on his famous travels, spending thirty-four years in visiting the Holy Land, Egypt, India, and China. Rheumatic gout at last obliged him to return and rest; he wrote and published a full account of his wondrous travels in the French language (not in Latin as is generally supposed), and submitted it to the Pope on his way home. His work, full of the most interesting details, freely interspersed with all sorts of wonderful and incredible tales, earned for him a most extraordinary reputation among his contemporaries, and was circulated over Europe in various translations. The oldest remaining manuscript in French is dated 1371, and the earliest English transcript cannot be much more recent; it is probably the former manuscript which is referred to by Clutterbuck² as having belonged to a Mr. William Thompson (Fellow of Queen’s College, Oxford), before 1746. The translations were embellished by the monks and copyists of the time with the most fanciful and outrageous stories or narratives compiled from Pliny and other authors, as well as from their own fantastic imaginations. For many generations after Mandeville’s death his work was the most popular volume of travels then existing, and Mr. Halliwell ventured the opinion that “of no book, with the exception of the Scriptures, can more MSS. be found at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries.” Mandeville died in 1372. Weever, who wrote in 1631, states that he saw his tomb in the city of Liége in the church of the Guilliamentes, bearing date 16th November, 1371, and he gives the inscription upon it; but an epitaph on the last pillar but one on the north of the nave of the Abbey Church indicates that the celebrated traveller is interred there. An escutcheon is also shown, differing essentially from that which is said to

¹ Williams’s Hist. of St. Albans. ² Dr. Jessopp’s Studies by a Recluse. ³ Clutterbuck, p. 82.
have existed on the tomb at Liége. The late Dr. Nicholson records that the latter showed the arms borne by Sir Roger Tyrell, of Hertfordshire, in the reign of Edward I.; if this be so, then St. Albans may have the honour of containing Mandeville's grave as well as of being his birthplace. A strong presumption of his personal being is drawn from the fact that Liége is said to be the place of his burial; "qui obiit Leodii, A.D. 1382." It is also shown in "Appendix Granville" (No. 6728/3) that he was believed to have lived at Liége, where he is said to have written his book in the year 1355; and, if Weever is to be relied upon, he died there, but at an earlier date, namely 1371. Speaking of St. Albans, the same authority says: "This Towne vaunts her selfe very much of the birth and buriall of Sir John Mandeuill Knight, the famous Trauailer, who writ in Latine, French, and in the English tongue, his Itinerary of three and thirty yeares. And that you may beleue the report of the Inhabitants to bee true, they haue lately pensild a rare piece of Poetry, or an Epitaph for him, vpon a piller; neere to which they suppose his body to haue beene buried, which I think not much amisse to set downe; for although it will not bee worth the reading, yet do but set it to some lofty tune, as to the Hunting of Antichrist, or the leke, I know it will be well worth the singing; marke how it runs:—

"All yee that passe bye on this pillar cast eye,
   This Epitaph read if you can;
'Twll tell you a Tombe onc't stood in this roome,
   Of a braue spirited man.
John Mandeuill by name, a knight of great fame,
   Borne in this honoured Towne.
Before him was none that euer was knowne,
   For traualie of so high renowne.
As the Knights in the Temple, crosse-legged in marble,
   In armour, with sword and with sheeld,
So was this Knight grac't, which time had defact,
   That nothing but ruines doth yeeld. 4
His Trauailles being donne, he shines like the Sun,
   In heauenly Canaan;
To that blessed place, O Lord of His grace,
   Bring vs all man after man.'

1 Cott. MSS. Titus. 2 Appendix Harl. 3589-2. 3 Ancient Funeral Monuments, 1631.
4 These lines confirm Norden's statement. Vide p. 95 Note (ante).
"That he was borne heere in this Towne I cannot much deny; but I am sure that, within these few yeares, I saw his Tombe in the Citie of Leege, within the Church of the religious house of the Guilliammits, with this Inscription vpon it, and the verses following hanging by on a table." Here follow the Latin inscription and verses, after which Weever adds:—"The Churchmen will shew you here his kniues, the furniture of his horse, and his spurres, which he vsed in his trauells." ¹

Nicholas Breakspear, better known as Pope Adrian IV., also possibly attended the pre-Reformation School.²

The history of the Grammar School subsequent to the Reformation is, as might be anticipated, much more copious and reliable than that gleaned from the monastic records, which furnish the information up to that period. The monastery ceased to exist in 1539, and the School's fortunes sank to a low ebb at that troublous epoch. But the necessity for its continued existence was soon felt, and when, on May 12th, 1553, a Charter of Incorporation was granted to the town by Edward VI., one of the provisions was that the mayor and burgesses should have power to erect a Grammar School within the Church of St. Albans, or any other convenient place. Accordingly, the Lady Chapel and the ante-chapel at the eastern end of the Abbey were appropriated for the purposes of a school; a passage-way known as "The Cloisters" being at the same time thrown open, thus dividing the scholastic and the ecclesiastical parts of the edifice. Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth subsequently confirmed the Charter. Over the door of the Chapel was placed a wooden tablet containing the following inscription:—

¹ Vide Introduction to The Voyage and Travayle of Sir John Maunderville, Knight, etc., etc. Edited by John Ashton, 1887.

² Vide Abbacy of Robert de Gorham, p. 37 (ante).
Among the distinguished scholars of the School since the time of the Reformation may be mentioned John Westerman, who became head-master in 1625; Sir Francis Pemberton, Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas; Sir John King, a celebrated lawyer in the time of Charles II.; Sir William Domville, Bart., who was Lord Mayor of London in 1814; Anthony Brown, Esq., M.P. for Hedon, Yorks., in 1818; and Professor Donaldson, the celebrated architect. An entry in an old School-register suggests the great probability that the Poet Cowley also received his primary education here, previous to his entering Westminster School.

The Wine Charters.—The three towns of Oxford, Cambridge, and St. Albans possess the unique privilege of retaining the money raised by the issue of wine licenses. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth the Grammar School was in the enviable position of having a good friend at court in the person of Sir Nicholas Bacon, the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal,—the first of the Bacons who lived at Gorhambury. He took a great interest in the foundation, and drew up the regulations for its management, subsequently performing the same kindness for Harrow School. Sir Nicholas enriched the School library, which still contains several volumes bearing his signature and book-plate. Queen Elizabeth was at Gorhambury in 1569, and the Lord Keeper availed himself of the occasion to procure a Wine Charter from the Queen for the relief and support of the Grammar School. This charter allowed two licenses to be granted to innkeepers in the town, who were to charge any price they pleased for the liquors they sold; and persons selling wine contrary to the provisions of the charter were liable to a fine of £20 for each offence. A third license was granted by King James I. in 1611, and authority given to the mayor and burgesses to enter any house or cellar in the town to search for and seize any contraband wine; this power was also vested in the Corporation, who may even now imprison offenders until they give security not again to sell wine within the prescribed area.²

1 This tablet now occupies a position in the present School buildings.

2 A. E. Gibbs's The Grammar School.
In all general Acts of Parliament imposing duties on wine there are special exceptions made with regard to St. Albans, the rights and privileges of the charters always being guaranteed. The Excise authorities have, however, invariably viewed them with a jealous eye, and have more than once tried to override them. In 1803, an action was taken at the suit of the King by the Attorney-General against Ann Marks in the Court of Exchequer, for three penalties of £20 each, for selling wine in the borough contrary to the provisions of the charter. It seems she had obtained a license from the Commissioners of Excise instead of consent from the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, so judgment was given against her, whereby the authority of the charters was upheld. It has been the custom for many years for the lessees of the licenses to sub-let them to other persons, and in 1876 the Excise decided to test the legality of this system of sub-letting; accordingly, a number of the sub-lessees were proceeded against for selling wine without a license. The case was heard before six of the County justices, and, although the six publicans summoned were nominally the defendants in the action, it virtually resolved itself into the Excise v. the Corporation of St. Albans. For the purposes of this action the Corporation ordered the Charters of Elizabeth and James to be translated, and these translations were produced in court; after a long hearing the Bench dismissed the cases, holding the Excise barred from taking action by the clauses in the charter, which gave the sole power to the mayor and burgesses to proceed against offenders. The amount yielded by the sale of these charters has fluctuated greatly, sometimes only two being let, when of course the income depreciated. Their letting value has increased from £45 (in 1787) to £91 (in 1879), but at present it is appraised at £65, the money thus accruing being paid over by the Corporation to the Trustees of the School.¹

The rules which Sir Nicholas Bacon framed for the School provided, among other things, that the hours in summer should be from six o’clock in the morning until five in the evening, from eleven to one being allowed for dinner. In the winter the hours were from seven a.m. to five p.m. If a boy absented himself for more than three days in the quarter he was “banished from the School,” and the longest holiday appears to have been about six days! The parents provided for their boys ink, paper, pens, wax candles for winter, a bow, three arrows, bow-strings, a shooting-glove, and a bracer² to exercise shooting. “Archery and similar manly pastimes

¹ A. E. Gibbs’s The Grammar School.
² The bracer was a tightly-fitting leathern sleeve laced upon the left arm, and to it was attached a shooting-glove for the protection of the fingers.
were, at the time the charters were granted, considered essential parts of a young man's training, and he was thus early taught to follow such pursuits as tended to promote muscular strength and prepare him for a military career. History tells us how well our ancestors could use the bow, and to their skill with this weapon, attained for the most part when they were young, they were indebted for not a few of the victories which we still remember with pride and satisfaction. Several Acts of Parliament were passed in the Tudor period, rendering it obligatory for every man to exercise himself in the use of the long-bow. The royal favour

A CLASS-ROOM IN THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.
The Room in which the Borough Sessions were held from A.D. 1554 to A.D. 1651.

was not withdrawn from the School subsequent to the granting of the charters, for Charles I. made a visit of inspection, when three of the scholars delivered orations in his presence.

During the time the School remained in the Lady Chapel of the Abbey its fortunes (as shown by the number of scholars educated there) fluctuated very considerably. In 1818 there were but seven names upon the register, and at a subsequent date only one boy regularly attended; about the year 1860, however, no less than eight masters were deemed necessary to manage the number of pupils under instruction, but a few

years afterwards the School attendance again considerably decreased. It is probable that the lack of sufficient funds may account in a great measure for the varying vicissitudes of the School in the past; the head-master's income was, in the early part of this century, only £60 or £70 per annum, and the total income of the School then merely amounted to £150.

In 1869, an opportunity presented itself for securing more suitable scholastic premises than those afforded by the Lady Chapel, and the governors, with commendable promptitude, at once took the matter in hand. The Great Gateway of the Monastery was vacant, the prisoners having been transferred to the new Borough gaol; to secure these desirable premises "The Abbey Gateway Committee" was formed, and the building with its adjuncts were purchased for £1,100. Subscriptions to the amount of £1,300 were raised in the County, with which fund, considerably augmented by local pecuniary assistance, the premises were properly repaired and the necessary additions made. Two wooden tablets of historical interest are suspended in the largest class-room, one containing a list of the head-masters since 1588, the other recording the gift of the wine charters by Queen Elizabeth and perpetuating the names of past benefactors. Here, also, is a large mediæval semi-circular oak table, supposed to be a relic of the monastery, where it was used as a cope table. The School possesses a most valuable and interesting old library, which, although not very extensive, contains some splendid fifteenth- and sixteenth-century volumes; other rich treasures have been brought to light by the diligent book-hunter, one imperfect volume—a Caxton—being purchased by the trustees of the British Museum for £150. The book-plate in some of the oldest volumes is one of the earliest English examples in existence, and represents a combination of the arms of the School (likewise those of the City) and the motto of the Bacon family, adopted by the Grimstons, the donor of these particular books being Sir Samuel Grimston.1

In its present convenient quarters the ancient foundation has flourished, and now numbers about one hundred scholars; invigorated by the new life and energy infused into it, we may confidently anticipate a future which will bear comparison with the halcyon days of a once glorious past. No more fitting abode for this famous Grammar School—the oldest in the Kingdom—could be found than within the massive walls of the Great Gateway. Nurtured in its infancy by the fostering care of Saxon and Norman Abbots

1 Vide Illustration on "Dedication" page.
the School eventually flourished side by side with the great convent—the most powerful
monastery that England ever saw,—and now, even when the great fraternity is no more,
it seems to stretch forth a protecting hand to shelter within a portion of its ancient
walls the home of erudition which it founded so many centuries ago.

"John Insomuch," The Schoolmaster-Printer.—To St. Albans belongs the honour of
being one of the first towns in England in which typography was introduced. The Art
of Printing, although known to the Chinese at a very remote period, did not find its way into
Europe until the end of the fourteenth century. The earliest dated example is, however,
1423; this is a specimen of block-printing, for the first European books consist entirely of
illustrations in the form of crude engravings on wood. About A.D. 1450, separate types were
introduced at Mentz, and printing subsequently made rapid strides on the Continent.
William Caxton, the first English printer, commenced the Art in Bruges in 1474; two years
later he came to England, and in 1477 he issued the first work printed in this country, viz.:—
"The Dictes or Sayengis of the Philosophres," and not "The Game and Playe of the Chesse,"
as commonly, but erroneously, understood. In the following year (1478) a book was issued
from the Oxford Press, entitled "St. Jerome," which bears the date "1468," and upon this
evidence the honour of printing the first book in England has been denied to Caxton
and claimed for Oxford; but it has been satisfactorily proved that the date "1468" is a
typographical error, and should be "1478." 2

The first book printed in St. Alban's Abbey was issued in 1480. The assertion has gained
currency in St. Albans and its neighbourhood (apparently based upon Chauncy's account 3)
that the second printing-press was set up in the town,—an inaccuracy fostered and perpetuated
by local histories and guides; but it will be seen from the preceding facts that St. Albans
must, unfortunately, be relegated to the third position. The name of the printer is unknown;
that which is given to him by Chauncy, "John Insomuch," is probably due to some misappre-
hension of the words "Inso myche that it is necessari" at the commencement of the
Prologue to the "St. Albans Chronicle;" and again in the opening sentence of "The Boke

1 Dr. Jessopp's Studies by a Recluse.
2 Vide Catalogue of Printed Books at the British Museum.
3 Chauncy, p. 284.
of St. Albans"—"In so moche that gentilmen and honest persones," etc. As it was customary for some of the early writers to veil their identity in the initial words of their books, it is fair to assume that Chauncy was betrayed into an error by a knowledge of this fact, and consequently inferred that the name of the author of this anonymous work was "Insomuch." Newcome goes utterly astray in calling him "John Hertford," who was a printer in St. Albans about fifty years afterwards, and produced "The Life and Passion of St. Alban,"—following the translation from the French and Latin by John Lydgate, the celebrated poetical monk and schoolmaster of Bury.

The unknown printer of St. Albans was associated with the monastery, and a schoolmaster. If the educational monopoly granted to the Grammar School by the charter of 1310 was still in force (and there is no evidence to the contrary), he would, of necessity, be a master of that ancient foundation. The nature of his occupation may be gathered from a reprint of the "St. Alban's Chronicle" at Westminster in 1497, by Wynkyn de Worde, where, in the colophon, the work is said to have been "compiled in a boke and also emprynted by one sometyme scole-mayster of Saynt Albon." His orthography is phonetical, and quite of a northern dialect. The schoolmaster-printer was a contemporary of Caxton, and it is believed by some authorities that a connection existed between the presses of Westminster and St. Albans. The weight of evidence, however, seems to be against this assumption, although fragments of some of Caxton's works have been found in the library of St. Albans Grammar School. While the books of Caxton, almost without exception, were printed in the English tongue, the productions of our schoolmaster were chiefly in Latin. The only two English works issued from the St. Albans Press were "The Boke of St. Albans" and the "St. Alban's Chronicle." A total of eight works, altogether containing 1020 leaves, was (so far as can be ascertained) the result of his labours.

2 An imperfect copy of The Chronicis of Englode, with the Frute of Timis, forming a portion of the library of Bishop's Stortford School, was sold by auction on July 27th, 1893, and purchased by Mr. Quaritch for the sum of £220. It is printed in black-letter, with capitals in red, and dated 1483. Some part of the St. Albain's Chronicle (that relating to English affairs) had been printed by Caxton in 1480, and called The Chronicis of Englode, &c. This work, enlarged and amplified, was re-issued by the local unknown printer in 1483, under the title of the St. Albain's Chronicle. The reprint by Wynkyn de Worde has already been referred to.
3 Gibbs' Hist. Rec.
In 1860, Mr. Blades printed a pamphlet entitled "Some Account of the Typography of St. Albans in the Fifteenth Century (1480-1486)," which, however, went no further than half-a-dozen proofs. It contains a collation and description of the type of each of the books issued by the schoolmaster of St. Albans, and the author writes:—"Seven different works printed at St. Albans about the close of the fifteenth century have descended to modern times. From the colophons of these we learn that the press there produced two works in 1480, two in 1481, one in 1486, and two without dates, one of which, however, must have been printed after 1483, which was the year of its compilation. From this it seems very probable that several works may have been printed at St. Albans between 1480 and 1486, of which not a single copy is now preserved. The fact that these seven books present us with four different founts of type leads to the same conclusion, which also receives some confirmation from the colophon to the Essay on Rhetoric by Laurentius de Saona. Laurentius wrote his work in the University of Cambridge in 1478, and the fame of the St. Alban's Press would seem to have reached there so early as 1480, as in that year his compilation was printed at St. Albans. But who was the St. Albans's printer? Not one of his productions affords the slightest information. That he must have been connected with the Abbey, or protected by the Abbot there, seems almost certain, as the undertaking otherwise would have been too perilous."¹

A copy of the first work issued from the St. Alban's Press, entitled "Rhetorica nova Fratris Lawrentii Gulielmi de Saona" (Imp. ap. Villam St. Albani, 1480), is preserved in the British Museum, having formed part of the celebrated Library of King George III. A comparison of the typography in this production with a contemporary work of Caxton is instructive, the great difference in the type and general arrangement being at once manifest.

The most celebrated book printed at St. Albans is that which appeared in 1486. It was partly written and compiled by the well-known Lady Juliana Barnes, or Berners, the Prioress of Sopwell Nunnery, and was the first treatise upon Hunting printed in Europe. It is generally called "The Boke of St. Albans, or the Gentleman's Recreation," and consists of three parts, viz. :—"The Bokys of Haukyng and Huntyng and also of

¹ Reprinted in W. Blades's Books in Chains.
Cootarmuris."¹ Like the "Chronicle," it is printed in black and red, and consists of eighty-eight printed leaves, upon the last of which is this colophon:

"Translatyt and complit togedyr at Seynt albouns the yere from thincarnation of oure lorde Ihu Crist. meccelxxxvi."

Much might be written upon "The Boke of St. Albans," for it is exceptionally interesting both to litérateurs and antiquaries. I may mention, for example, its curious remarks upon the use and management of Hawks; the poetical stanzas of Dame Juliana Berners, with their quaint terms and rude directions; the serio-comic dissertation upon "Cote Armour," and, lastly, though by no means the least remarkable feature, the northern dialect and spelling that pervade the whole,—peculiarities which make this work one of the most fascinating in the entire range of the fifteenth-century literature. The number originally printed probably did not exceed fifty; imperfect copies are in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, the University Library at Cambridge, and the British Museum. In the Museum copy one leaf and part of another are missing; when it became the property of the Nation it was unbound, but contained the original end-papers, or flyleaves; there is no title-page, the book commencing abruptly with the words, "Here beginneth the Blayzing of Armes." It is a wonderful example of the excellence to which the Art of Printing was carried, even in the days when typography originated, the paper being well made and the letter-press remarkably uniform; nor did the enterprising printer hesitate to try his hand at colouring, for, although the actual text is in black, the different coats-of-arms and initial letters are in red.

The British Museum copy possesses special interest and value by reason of its romantic history and adventures. About the beginning of the present century the library of Thornock Hall, near Gainsborough, underwent extensive repairs; the books were afterwards sorted by some ignorant person, who discarded all those without covers, until a considerable pile had thus accumulated. These coverless volumes were destined for the flames, but a literate gardener, having obtained permission to take away what he liked, selected some, of which he made a list, No. 43 being entered therein as "Cotamouris." After the gardener's death most of these books were put in a chest and consigned to a garret, but a few favourites, the "Boke"

¹ This curious volume and that entitled The Art of Fyssching with an Angle have been admirably reproduced in facsimile, and published by Mr. Elliot Stock.
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amongst them, were kept on a kitchen shelf for years, until his son's widow became so tired of dusting them that, one day in June, 1844, she sold them to a pedlar for ninepence! The purchaser tied them together with string and carried them thus through Gainsborough; as he was passing the shop of a chemist who generally bought old papers in which to wrap his drugs, he was invited to enter, and the chemist's attention being attracted by the appearance of the "Boke," he purchased the whole of the stock for three shillings. Not being able to read the colophon, the man of drugs took it to an equally ignorant stationer and offered it to him for a guinea, at which price it was declined, but the suggestion was made that it should be exhibited in his window as a means of eliciting information concerning it. This was accordingly done, and a book-collector on seeing it there went in and offered half-a-crown for it, which caused the vendor to suspect that it was worth more than he had anticipated. Soon after, Mr. Bird, the Vicar of Gainsborough, inquired the price, for, although desiring to acquire such an early specimen of printing, he was not aware of the great value attaching to this particular book. While he inspected it a very intelligent bookseller named Stark entered the shop, to whom Mr. Bird gave way; but Stark betrayed such visible anxiety to obtain the work that the bookseller, Smith, declined to settle upon a price. Presently Sir C. Anderson, of Lea (author of "Ancient Models"), called and took away the "Boke" to examine, but returned it in the morning, having found it imperfect in the middle, and offered £5 for it, Sir Charles possessing no means of reference to guide him as to its value. In the meantime Stark had employed a friend to obtain for him the refusal of it, and had undertaken to give a little more than any sum Sir Charles might offer. The bookseller, on finding that at least £5 could be secured for it, obtained it from the chemist for the sum of two guineas, and then sold it to Stark's agent for seven guineas. Stark took the "Boke" to London and disposed of it for seventy guineas to the Right Hon. T. Grenville, who bequeathed it to the British Museum. Its probable value at the present time would not be much less than a thousand guineas!

In 1882, a copy of this rare work was offered for sale by public auction, and purchased for six hundred guineas by Mr. Quaritch; à propos of which it is related of this enterprising London bookseller that when, as a poor lad, he visited St. Albans, he was so impressed by the quaint old town and its beautiful Abbey that he always subsequently associated the place
with the book, and determined, whenever an opportunity occurred, he would buy "The Boke of St. Albans." On the eve of the sale already referred to he decided to give a thousand guineas for this precious volume, if he could not obtain it for less, but (as we have seen) he was enabled to acquire it for a much smaller sum. It is generally believed that no more than six copies are at the present time in existence, therefore, considering its extreme rarity, the price paid by Mr. Quaritch does not seem excessive. Dibdin estimated the value of a perfect copy at £420; the Roxburgh copy (imperfect) realized £147 in 1819. The only two perfect copies known are those in the collections of Earl Spencer, and of the Earl of Pembroke.

That Sir Walter Scott sometimes found "The Boke of St. Albans" invaluable for reference is proved by certain passages in his correspondence when preparing his edition of the "Border Minstrelsey." In a letter to George Ellis, Esq., dated from Musselburgh, 11th May, 1801, he writes:—"I am in utter despair about some of the hunting terms in 'Sir Tristram.' There is no copy of Lady Juliana Berners's work in Scotland, and I would move heaven and earth to get sight of it." His friend was evidently enabled to lend him this curious treatise on Sport, for, in a subsequent letter (2nd March, 1802), we read:—"If I do not come to London this spring I will find a safe opportunity of returning 'Lady Juliana Berners,' with my best thanks for the use of her reverence's work."

Some years ago Mr. Bradshaw, of Cambridge, increased the list of books attributed to the St. Alban's Press by the discovery of "Antonii Andreæ Questiones" (4to), of which the only impression known is in the University Library, Cambridge.

When we remember the literary "finds" which are made year by year, it does not seem altogether beyond the bounds of probability that we may yet ascertain something of the life and history of the Schoolmaster-Printer; if only his name and place of abode can be discovered, it will prove a valuable acquisition to our imperfect knowledge of this remarkable inconnu. Thrice fortunate will be he who, in a forgotten nook of some old mansion, shall bring to light a time-worn volume in parchment covers, having on the last page the significant legend:—"EmpriUtt at seynct albon by me (the at-present-unknown name here) dwellyng at yc scote hous over ayenst ye abbys,"

1 The collection of Earl Spencer has recently been privately purchased, and presented to the City of Manchester; this volume, therefore, is now to be found in the "Rylands Library" there.
2 Bibliographer, May, 1882.
3 Lockhart's Life of Scott.
CHAPTER XI.

THE SAXON FORTRESS-PALACE OF KINGSBURY.


Upon the elevated plateau which occupies no inconsiderable portion of the western part of the modern City of St. Alban there stood, in Saxon times, the Fortress-Palace of the Kings of Mercia. In that remote age, when seven Saxon Kings swayed their sceptres in England, the massive walls and towers of Kingsbury rose from their foundations; the name of the regal builder is, however, lost in the mists of antiquity. As King Offa took a personal interest in the erection of the Great Monastery, by means of which he hoped to expiate his crime, it is possible that the Palace was built by him as a residence contiguous to the spot in order to facilitate his supervision of the work. Certain it is, that if Offa did not build Kingsbury it must have been erected by one of his immediate successors, for we find that not only was it in existence less than sixty years after his death, but, also, that it was of sufficient importance and extent to entitle it to be selected as the meeting-place for the Parliament of Mercia. This was in A.D. 851, when Bertulph, the sixth king in succession from Offa, summoned the Witenagemot to meet at his Palace of Kingsbury. At this assembly were present Ceolnoth, Archbishop of Canterbury, six bishops, and a number of Mercian earls; the general affairs of the Kingdom were treated of, and, among other matters, certain possessions were granted and solemnly confirmed by the King to the Monastery of Croyland.

1 Spelman's Councils.
About a century-and-a-half later the annoyance experienced by the monks,—occasioned by royal fishing-parties from the Castle,—caused Abbot Ælfric to make a bargain with King Edgar, which led to the subsequent draining of the "deep lake" by cutting through the dam near the present Silk Mills. Soon after this, Abbot Ælfric II. purchased the Castle (or Burg) itself, together with the whole manor of Kingsbury, and added it to the monastic possessions; the Castle was demolished with the exception of the eastern tower, which King Ethelred stipulated should be allowed to remain in order to preserve the associations of royalty with the spot.

"The last relic of the Royal Castle was removed by Abbot Roger de Gorham, about two centuries-and-a-half subsequent to the time of Ælfric II. The chronicles of the Abbey relate how King Stephen visited the fraternity in 1154, shortly before his death, when the following scene took place:—After the King had heard Mass at the altar of St. Stephen, the feretry of the Martyr was laid at his feet, and Abbot Robert besought the King, as he loved God and the Martyr, that he would give license for the destruction of a certain Tower (propugnaculum), a remnant of the Royal Castle of Kyngesbury, at the eastern part of it, which was held by some disturbers of the peace, who feigned to be employed upon the King's business. The King started, and angrily demanded of the bystanders an explanation of these complaints of the Lord Abbot, whereupon one of the magnates present, who happened to be a firm friend of the Abbot, replied, 'My Lord King, not far from this spot, nay, close under the wing of this Abbey, there is a den of thieves who work mischief in the whole land, and not less damage to your Highness. It is the petition of these pious men that you will allow this thorn to be extracted from their eyes.' The King, thus pressed (says the chronicler), assented at once to the petition, ordered the knaves to be turned adrift and the Tower to be levelled, which was done without delay; the Abbot had the ground cleared of the débris, and also ploughed and sowed it, so that not a vestige of the eyesore might be visible."

The site occupied by the Fortress-Palace of Kingsbury is difficult to determine accurately, as no remains whatever of the buildings have survived. St. Michael's Mills, by being also called Kingsbury Mills, have given rise to the supposition that the Castle

1 "Silex" in Herts Advertiser, Jan. 20, 1875.
stood there, but, as that site was under water when the Fishpool existed, this is, of course, erroneous. Remembering that, in ancient days, castles were invariably placed upon the highest available situations in order to obtain the maximum advantages for defence, we must perforce leave the low-lying Fishpool and its banks, and seek another position that would better answer these requirements, and this we find in the plateau which lies contiguous to the Fishpool.

The steep bank and deep depression existing at the present time in New England Field and in the field called "Claridge's Close," to the south of it, form the eastern boundary of this elevation, while Verulam Road westward to a point near Kingsbury Brewery is the northern termination. It has been stated that, in all probability, this depression, as well as the low-lying meadow called "Clay Pits" adjacent to the Verulam Road, were Roman brickfields, from whence was obtained the enormous quantity of clay for the bricks used in Verulamium; if so, the Saxon builders of the Castle would find ready to their hands a deep and wide dry-moat surrounding half the site they intended to occupy. This moat extended towards the south from the present New England Field and met the waters of the Fishpool where the gardens of the houses adjoining the "Royal Oak" Inn in Fishpool Street are now situated; from this point the fortifications and the edge of the plateau on the south extended to the eastern end of that thoroughfare so appropriately termed "Mud Lane," and the continuation of this lane to Branch Road would be the remainder of the southern boundary. If a line be drawn from this point in Branch Road to another point in Verulam Road near the Kingsbury Brewery (but not including the buildings or grounds of the latter), it will define the western limit of what may be termed "Kingsbury Hill." To obtain the full benefit of the defence furnished by the Fishpool, it is probable that an embattled structure was continued down to the water from the Branch Road angle of the Castle grounds, and a steep bank of earth which exists by the side of the road there supports this theory. The site thus marked out as being that which was occupied by the Fortress-Palace of Kingsbury is an extensive one, but by no means too large for the accommodation of the Palace, towers, gardens, bailies, and the numerous buildings that in Saxon times constituted a royal residence. The particular tower which proved so obnoxious to the brethren
in the Monastery stood, in all probability, upon the commanding and elevated knoll at the south-eastern portion of New England Field, or Claridge's Close; an observer stationed at this point, and overlooking the ravine between himself and the Abbey, appears to be in close proximity to the latter building. As the zealous ecclesiastics completely razed the Castle and its fortifications to the ground, the materials were no doubt conveyed away and used in the monastic structures, or were built into the cottages which began to creep from St. Michael's towards St. Albans when the Mere was drained of its waters.

In Mercian times Kingsbury Park embraced several of the adjacent manors, and was apparently a famous hunting-ground; its contiguity to some of the main roads of Mercia, with the facilities it afforded for hunting and fishing, must have made it a favourite royal residence. It is probable, also (as Newcome surmises¹), that the present Cunynghame Hill Farm occupies the site of another residence of the Saxon Kings, or it may have been merely a hunting-lodge; its name ("Kening hame," or "King's home") inseparably connects it with royalty. We learn from Domesday Book that a Vivarium, or place for keeping wild beasts or curious animals, existed at Kingsbury in the time of the Conqueror, and to maintain these was a privilege and dignity which belonged only to the king.²

From an antiquarian point of view it is to be regretted that Kingsbury is now nothing more than a name, and that all relics of this royal residence, with its battlements, flanking-walls, and towers, have utterly disappeared. Had only a portion of these remained as a connecting link between the Saxon Heptarchy and the present time, it would have formed a unique possession among the many other archaeological treasures of St. Albans.

¹ Newcome, p. 507. ² Newcome.
CHAPTER XII.

SOPWELL RUINS.


Abbot Geoffrey de Gorham, the sixteenth Abbot of St. Alban’s Monastery, founded the Nunnery of Sopwell about the year 1140. Tradition states that two poor women lived upon the site in a wretched hut constructed of boughs and the bark of trees, and subsisted on the poorest fare; their piety and abstemiousness attracted the attention of the Abbot, who built a house and chapel for them, and appointed some possessions for their support. He also framed the necessary rules for the Nunnery, ordaining that none but unmarried women should be admitted; he limited the number to thirteen, and placed them under the rule of St. Benedict, the most stringent regulations being drawn up in order to preserve a high standard of morality amongst the inmates.  

1 M. Paris.  
2 Ibid.
his wife gave land in the manor of Cotes to the Nunnery, and Richard de Todenai certain property in the parish of Ridge. Clutterbuck affirms, from evidence connected with these donations, that the two poor women must have lived before the time of Abbot Geoffrey, who rebuilt the house for the sisterhood, but did not found the Nunnery.

A certain amount of irregularity subsequently lowered the tone of the community, for, in 1338, Abbot Michael de Mentmore deemed it necessary to impose fresh rules for the guidance of the inmates. The Nunnery now became celebrated, and many high-born ladies entered it, the order respecting the admission of maidens only having apparently lapsed. One of those who availed themselves of this retreat from the world was the young widow of the Duke of Clarence,—the unfortunate brother of Henry V., who died fighting valiantly at the Bridge of Beaujé, in 1420. His young duchess, Margaret, on taking up her residence in the Nunnery, made some costly presents to the Monastery.

By far the most celebrated name in connection with this establishment is that of the Lady Juliana Berners, the Prioress. She was the daughter of Sir James Berners, of Berners Reding in Essex, and sister to Richard Lord Berners, one of the Lancastrian nobles who fought for King Henry VI. in the First Battle of St. Albans. This distinguished lady composed a book upon Hunting, Hawking, and Fishing, which was one of the earliest volumes printed at the Monastery Press of St. Albans. The precise date of her death is unknown, but, according to the testimony of a work in the University Library at Cambridge, she was living in 1460. Holingshed calls her "Julian Berner, a gentlewoman endued with excellent giftes both of bodye and minde, who wrote certaine treatises of hawking and hunting, delighting herself greatly in those exercises and pastimes." Juliana was a poet, and her remarks show that she possessed strong common-sense combined with great powers of observation, as the following extract from her famous work sufficiently testifies:—

"A faythfull efrende wold I fayne fynde,
To fynde hym there he myght be founde,
But now is the worlde next unkind,
That frendship is fall to the grounde;"

1 Hume.
2 Newcome, p. 394.
Now a frende I have founde,
That I wolle nother ban ne curse,
But of all frendes in felde or towne,
Ever gramercy—my owne purse."

The Nunnery is also known in connection with the marriage of King Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn, which event is affirmed to have there taken place both by Camden¹ and Stukeley,² although it is a disputed point in history. Some authors have stated that Anne was privately married to the King at Dover on the same day they returned from France;³ but, according to other historians, the nuptials were secretly performed in the presence of the Earl and Countess of Wiltshire in the Chapel of Sopwell Nunnery,—a report that was perhaps originated by the temporary retreat of Anne to the Convent after her return from France and the secret resort of the King to meet her there, the trysting-place being a yew-tree that flourished about a mile from the Nunnery. The unpopularity of the union was the cause of the profound secrecy with which the nuptials between Henry and his fair subject were solemnised; for the same reason it was necessary to keep the fact from publicity as long as it was possible to do so. It is among the historical traditions of Anne’s native county, Norfolk, that she was privately married to the King at Blickling Hall,⁴ while it is also asserted that the wedding took place at Calais in the presence of Archbishop Cranmer, the Duke of Norfolk, her father, mother, and brothers,⁵ the ceremony being performed by Rowland Lee, afterwards Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. The recent curious discovery of a supposed picture by Holbein (now in St. Albans) is interesting (if authentic) as showing the intimate connection of Henry VIII. with the town; here the King and Queen Catherine are represented as paying a visit to Cardinal Wolsey, the Abbot of St. Alban’s Monastery, and apparently Anne Boleyn is one of the persons depicted by the artist.

In 1539, the site of the Priory of Sopwell was granted by King Henry VIII. to Sir Richard Lee as a reward for his military services in France; in the following year the Manor also became the property of this favourite of the King, together with the monastic buildings; he demolished the latter, and, with a part of the materials, erected a mansion

¹ Camden’s Britannia, 1586.
² Stukeley’s Itinerarium Curiosum, 1720.
⁴ Agnes Strickland’s Queens of England.
⁵ Herbert, p. 161.
at Sopwell, the ruins of which are still extant. It is a moot point whether the whole of the Nunnery was destroyed at that time, but it may be conjectured that only a portion was pulled down, sufficient to afford a site for the new mansion, the remainder being adapted to suit the altered conditions.

Sir Richard Lee came from an old Sussex family, his mother being related to Dudley, the extortioner in Henry the Seventh's reign, from whom descended the Duke of Northumberland, executed by Queen Mary. Sir Richard probably lived at St. Albans previous to the grant of the Nunnery; he was in the service of the King, being employed with others, in 1543, upon the fortifications of Tynemouth.¹ He accompanied the expedition under the Earl of Hertford to Scotland in 1547, and, in the plunder of Edinburgh, brought away from Holyrood the curious font of brass, adorned with embossed figures, which was used in the Abbey Church until Cromwell's time, when it disappeared.² There is every likelihood that the brass eagle-lectern now in St. Stephen's Church formed part of the Scotch plunder of Sir Richard. The grant of the Nunnery and monastic lands is said by Newcome to have been owing to the personal charms of Sir Richard's wife, who is described as being very beautiful, and in no small favour with the King. In addition to the house which Sir Richard built at Sopwell, a large piece of land was enclosed for a park, of which the Old London Road formed the northern boundary. The worthy Knight died in 1575 and was buried in a vault in St. Peter's Church, where his wife and two daughters were also interred.³

Edwin Sadleir, the second son of Sir Ralph Sadleir of Hendon (who had married Sir Richard Lee's eldest daughter), now took up his residence at Sopwell; their second son, Richard, inherited the place, and left it to his son Robert, whose daughter Ellen married Thomas Saunders of Beechwood. The latter sold the mansion and lands to Sir Harbottle Grimston soon after the Restoration; but the house, not being inhabited, fell into a ruinous condition, and parts of it were pulled down and sold. Some beautiful medallions were carefully removed, and purchased by the lord of Salesbury Manor, in the parish of Shenley.⁴ Salesbury Hall was then being erected, and the medallions were affixed to the walls of the entrance-hall, where they may still be seen. It is conjectured that they are the

work of two famous sculptors named Wolvey, father and son, who flourished in the time of Richard II. and were buried in St. Michael's Church; the medallions are presumed to have been copied from antique coins, and represent Julius Caesar, Augustus, Galba, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Constantine, Cleopatra, Faustina, and Zenobia. In an old house, No. 27, Holywell Hill (nearly opposite Sopwell Lane), is a ceiling which (according to the late Rev. Dr. Griffith, of Sandridge) was also brought from Sir Richard Lee's house; it is decorated with medallions smaller than those at Salesbury Hall, the same profiles being represented.

Benjamin Hare's map (1634) gives a crude representation of Sopwell previous to its demolition. Three large houses are there delineated, the principal of these being placed in the centre, and distinguished by having two tall turrets upon the roof; a smaller building is also shown, while all four structures are surrounded by a number of trees. A high stone wall running down the eastern side of Cotton-Mill Lane defines the boundary of the grounds in that direction, and a similar wall is indicated along the south side of the Old London Road. Chauncy represents the large mansion, together with the turrets, as still being perfect in 1700, but in the map of Andrews and Wren (1766) it appears to be in ruins. In a work relating to St. Albans, published early in the eighteenth century, Sopwell is depicted as a residence occupying three sides of a square, while a map by Oliver portrays it as two dwelling-houses standing contiguous to each other.

\[1 \text{Ichthography of ye town of } St. \text{ Alban, Fo. 10, Brit. Mus.}\]
Huge fragments of wall, composed of brick and flint, are now the sole remains of this famous Tudor residence. The windows of some of the principal apartments are large and square, with stone mullions and many vestiges of ornamentation. Upon a square tablet of stone, placed over a doorway leading into one of the gardens, is a carving in relief (now almost obliterated) of a dexter hand and arm, elevated, and holding a broken sword, this closely resembling the crest granted to Sir Richard Lee; above it is an undecipherable label. A strongly-arched brick building, with curious recesses in the sides, stands in one angle of the garden; the thick and massive brick wall, with its buttresses and fragments of alcoves, running by the side of the grounds adjacent to the river, is probably a relic of the Nunnery, and, at the eastern termination of the grounds, the two trout-ponds, now overgrown with lilies, may also have the same origin ascribed to them.
CHAPTER XIII.

ST. STEPHEN’S CHURCH.


Delightfully situated upon the summit of one of the loftiest elevations in the vicinity of St. Albans, the parish Church of St. Stephen presents a quiet, homely picture of rural peacefulness and rustic simplicity. It is strange that at such a short distance from the City should be found all the primitive concomitants which generally form the chief characteristics of village life; for here we see the Church (with its rectory) nestling in the trees, the almost deserted street, the village post-office, the inevitable inn occupying the customary position opposite the Church, the dwellings of rich and poor intermingled indiscriminately, while the scent of hay and kine is wafted on the air from the surrounding farmsteads.

The Church, dedicated to St. Stephen, is one of the three sacred edifices originally built by Abbot Ulsinus about the year 948. Three restorations since that time, however, have left little of the original Saxon work to indicate its great antiquity, but nearly all the periods subsequent to the Saxon may be traced. It appears to have been rebuilt in the time of Robert de Gorham, eighteenth Abbot (temp. Henry I.), and was dedicated by Ralph, the Bishop of Durham. In the fifteenth century a complete restoration took place, the major portion of the architecture of the present structure being of that period,—the third Pointed or Perpendicular style. In 1861 it was again restored by Sir Gilbert Scott. The Church stands at the abrupt termination of the old Roman military way,—the “Watling Street,”—which, from this point to London, still remains comparatively perfect; indeed, the continuation of the road from St. Stephen’s may be easily traced across the fields to
the gate at the lower entrance to the Verulam Woods. The monks of St. Alban's Monastery are said to have destroyed this part of the road, and to have constructed the thoroughfare down St. Stephen's Hill for the purpose of diverting the traffic to and from the Great Metropolis, thus compelling it to pass through the town, with the object, no doubt, of ultimately benefiting the Monastery. King Harry Lane, sometimes erroneously called the "Watling Street," was, until recently, a mere cart-track.

The Chapel on the south side of the Church is probably the most interesting portion of this structure. It is called the "Lepers' Chapel," and was formerly detached from the chancel, having a small loophole, or lych-noscope, at its eastern end, which was supposed to be the aperture that enabled the lepers of the adjacent St. Julian's Hospital to witness the elevation of the Host. It is very doubtful, however, if this building was ever erected for such a purpose, as the lepers had their own private chapel; * most probably it was a chantry, erected about the thirteenth century, and might have been used by the lepers after the destruction of St. Julian's Hospital in the sixteenth century. Some interesting remains of an ancient wooden cupboard, or safe, may be seen in the south wall of the Chapel, and a stoup is also discernible at the eastern end of the same wall.

* Gibbs's Leprosy at St. Albans.
The Church consists of a nave, a small aisle on the south, and a wooden tower and spire at the west end. On the south side is a Norman arch, which perhaps led to a former chantry, or chapel. The chancel-arch is of a peculiar character; it is constructed of timber, and must have been erected at a late date, for the former arch was undoubtedly of stone, and removed when the Perpendicular portions of the Church were built.

The appearance of the west front before the recent restoration was ludicrously primitive, consisting as it did simply of a gable, upon which rested a square weather-boarded structure in lieu of a tower, while the whole was surmounted by a puny "Hertfordshire spike." The present wooden tower and spire are a decided improvement upon their predecessors, though still preserving to some extent the broad characteristics of the former peculiar erection.

The Lectern in the Church is very interesting by reason of its age and history. Its form is that of a massive brass eagle of curious workmanship, and upon it is the following inscription in old German characters:—"Georgius Ercichtoun Episcopus Dunkeldensis." It is known that there were two Scotch Bishops of Dunkeld of that name; the first, appointed in 1527, was also Lord Privy Seal of Scotland, while the other, appointed in 1550, was his nephew,—the last bishop of that See. Two theories have been advanced to account for the presence here of this remarkable Lectern; one is, that the Church was dedicated by

1 Clutterbuck, p. 232.
the Bishop of Dunkeld after its second restoration, when the Eagle was presented to the Church by him; and the other, the much more probable supposition, that Sir Richard Lee brought it with him from Scotland as a part of the plunder of the Abbey Church of Holyrood, at the same time that he carried off the brass font (mentioned by Camden) which he placed in the Abbey. Either during the Civil Wars or at some other unquiet period the Lectern was buried or hidden in the ancient tomb of the Montgomery family, near the vestry door; about the year 1748 this vault was opened for the purpose of burying a member of the family, when the missing Eagle was discovered, since which time it has again served as the reading-desk. It has been suggested that, as this interesting relic is the only ancient Scottish lectern known to exist, it should at once be handed over to the people from whom it was taken, and put to use in St. Giles's Cathedral, Edinburgh, with a possible reservation in favour of Holyrood Chapel Royal, should that building ever be reinstated.¹

The Font is of stone, of Perpendicular work, and traces of fresco-painting are still visible on the thirteenth-century pillars near which it stands. There is an excellent peal of six bells, which have been recently re-cast from the six old bells. The belfry is a continuation of the nave, partitioned off by means of a glazed wooden screen.

The large boulder that rests against the churchyard-wall adjoining the public road is believed to be a Roman milestone, several of which existed in the neighbourhood in comparatively modern times; during the recent restoration it was removed from the west end of the Church, where it had been built into one of the buttresses. In 1848, some interesting and valuable sepulchral remains were found in the churchyard, which also proved to be of Roman origin; they consisted of glass cinerary urns, a Samian vase, a lamp of red glass, etc., together with some calcined bones.

The parish of St. Stephen is an extensive one, and for this reason the situation of the Church, which is placed in a remote corner of it, proves to be an unfortunate one, and is decidedly inconvenient to those worshippers who are thereby compelled to travel a considerable distance in order to attend Divine service. Frogmore Church, in the same parish, is intended, however, as a Chapel-of-ease to modify this disadvantage.

¹ *The Scotsman*, Dec. 1892. A Lectern almost identical in character is to be found in the Church of St. Gregory at Norwich.
CHAPTER XIV.

HOLYWELL HILL AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS.

The name "Holy Well" is probably more ancient than that of any other part of St. Albans. The miraculous water from the celebrated well at the foot of the hill was renowned even in British times for its healing properties, and the great Uther Pendragon is asserted to have been cured, by bathing therein, of the wounds he obtained before Verulam. It is fair to suppose that Holywell Hill bore its present cognomen even at that remote period, although there is no actual allusion to it until a much later date. From the earliest monastic days it was a highway of importance; the traffic, arriving from London by the
Watling Street, was diverted at St. Stephen's by the monks, who, having destroyed the continuation of the Roman road through the fields to Verulam, caused travellers and merchandise of all descriptions to descend St. Stephen's Hill by the new road constructed by them, and then to cross the river before entering the town.

The fortifying-ditch and wall of mediaeval times approached St. Stephen's Hill at right angles from the Sopwell district; they bounded Eyewood Lane (part of which still remains by the side of the Gas Works), but at the junction with the hill they were diverted towards the river and terminated at that point. There were formerly two bridges over the water; one, a foot-bridge, occupied the same position as that now standing, but was considerably narrower; the other—a wider structure for vehicular traffic—crossed the stream contiguous to the spot where the present brick wall, at the rear of the cottages near the "Marlborough" Inn, abuts on the river. From the following account of a fray that took place here, we learn that these bridges were built subsequently to A.D. 1142, and that only a ford previously existed. "King Stephen arrived at St. Albans with a strong body of men-at-arms in 1142, for the purpose of arresting William de Mandeville upon a charge of treason, but, before he was able to secure him, he met with a sanguinary resistance at the stream called Halywelle Water, where the adherents of de Mandeville stoutly resisted the royal force. In the encounter, the Earl of Harundelle (Arundel), although he is described as a famous knight, was unhorsed in the midst of the stream by a most doughty combatant named Walkeline of Oxford. He was battered and bruised in every limb, and almost drowned. But the soldiers of the blessed Alban, who then occupied the street which adjoined the Monastery, for the protection of the Church and the town surrounded by fosses, stoutly withstood the King, until he and the combatants had made satisfaction to the Church, which some of the King's officers had violated."1

A prolonged and determined conflict, with which Holywell Hill is intimately associated, took place between the townsmen and the brethren of the Monastery during the abbacy of Hugh de Eversden, occasioned by a dispute concerning the ever-recurring subject of the mills. The unsettled state of the kingdom in the reign of Edward II. enabled the inhabitants of St. Albans to show more openly

1 "Silex," in Herts Advertiser, 1875.
their discontent at the regulations and exactions imposed upon them by the ecclesiastics; they refused to have their corn ground at the Abbey Mills, and provided themselves with handmills. The Abbot prosecuted, and thereby apparently exasperated them beyond endurance, for against one man he obtained damages amounting to sixty pounds, and was similarly successful in three other cases. The townsmen expressed their feelings by illtreating a monk who incautiously ventured into the streets, by sacks a house belonging to the Abbot, and by cutting down trees. They also erected a gallows in the Market-place, and affixed an axe to it by means of a chain, threatening to hang or behead all those who ventured to differ in opinion from themselves. They then demanded the Abbot's compliance with seven conditions which they presented to him; these were agreed to by de Eversden, but only orally, and the refusal to put such verbal consent into writing appears to have exhausted the small remaining portion of the townsmen's patience, for they at once collected a large body of men and commenced an assault upon "Halliwellegate," as being, in their opinion, the most vulnerable part of the Abbey defences.

"Halliwellegate" stood (there is reason to believe) upon the north side of the present entrance to Lady Spencer's Avenue, adjacent to the short back-street at the bottom of Holywell Hill. Of its dimensions and appearance we have no account, its demolition at the Dissolution possibly occurring among the first of the buildings when destroyed by Sir Richard Lee, on account of its proximity to Sopwell. The Abbot had evidently foreseen the disturbances that would result from his refusal, for two hundred of the King's archers\(^1\) were introduced into the Abbey to protect it; consequently the onslaught of the citizens met with the most determined resistance on the part of the defenders. The assault upon the Gate was commenced by the discharge of showers of arrows and the hurling of stones, under cover of which some of the assailants piled up combustibles against the thick wooden doors and endeavoured to burn them down, but so vigorous and alert were the defenders that the attack was beaten back at every point. For five days the siege continued, being sustained on both sides with obstinacy and determination. The defenders endured considerable privations, as provisions were dealt out with great frugality, and

\(^{1}\) *Gesta Abb.*, II. 161.
constant watch had to be everywhere maintained. An attempt at mediation between the belligerents, made at the termination of five days, failed, and the townsmen renewed the attack, to be again repulsed. A body of eighty of them now perambulated the Abbey boundaries during the night, and formed ambuscades in various places, intending to capture any of the defenders who might venture forth. One of these parties, which had concealed itself near the Derne Gate (situated in the meadow near the river, and east of the Silk Mills), was surprised in the darkness by a sortie of the garrison, who captured a prisoner and promptly incarcerated him in the vaults of the Great Gateway. The King finally interfered, and arrangements were made by the contesting parties which were by no means favourable to the Abbot. The handmills, to the number of eighty, were allowed to remain, and the elated townsmen celebrated their victory by destroying hedges, fences, and trees, catching the Abbot's fish, and hunting the game in his preserves.

In 1381, during the abbacy of Thomas de la Mare, the insurgents under Wat Tyler and Jack Straw threatened destruction to the Abbey, when Walter de Amersham was attacked and seriously wounded by the rabble of St. Albans while standing up for the Rights and Liberties of the Church. A curious representation of the latter incident will be found in the Cotton MSS. (Nero, D 7), but, like most of the records of the worthies preserved in those MSS., it is without date.

At the foot of Holywell Hill there existed, until comparatively recent times, the spacious mansion known as Holywell House. In 1541 (the thirty-second year of King Henry VIII.), Ralph Rowlatt, whose family had long been settled at Holywell, received, at the suppression of the Monastery, a grant of the lands at Gorham, Westwick, Pré, Sandridge, Newnham, Caldicott, Radwell, and Napsbury, all of which had previously belonged to the Abbey. In the following year he was made Sheriff of Hertfordshire and Essex,
and received the honour of knighthood. He died in 1543, when his son Ralph, by reason of his social position and great wealth, became a man of distinction in the County, serving in Parliament for Hertfordshire in 1548, and being also created sheriff and a knight in 1559. From the Charter of King Edward VI., 1554, we glean that the southern boundary of the borough was at the Bars near the house or mansion of Sir Ralph Rowlatt, Knight, and was called the "New Barrys."

The personal associations of Queen Elizabeth with St. Albans are usually connected solely with Gorhambury, and the fact that she slept for one night in the town has not, I venture to state, hitherto been made generally known. In 1554, when her sister Mary was Queen, the Princess Elizabeth was staying at Ashridge, where she received a peremptory summons to repair with all speed to London, as she was supposed by Mary to be implicated in Wyatt's rebellion. Elizabeth either feigned illness or was actually indisposed, and therefore journeyed to the Metropolis by very easy stages, resting for one night in Sir Ralph Rowlatt's house, at "Holywell," on the 13th of February, 1554.

Upon the demise of Sir Ralph, who died childless, the estate was inherited by his two sisters, Mary and Elizabeth. The latter married Ralph Jennings, of Churchill, in the county of Somerset, and on the partition of the estates the manor of Sandridge, and also Holywell, fell to her and her husband. Their descendants remained in possession of Holywell House, and resided there until the property was eventually divided among three sisters,—Frances, Sarah, and Barbara Jennings. Sarah had married John Churchill, who was afterwards created the first Duke of Marlborough. As Lady Marlborough was partial to her birth-place, her husband gratified her by purchasing the share of the two other sisters, and soon afterwards
erected a spacious mansion on the spot, which he named "Holywell House," incorporating portions of the old residence with the new. This property gave him an interest in the Borough of St. Albans, and he was chosen the first High Steward under the Charter of Incorporation for the town, granted by James II. Holywell House was the favourite residence of both the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough until the construction of Blenheim Palace. The estate and mansion of Holywell, being left at the disposal of the Duchess of Marlborough, were by her bequeathed to her grandson John, second son of Charles, Earl of Sunderland, from whom they descended to his son, the first Earl Spencer. The Dowager Countess Spencer retired hither after the decease of her husband in 1783, but, upon her death in 1814, most of the valuable paintings, trophies, books, etc., were removed, and the mansion was let, being occupied in 1822 by Mr. John Reid. About 1837 this historic residence was demolished.

Holywell House stood upon a site now occupied by some of the houses in Spencer Place and by the roadway fronting them, its southern extremity extending almost to the space now covered by the "Marlborough" Inn. The principal façade looked towards Sopwell, while the traffic between St. Stephen's and Holywell Hill passed round the rear of the residence by the narrow curved road which is still in existence, and where portions of the old wall, now moss-covered and weather-worn, may yet be seen. Two entrance-lodge gates faced the Hill where the road now divides; the lawn and gardens comprised the whole of the locality included in the Grammar-School Recreation Ground, the gardens of Ver House (north of the river), and other land to the south of Sopwell Lane, while there was a carriage-entrance near the "Hare and Hounds" Inn. The "Holy Well" was situated upon the lawn, and, doubtless, was well cared for when the house existed; it is now remembered only as a muddy depression, sheltered by the remains of a dilapidated wall and a mournful specimen of a blackthorn; a few years since the exigencies of athleticism necessitated the ground being levelled and turfed over, and it is much to be regretted that there is nothing to mark the site of what was essentially one of the most ancient of English "Holy Wells." Near this spot there stood, previous to the Reformation, a well-house, forming part of the possessions of the Guild of All Saints in St. Peter's Churchyard; this Guild also owned a tenement called the "Lymberies," in Holywell Hill, the exact situation of which
is uncertain. The allegorical design (carved in wood) at the rear of the "George" Inn is reputed to have come from Holywell House; a drawing-room in the High Street contains a stained-glass window said to be from the same source, while other houses in St. Albans and the neighbourhood also possess relics of the dismantled residence. The connection of the Dowager Countess Spencer with Holywell House is perpetuated in the double row of trees bordering the semi-private road leading to the Silk Mills from Holywell, and

known as "Lady Spencer's Avenue." These were planted by her Ladyship about 1795, probably upon the site of a former grove of trees, named "Mary Magdaleyn Grove" in a document bearing date 1549; at the same time the Countess planted the Cedar-tree which still flourishes in the Sumpter Yard.

One of the most picturesque features of St. Albans is to be found at the base of Holywell Hill, nearly opposite Belmont Hill. The two old cottages here referred to, with their red-tiled roofs and quaint windows, attract the attention of all who enter the town from the south; on a summer's day a wealth of light and shade plays over them.
from clustering tangles of foliage, heightened perhaps, in strength and depth, by the heavy mass of ivy beyond,—the pictorial effect thus produced being very striking. The early history of the adjoining house, called "Ivy House" (by reason of its being mantled with that evergreen growth), has always puzzled the antiquary, and is not yet satisfactorily solved. That the very massive foundations of the building were connected with the Monastery seems probable—a supposition borne out by the fact that they are constructed with a great quantity of stone and Roman brick. The upper portions of the house have been described as Elizabethan, but are probably Jacobean, for the quaintly-panelled staircase, curiously-carved mantelpieces, and the strange disposition of some of the rooms are architectural features which certainly belong to the latter period; whilst the little "powder-room" brings forcibly to our minds a recollection of the time when the beaux and belles submitted their locks to the white powder, deftly scattered by their valets or maids. The crenellated stone wall of the Monastery formerly extended along the rear of the garden of Ivy House, and its accompanying defensive ditch may still be traced.

Opposite Ivy House is Torrington House (now the residence of that distinguished entomologist, Miss E. A. Ormerod), which lies wholly within the ancient "pleasaunce" of Holywell House. The cellars under the adjacent building to the north (Holywell Lodge) are evidently mediaeval, while the old-world garden in the rear is the realisation of lotos dreams of luscious fruit and lovely flowers.

At the south corner of Sopwell Lane are tenements which afford evidence of being at least two or three centuries old; they originally formed one structure,—an important hostelry,—but the decadence of the coaching-days, together with the construction of New London Road, caused its deterioration and subsequent division into small dwelling-houses. This building is now known as the City Lodging-house; the moulded plaster once ornamenting the spaces on the exterior walls between the timber-framing may yet be faintly observed; in one of the lower rooms is an interesting fireplace, which undoubtedly dates from the Tudor period, and which may have been brought from the Monastery.

In the early history of St. Albans, Sopwell Lane was a thoroughfare of considerable importance, forming as it did the termination in the town of the main road from
A trace of the oldest London Road (if it may be so termed) can be seen crossing the field (anciently termed "Bing's Orchard") from the upper end of Cotton-Mill Lane in the direction of New Barnes, whence to London it still remains nearly perfect, passing by way of Napsbury, Shenley, and Hampstead. The Old London Road superseded this route at a very early date, and was the main coach-road to the Metropolis, via London Colney and Barnet.

In the account given of Long Butts Field and the Levy Lands, the Tonman Ditch is described as running southwards from those places towards Sopwell Lane; therefore, in doing so, it would form the western boundary of Key Field, which lay between Watson's Row and Watson's Walk, and was terminated on the south by the Old London Road. In this field, and in those adjoining, the army of the Earl of Warwick encamped in 1455, on the eve preceding the First Battle of St. Albans. The boundary-wall of Keyfield Nursery, in Watson's Row, occupies approximately the same site as the mediæval defensive wall; a gap (probably a postern-gate) occurred in it where the "White Hart Tap" now stands, and from there it proceeded in a straight line to the western end of the "White Lion" Inn, in Sopwell Lane,—an old hostel that may have obtained its name either
from the badge of Edward IV., which was a white lion, or from that of the Duke of Norfolk, one of his supporters in the First Battle. The "Sopwell Bars" mentioned in the Charter of Edward VI. occupied the roadway before the "White Lion," and the old gate, or postern, at this point was the one so stoutly defended by Clifford in the First Battle,—a statement apparently confirmed by the fact that in the adjacent field (now occupied by the cottages on the eastern side of Thorpe Road) many human bones and other relics of the desperate combat have been disinterred at various times. The Dowager Lady Spencer's "Green School," where she frequently instructed the poor children, stood at the north-west angle of this field until her death in 1814.

The continuation of the Tonman Ditch from Sopwell Bars was in a straight line to Cotton-Mill Lane, the "Hare and Hounds," Inn being just without (i.e. to the north of) the boundary. The long white front of this old hostel has altered but little with the passing years. In the last century it was a favourite resting-place and house of resort for country waggoners, but its many patrons dwindled away when the railway monopolised nearly the whole of the carrying trade. A few years since the field adjacent to this inn was cut up into allotments and a considerable portion of the foundations of the ancient fortifying-wall exposed to view, these containing quantities of large stones, roughly squared, together with flints embedded in mortar. In Pre-Reformation times a cross, called "The Cross with the Hand," stood in this locality, but its origin is unknown and its site has not been accurately determined.

Cotton-Mill Lane derives its name from the Mill which formerly stood on either side of the river at the lower part of the lane. It has been asserted that the cutting and polishing of diamonds was at one period carried on within its walls. The spinning and weaving of cotton and the manufacture of candle-wicks also gave occupation to a considerable number of hands during the last and the present centuries, no less than sixty operatives being employed there in 1840. An early engraving indicates two or three buildings as constituting the extent of the Mill; the roofs were tiled, while a square tower, having sails like a windmill, occupied the centre, a balcony round the tower

1 This cognisance was also worn by the Earls of Suffolk.

2 Lewis's Topographical Dictionary, 1842.
presenting a curious feature. In the engraving there is no suggestion of the proximity of the river, or of water-power being utilised.

The Priory of Sopwell originally owned the majority of the houses in Sopwell Lane, and at the Dissolution these possessions were first leased to Sir Richard Lee, and afterwards granted to him. An ancient hostelry known as the “Ramme” is indicated in the Marian Survey of the town (1556) as standing in Sopwell Lane, and the same inn is referred to in the Corporation Records for 1613, where the “Horse Shoe” is also mentioned as contemporaneous. The “Goat” Inn, which may still be found on the north side of the Lane, appears in the Survey of 1649. Although the majority of the houses in Sopwell Lane are comparatively modern, there yet remain a few with overhanging upper-stories, low-pitched rooms, and external timber-and-brick construction, these giving some idea of the general appearance presented by this narrow thoroughfare two or three centuries ago.

Georgiana, the celebrated Duchess of Devonshire (the mysterious disappearance of whose portrait by Gainsborough caused considerable sensation some years since), is connected with Sopwell Lane by a tradition which may have some foundation in fact. Her ladyship was the eldest daughter of Earl Spencer, and married the Duke of Devonshire in 1774; being much interested in a local election, she is said to have publicly kissed a butcher in order to secure his vote for her candidate, and the veritable house where this interesting event took place is that having a flight of steps leading up to the door near the centre of Sopwell Lane upon the north side.

Newcome, in his sketch of the “Ground Plot of the Monastery of St. Alban as it existed in the time of Henry III., 1250,” places the “Grand Entrance” to the Monastery in Holywell Hill, opposite the end of Sopwell Lane; but it is doubtful if that gateway ever existed, for, I believe, no monastic foundations or relics have ever been discovered at this spot, where now stands a comparatively modern building. Another conjecture is that the gateway occupied the site of “Ivy House,” and that here the foundations of the older structure are still observable in the basement. The house containing some of the plaster medallions removed from Sopwell Nunnery in the time of Charles II. stands almost immediately opposite the Lane.

The present High School building (formerly used as a hospital and dispensary)
partly covers the site of the "Old Crown" Inn—a large and commodious hostelry of much repute in the coaching-days, but of which not a vestige is now visible. It was a favourite resort of the huntsmen of the neighbourhood, a well-known sporting character named Ward being the landlord for many years, and it is within the recollection of persons now living that the commodious stables were continually in demand. This Inn was one of the houses which suffered marked decadence as soon as the railways were brought to the town; but it must have presented a very brilliant and picturesque spectacle when, fifty years ago, the scarlet-coated huntsmen and town gallants, all booted and spurred for the chase, turned into Holywell Hill on their way to the covert. Nearly opposite the entrance to Albert Street in Holywell Hill are two old hostels—the "Post Boy" and the "Trumpet," names which (if that of the latter be synonymous with the post-horn) are also remindful of old coaching-days. Coaching, by the way, has
to a certain extent been revived of late years, for St. Albans is daily visited during the season by such a vehicle from London, called the "Wonder," which is skilfully "tooled" up the steep incline of Holywell Hill by means of six horses travelling at full speed, the similarly rapid descent requiring but four, the customary number. The "Wonder" was established in 1825, and still maintains the celebrity for punctuality and speed which formerly justified the inhabitants of the City in regulating their watches by its arrival.

The residence on the north side of the "Trumpet" was once the home of the Right Honourable Sir William Domville; it was probably erected by Mr. Charles Domville, who died in 1775, and was interred in the Abbey. It has been affirmed that Sir William was originally a dancing-master, who prospered so well that, in 1814, he became Lord Mayor of London, being knighted on June 18th of that year, on the occasion of the State visit of the Allied Sovereigns to London. A famous old Inn called the "Bull" once stood upon the site now occupied by "The Priory;" it was formerly patronised by the Mayor and Aldermen of St. Albans, who often found that their arduous duties necessitated frequent and liberal refreshment, eating and drinking right royally upon these auspicious occasions, and duly entering into the Corporation accounts the sums paid to the landlord of the favoured hostelry. The "Bull" is referred to in the Borough Records of 1612 as a well-known establishment; it probably existed in the previous century, and for many years was one of the chief hostelries of St. Albans. Adjoining it stands the "White Hart" Inn, another famous old coaching-house, from the rear of which a semi-public road at one time extended to the south extremity of Watson's Row, where the "White Hart Tap" may still be found; many of the numerous coaches passed from the Old London Road to Holywell Hill by this thoroughfare, thus avoiding the narrow Sopwell Lane and a steep part of the hill.

As reference has been made to the old coaching-days and their important bearing upon the prosperity of St. Albans, it may be appropriate to mention that the great extent of this traffic in former times is but little realised by the present generation. By being situated upon the Great North-West Road, the immense traffic between London and the
midland counties (adjacent to the Watling Street, north of St. Albans) would necessarily travel through the town. In 1815 it was computed that the accommodation provided by the mails and stage-coaches which passed through daily was sufficient to meet the requirements of six hundred passengers, and when to that number are added the travellers who journeyed by other conveyances, or on foot, it is estimated that not less than a thousand people entered St. Albans every twenty-four hours. It was a common occurrence for persons of means to take one of the St. Albans coaches in the evening from London, stay in the town one night, and, by taking a seat in one of the North coaches on the following day, avoid the inconvenience of an early-morning journey from the Metropolis. Innumerable pack-horses were also constantly passing, laden with the produce of the factories of Manchester, Nottingham, Stafford, Coventry, and other industrial centres; and, although the number of inns in existence at that time seems most disproportionate when compared with the population, it would seem that all found ample employment in catering for this immense traffic. In 1826, seventy-two coaches passed through the town each day, including those from Leicester, Leeds, Northampton, Dunstable, Luton, Birmingham, and other important localities. The Birmingham coach (known as the "Birmingham Wonder") arrived in St. Albans about 8 a.m., having accomplished the distance from the "Peacock" at Islington in two hours.
These conveyances were generally crowded with passengers, each vehicle accommodating four inside and eleven out, exclusive of the guard and the driver. On leaving the town for the North, the route taken by the coaches previous to 1826 was down Fishpool Street to St. Michael's, and thence partly by what is now the private road to Gorhambury, finally emerging into the Watling Street at Bow Bridge,—a point about a mile north-west of the town; but, when Verulam Road was constructed from the "Great Red Lion" to Bow Bridge, the new and more convenient route was naturally adopted.

The "White Hart," also formerly known as the "Hartshorn," was a family-hotel as well as a coaching-inn, and has an interesting connection with Hogarth and the unfortunate Lord Lovat. This Scottish nobleman, a zealous Catholic, had opposed the Old Pretender in the rising of 1715, and was appointed Governor of Inverness; he favoured the Rebellion of 1745, under the Young Pretender, but did not serve personally in it. The English Government ordered him to report himself in London, and during this journey he was taken ill and stayed for some time at the "White Hart" Inn, St. Albans, under the care of a local physician, Dr. Webster, who was strongly of opinion that his patient's illness was wholly imaginary, and chiefly arose from apprehensions of what might happen to him when he reached his destination. The worthy doctor, who was well known to Boswell, Johnson, and other eminent personages of the day, invited Hogarth to St. Albans for the purpose of introducing him to Lord Lovat. The celebrated painter seized this opportunity for producing a portrait of the aged nobleman in that peculiar style of grotesqueness in which he so excelled, but was compelled to greatly hasten the work because Lovat was under orders to leave immediately for London, where he was committed to the Tower. In 1747, when eighty years of age, he was tried for high-treason, convicted, and executed on Tower Hill, where he met his fate with a strange compound of levity and courage.

1 Dr. Webster is said to have probably been the author of the well-known ballad, "The Beggar's Petition," the first line of which, "Pity the sorrows of a poor old man," will at once recall the poem. The kind-hearted doctor (it is further recorded) was induced to write the lines in the hope that, by the sale thereof, he might help to remedy the pecuniary misfortunes of an aged farmer at Potter's Crouch.

2 The portrait was left in the possession of Dr. Webster, upon whose decease it passed into the hands of some person apparently quite ignorant of its value. About eighty years after it was painted, it was discovered
It was at the "White Hart" that the famous Daniel O'Connell stopped and changed horses on his way home from London, where he had taken such an active part in the proceedings of Parliament; and here Kean, the actor, also stayed one night, this fact causing much excitement in the town. All that survives of the original Inn forms but a portion of the large house of entertainment which, fifty years ago, competed successfully with other important local hostelries in securing the patronage of wealthy and influential travellers. Many parts of the building appear to date from the latter part of the sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century, and these are probably the remains of a much earlier structure; the chimney-pieces have been considerably altered, but in these, as in many other similar establishments which have deviated from their original use, there are yet to be seen some indications of their connection with the Jacobean or Elizabethan period. In that portion of the old Inn which stands to the north of the coach-entrance there was recently discovered in one of the rooms an interesting specimen of early mural decoration; behind the canvas which upheld various thicknesses of wall-paper it was found that the plaster panels and the timber-framing of the house were decorated with a continuous hand-painted scroll ornament, heraldic designs, and figures of cupids, representations of the two-headed eagle being frequently introduced; indeed, the four sides of the apartment had been adorned so as to successfully resemble, in a crude way, the figured tapestry of the period.

The "White Hart" of to-day bears but little similitude, either in its outer aspect or its inner life, to the thriving hostelry of former times, when it glowed in the constant excitement resulting from the continuous arrival and departure of guests; when, within its in the house of a poor person in St. Albans, and in 1827 was included in the sale of Mr. Rodd's collection. In 1866, this celebrated canvas was purchased by the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery. The portrait is a half-length, and was evidently very quickly painted, judging by the thinness of the priming on the board. The engraving from this picture was so popular at the time it was published that the artist refused an offer made for it by a printseller which was equivalent to the weight of the etching in gold, and is said to have received for its sale at the rate of £2 per day for many weeks. The coat-of-arms depicted in the corner of the plate is not in the original picture.1 In Hone's Table Book (1827) we read that "Hogarth said himself that Lord Lovat's portrait was taken by him at the 'White Hart' Inn, St. Albans, in the attitude of relating on his fingers the number of the rebel forces."
panelled rooms, illumined by waxen tapers and brightly-burning logs upon the hearths, mirth and laughter resounded on festive nights from powdered beaux and short-waisted belles as they tripped merrily in the dance; when bewigged old gentlemen, with dangling seals and voluminous waistcoats, bowed with courtly grace to the stately dames of the age, or narrated (o'er many a bottle of crusted port) the varied histories of their lives. The worthy “City Fathers” were also very partial to the “White Hart,” for they frequently adjourned there, no small part of their civic functions being apparently discharged in this their favourite resort. Thus we find that, on January 10th, 1733, and subsequently, the Court adjourned thither and made several gentlemen free of the Borough.

Opposite the “White Hart” is the entrance to the Sumpter Yard of the Abbey, which is sometimes called “Rectory Lane,” because on the left side stands the former Rectory (rebuilt after a fire in the eighteenth century), the residence of the late Archdeacon Grant. On the right is the site of the mediæval residence of Iohannis Swanbourne, who erected or acquired some houses (for many years known as the “Swanbourne Tenements,” and said to have been eleven in number) between the present “Postboy” Inn and “Ivy House.” We learn from the “Registrum” of Abbot John Wheathampsted that a descendant of a certain John Swanbourne, who possessed houses and lands in St. Albans, died a minor, intestate, leaving no heirs, and that, owing to these circumstances, Abbot John Stoke claimed the estate as Lord of the Fee. A connection, however, of the daughter of John Swanbourne appeared, who came from Essex, and installed himself in possession. Abbot Stoke could not prevail upon him to vacate the house, and the matter remained in abeyance; but, when Abbot Wheathampsted returned to office, he took measures to enforce his rights, and a compromise was effected by which the claimant gave up his title to the property in return for an annuity of sixty shillings and a gown. The three houses now covering the site of the ancient Swanbourne residence may possibly incorporate some of its remains; the first and second of these were occupied by the Ruth family, who were glovers, and whose names first appear in 1590. One, Richard Ruth, was Mayor in 1628 and 1640, and died in 1648; his son, also named Richard, officiated as an Assistant in the Corporation for many years, but, having grown old and feeble, was removed from that office in 1682; while a descendant,
William Ruth (whom we find in trouble with the Corporation in 1721, for setting up posts and rails on the "waste land" in front of his houses in Holywell Hill), was the founder of the Charity which bears his name. Rectory Lane was, less than a century ago, entered from the Hill by an arched passage beneath a house which extended over the front court of the Rectory; until a few years back it was very narrow and confined, but a part of the corner residence was demolished, leaving the peculiar projecting chimney at the side which often attracts attention. The rear portions of these houses, as viewed from the entrance to the old Rectory, present a rich and varied aggregation of quaint gables, projecting eaves, leaning chimneys, and a harmonious colouring of walls and roofs. The "Two Brewers" Inn and the premises to the right of it stand upon the site of the house of Thomas Carter, who (in 1586) was admitted a freeman and a member of the Company of Butchers, and appointed a Viewer of the Holywell Ward; two years afterwards we find him reported by the Wardens of the Victuallers for "killing flesh in the corners of the town." The Carters often appear in the Corporation Records, some eventually occupying the mayoral chair.

Upon the north side of the entrance to the "Saracen's Head" Yard formerly stood the ancient Inn of that name, and from thence in mediaeval days a continuous row of hostelries extended up Holywell Hill, without a break, to the "Old Woolpack" Inn, whose site is now covered by an extension of the "Peahen." These establishments for rest and refreshment "of man and beast" were necessary in order to accommodate the vast number of pilgrims who flocked to St. Albans to worship and give offerings at the celebrated Shrine of the Proto-martyr; with the Dissolution of the Monastery they disappeared, and to-day even their names are almost forgotten.

Adjoining the "Saracen's Head," upon the north side, was the "Dolphin," while south of the entrance to Holywell Brewery stood the "Seven Stars" hostelry, between which and a tenement upon the opposite side of the road a subterranean passage extended, traces of which are still visible. The old timbers of these vanished hostels, worm-eaten, weather-worn, and distorted, are yet discernible at the entrances to the "Saracen's Head" and the adjacent yards.

1 Gibbs' Corp. Rec.
The "Old Woolpack," or "Wool Sack," Inn was, in the coaching-days, a posting and commercial house, and boasted of a local coach which left St. Albans at eight o'clock every morning for the "Rose" Inn, Smithfield, returning the same day. The "Peahen," now the principal Inn in the town, and whose peculiar name is almost unique among English hotels, is mentioned in the Marian Survey of 1556, but was of small importance as an inn until the formation of the New London Road, when it rapidly developed. In the early part of the century most of the coaches called there, and it was also extensively frequented by those in charge of the many strings of wagons conveying merchandise through the town. At this point the modern Holywell Hill terminates, but in former times the thoroughfare (then known as "Halliwelle Strate") was continuous from the River Ver to its junction with St. Peter's Street. Chequer Street now usurps the more ancient name for the upper part of the Hill, and there we find some interesting links of history.

The "Chequers" Inn, from which the street derives its appellation, has long disappeared, it having occupied the spot upon which the "Queen's" Hotel now stands. The
"Chequers" was one of the most ancient inns in the County, and obtained its name from a board exhibited outside the entrance, informing passers-by that a game called "chequers," or "tables," which was played upon a kind of draught-board, could be there indulged in; other inns also bore this announcement in addition to their own special signs, and not long ago one of these curious intimations was observable outside a public-house in French Row, now closed. Through the houses to the south of the Inn, "between the sign of the Chequers and the sign of the Key,"¹ the determined rush of the Yorkists took place in 1455, which turned the scale of victory in favour of the White Rose; and a private residence adjoining the "Cross Keys" Inn claims to have had the honour of giving passage to the great "Kingmaker." In 1596, we find "The Chequer" mentioned in the Town records as existing in "St. Peter's Street" (sic),—the property of a brewer named Goodes,—but it occupied a position of no particular importance during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, being best known as the place whence the Town or Stage Wagon, or Carrier's Cart, started at 2 a.m. on Mondays and Thursdays for the "Three Cups" Inn, Aldersgate Street, London. The "Key" Inn (or "Cross Keys," or "Peter Keys"), to which reference has been made, was nearly wholly demolished to make way for the New London Road, but the "Cross Keys" Inn, which stands partially upon its site, preserves to us the name of the vanished hostelry and its interesting connection with the martyr Tankerfield.

The greater number of the tenements upon the western side of Chequer Street have been re-fronted and comparatively modernised within the past century, but some still retain, in their quaint gables, a suggestion of their former appearance, and present a sufficiently striking aspect so as to enable us to mentally reproduce the picturesque charm which was once observable in this part of old St. Albans. In the small passages leading towards the lane at the rear of these houses may be discerned the massive oak beams, stays, trusses, and cantilevers which support the superstructures; whilst many of the interiors still preserve, almost intact, rooms and passages which speak eloquently of bygone generations. The house occupied by the Master of the Spicery of the Abbey stood formerly upon this side of Chequer Street, as did also that of the Keeper of the Abbot's

¹ Oman's Warwick.
Hostry, or Guestry, the space behind them being occupied by dwellings belonging to the office of Sub-Cellarer. The Malt Cheaping, or Malt Market, was formerly held in this Street, the upper portion being termed the Hay Market. Old inhabitants of St. Albans remember the time when Chequer Street was almost blocked by the "Red House," which stood nearly in the centre of the roadway, somewhat above the entrance to the "Half-Moon" Yard; the front of this old hostelry (now extinct) faced Holywell Hill, a narrow cart-track upon its eastern side affording passage-way for a single line of vehicles, while pedestrian traffic was similarly limited by a narrow pavement upon the other side. At the rear of the "Half-Moon" Inn a court-yard for the accommodation of wagons, horses, etc., extended towards St. Peter's Street, but, in the earlier part of the present century, the exigencies of the town traffic necessitated the entire removal of this obstacle, thus rendering Chequer Street one of the widest and most convenient of the modern thoroughfares of St. Albans.
CHAPTER XV.

THE HIGH STREET.


As one of the ancient streets of St. Albans, and a portion of the main thoroughfare through it from east to west, the High Street is necessarily associated with the general welfare of the city, and is intimately connected with some of those stirring episodes which invest the past history of St. Albans with such absorbing interest. Its formation is doubtless coeval with the existence of the monastery, and the institution of a market (either in it or adjacent thereto) by the Abbot Ulsinus would tend to enhance its importance and encourage its extension, while its width, though formerly not so great as at present, made it the favourite loco for outdoor civic functions and popular demonstrations.

In 1216, the Dauphin of France occupied the High Street with his troops, and threatened to burn down the town and the Abbey; but the eighty marks which he extorted from the Abbot induced him to relinquish the idea. A few years subsequently this thoroughfare witnessed a terrible scene, which speaks most eloquently of the lawlessness of the turbulent times during the minority of Henry III. Falcatius de Brent (also known as Faukes de Breauté, or Fulk, or Falco), a Frenchman who had participated with the English in their struggle against the Dauphin, was rewarded for his loyalty by the custody of six royal castles and an appointment as sheriff over six counties. In 1224, he allied himself with Llewellyn of Wales and a number of rebel barons, and, with a large force
of men-at-arms and foreign mercenaries, ravaged the districts which were contiguous to his landed possessions. St. Albans was fated not to escape his depredations, for he marched into the town (at that time unprotected by ramparts or fosses) and encamped in the High Street, where his followers at once commenced the most violent outrages upon the defenceless inhabitants. Forcing his way into the monastery, he demanded money from the Abbot, and, in order to induce him to comply, deliberately murdered one of the Abbey servitors, Robert Mai, within the sacred precincts. One hundred marks were thus violently obtained from the ecclesiastics; before, however, the merciless marauder departed, he plundered the town, and, seizing one of the citizens, roasted the unfortunate wretch alive at a large campfire in the centre of the Street. But retribution quickly followed, for we find that shortly afterwards the rebel fled before the Justiciar, Hubert de Burgh, who captured Bedford Castle (held by the brother of Falcatius) and hanged the twenty-four knights with the whole of their retainers who formed the garrison.
In connection with the foregoing incident the following passage relative to Falcatius may be cited from the "Gesta":—"Fawkes, being urged by his wife to make satisfaction for this deed to God and the Martyr, came to St. Albans, and humbly entered the Chapter-House, and, being stripped and holding a rod, he received discipline from one of the brethren. And so, seeking absolution, he obtained it, and kissed each monk as if he had made satisfaction to all; yet he restored nothing that he had taken away." The scene just narrated probably occurred immediately before Fawkes' disgrace and banishment, and his apparent contrition was doubtless an act of diplomacy, by which he hoped to obtain the help of the Church in mitigating the punishment which he knew was inevitable. He subsequently suffered death by poison in France, in 1225. The visit of Falcatius to the town appears to have brought disaster in its train, for, according to Norden, "In the same yeare it was ransackt againe by the soldierr, that went vnder the conduct of Earle Patric, Sayre, and others to remove the seidge of Mount Sorrel." Forty years later the High Street was again the scene of violence, when Gregory de Stokes and his three attendants fell while fighting desperately,—the victims of their own rashness and insolence.

In the many contentions between the ecclesiastics and the townsmen, this Street was invariably selected as a meeting-place for the latter to air their grievances; in 1264 they assembled here while a dispute was in progress respecting the fulling of cloth and grinding of corn. The manufacture of woollen cloth, of the meanest kind, had long been a staple industry in the town; the citizens now desired to full it at the Abbey Mills (which were four or five in number), and to grind their corn at home in small hand-mills. Abbot Roger de Norton strongly objected to the proposition, and ordered the hand-mills to be distrained by his bailiff, thus causing great confusion and violent outrage. Queen Eleanor, consort of Henry III., arrived at St. Albans at this juncture, and the people thronged Holywell Hill and the High Street in order to meet her and enlist her sympathy on their behalf; but the Abbot took care to conduct her majesty to the Monastery by some private way; however, by her mediation the dispute was arranged, the mills were converted to their former use, and the small hand-mills abolished.1

A long and sad procession, including some of the highest dignitaries of the realm, wended its way into the High Street in June, 1292, when King Edward I. escorted the mortal remains of his beloved consort from Hardby, near Lincoln, to their final resting-place in Westminster Abbey. The cortège is said by an old writer to have been the most imposing spectacle that England had ever witnessed. To meet the doleful company the whole Convent, habited in albs and copes, assembled at St. Michael's Church, and, upon its arrival, escorted the bier, with its royal mourner and his attendants, to the Abbey. The remains of the deceased Queen were carried into the Presbytery and placed before the High Altar, the monks keeping vigil throughout the night; upon the following day the funeral procession left for Waltham Abbey. In every town where the bier rested for a night King Edward afterwards erected a memorial Cross; that these Crosses were of exquisite proportions and elegant workmanship is conclusively indicated by the vestiges still existing, those at Waltham and Northampton presenting excellent examples of these marvellous monuments.¹ The Eleanor Crosses were for many

¹ The Martyrs' Memorial at Oxford (the drawings for which were furnished by Sir Gilbert Scott) is a combination of the chief features of these two Crosses.
years supposed to have been designed by Petro Cavallini, an Italian sculptor, but a recent discovery of parchment rolls enables us to assert that the credit of the conception, as well as the expert execution of these memorials of conjugal love and affection, is due to our own native art and artists. William Torel, an Englishman, designed them, while the figures were sculptured by Alexander of Abingdon and William of Ireland; the master-mason was John de Bello, sometimes called John of Battle (in Sussex), who appears to have been concerned in the erection of the Memorial Crosses at Northampton, Woburn, Dunstable, and Stony Stratford, as well as of our local example.

The Eleanor Cross at St. Albans stood upon the site now occupied by the drinking-fountain in the High Street, in front of the Clock Tower. We find it described as "verie stately" in 1596, and it is several times referred to in sixteenth-century documents as the "Great Cross," the "Eleanor Cross," the "Queen Cross," and the "Market Cross,"—the latter name now being applied to the space around the site. Of its demolition no detailed account is extant, but it took place about the year 1643, when a number of Crosses were destroyed by order of Parliament. Benjamin Hare's map (1640) shows the Cross as a tall pinnacle almost approaching the dimensions of a church spire, and as overlooking all the adjacent buildings except the Clock Tower; but this representation is obviously exaggerated. Gibson, the antiquary (who flourished in 1695), mentions the Cross as "having once stood." Dr. Stukeley shows a Queen Eleanor Cross in the map of St. Albans in his "Itinerarium Curiosum" (1721), yet, in the early portion of the same work, he says:—"In the heart of the town stood another of Queen Eleanor's Crosses which they likewise demolished, not considering that such kind of antiquities invite many curious travellers to come thither;" so perhaps Stukeley's was a copy of some other map. Chauncy represents the Cross (in his plan of the town, dated 1700) as though the tapering summit had been removed, leaving only the lower portion intact. It may be inferred from the above evidence that the upper portion of the Cross only was destroyed in 1643, and that the demolition of the base did not occur until 1701-2; in the Mayor's accounts for the latter years we read, "Paid to Robert Lemon for room in the Christopher Yard to lay the stone and rubbish that belonged to the old Cross," while in the Corporation minutes of the Court, held February 3rd, 1703, we find that "waste

1 Norden's Speculum, p. 12.
land" is mentioned as existing where the Cross had lately stood, near the Clock House, this proving that the beautiful structure, once the pride and glory of the town, had then utterly disappeared. There is every reason to believe that, as the Crosses of St. Albans and Northampton were erected by the same man, the designs would be somewhat similar; and in the minds of those who have had an opportunity of examining the latter, with its excellent proportions, purity of design, and wealth of decoration, the thought must arise, by the destruction of the Eleanor Cross at St. Albans, the town suffered an archæological and historical loss which, unfortunately, can never be replaced.

That portion of the High Street situated between the drinking-fountain and Holywell Hill was known in early times as "The Vintry;" it was probably so designated by reason of its immediate proximity to the vineyard of the monastery, the position of which has been identified by means of some existing title-deeds with the site now forming the grounds, at the rear of the Bank, which extend to the Abbey Cloisters and the Sumpter Yard. In one part of this beautiful and interesting garden (which will long be associated with the memory of Mr. Blagg) is a fine example of the "maidenhair tree" (Salisburia adiantifolia); this curious and rare specimen is about twenty feet in height, and in excellent condition. The Bank itself does not call for special comment, as it is chiefly of recent construction, but the building adjacent to it on the east side (which extends to Holywell Hill) possesses points of interest by reason of its antiquity, being mentioned in the time of King Edward VI. as the residence of Iohannis Cooper. Its exterior aspect is essentially modern, but the interior exhibits unmistakable signs of great age, the front room upon the second floor being quaintly panelled in old English oak of very early workmanship. It is probable that the upper part of this structure once projected some distance over the pavement, and was supported upon massive pillars, similar to the house which now stands to the north of the Corn Exchange, for such a projection appears to be suggested in a local map of 1766.

The New London Road, forming the eastern continuation of the High Street,

1 Strange to say, the ancient entrance to the Monastic Vineyard is still in existence, and now forms the carriage entrance for the Bank in Holywell Hill.

2 Gesta III. 185

3 Vide Map by Andrews and Wren.
was constructed in 1794, an ancient hostelry known as the "Key" (which stood between the present "Cross Keys" and "Peahen") being partially demolished to afford the necessary opening. At that time fields and gardens existed where London Road now runs, and one of the oldest inhabitants of St. Albans (who still resides in the town) distinctly remembers the fact that in his early days there were no houses whatever between the "Cross Keys" Inn and London Colney upon one side of the new road, while there were only two buildings (viz., the "Woolpack" Inn and "The Old Mile House") upon the other.

Although the High Street presents a modern appearance to-day, this is solely due to the fact that the majority of the houses have been re-fronted; until a comparatively recent period they exhibited a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century aspect, having projecting fronts and quaint gables, constructed chiefly of timber and lath-and-plaster. The premises now occupied by the Misses Randall were, until quite lately, of this character, while two other houses still preserve their original façades, one of them
THE HIGH STREET.

bearing upon its gable the date "1665." What is now one of the warehouses of No. 7, High Street, was, many years ago, a mere cottage, wherein lived Thomas Birch, a basket-maker,—"Twiggy Birch," as he was usually called,—who constructed a very clever staircase of wicker-work around the spire, or "spike," of the Abbey when the weather-cock required repairing, and completed it on the 21st of October, 1786.¹

Probably the most interesting building in the High Street is that adjacent to "The Cloisters," viz., the business-premises of Messrs. Thorpe and Collings. Upon this site originally stood the Wax-House Gate of the Monastery, so called because the wax candles (so essential and important a feature in the ornate Roman Catholic ceremonials) were there manufactured, as were also the large quantities of rushlights and tapers required for illuminating the huge halls and apartments. The original Gateway dated from a very early period, but in the fifteenth century it was pulled down and entirely rebuilt by Abbot Wheathampsted. It is incorrect to suppose that Sir Richard Lee destroyed the whole of the monastic buildings at the Dissolution in 1539, with the exception of the Abbey and the Great Gateway, for many of these structures, including the Wax-House Gate, were in existence at a much later period. The latter is shown both in Hare's map of 1634 and in Chauncy's of 1700; we learn from Stukeley that it was demolished in 1722, soon after he had made a drawing of it. The ground-plan of the Gateway, according to Hare, was an elongated octagon, the major diameter being parallel with the street; the building was three stories in height, having a flat roof and embattled parapet, and through the lower portion a large archway gave admission to the "Via quæ ductit versus Le Wexurs Gate," afterwards known as "School Lane," and now inappropriately called "The Cloisters."

The Gateway was pulled down by Edward Strong, the master-builder of St. Paul's Cathedral, who was interred in St. Peter's Church. There is every reason to suppose that only that part of the building which stood above the level of the ground was demolished, for the underground portions of the present structure show decisive evidences of monastic origin, the walls being of immense strength and over eight feet in thickness, and consisting chiefly of large blocks of stone, interspersed with flint. A huge mass of masonry extends

¹ Thomas Birch also made a similar staircase around the spire of Islington Parish Church (St. Mary's), when repairs were needed in 1787.
from the south wall into the middle of the cellar, while traces of archways and curious recesses are also visible. Upon the foundations thus provided Strong erected the present house, from a design furnished (it has been asserted) by Sir Christopher Wren. On the first floor is a panelled room, portions of which are carved and belong to the Jacobean period; suspended around the frieze are fourteen small devices and a grotesquely-carved head, these devices consisting of conventionalized foliage, badges, and arms, all of which date from the fifteenth century. It is very probable they are replicas of originals appertaining to some ecclesiastical edifice,—perhaps the Abbey Church. On the first-floor landing is an oak-panelled door, also of the fifteenth century, each panel being carved with an elegant "linenfold" pattern; two more devices are affixed to the wall of this landing. A capacious ingle-nook upon the ground floor speaks eloquently of the genial warmth it once afforded to travellers half-frozen in bitter winters of olden times. The three remarkable figures affixed as brackets in the lower part of this building are said to have been brought from Holywell House (together with the stained-glass window in the room described above), but the supposition is conclusively contradicted by the following extract from a work published in 1815:—"At a house of Mr. Richard Mason, in High Street, are some carved figures which support the overhanging part of the first story, and are in excellent preservation; there are also similar ones in Christopher Yard, and other parts of the town." As Holywell House was not demolished until 1837, these quaint and curious brackets (of which only four, I believe, are now in existence) must have had a different origin, which it would be interesting to ascertain.

In ancient times the defensive wall of the monastery extended downwards (or southwards) from the Wax-House Gate for a short distance on either side of the present Cloisters, and was

1 I am indebted to Mr. F. W. Kinneir Tate, M.S.A., for some of these particulars, and for the following details descriptive of the emblems and badges referred to:—Two of the devices represent the "Rose en Soleil," a White Rose en Soleil being a badge of Edward IV. (1461-1483); in another is seen an Abbot's Mitre, springing from the back of which are wheat-ears,—probably a device of Abbot Wheathampsted (1420-1464); of the next two designs, each represents an Angel clasping a Shield bearing the Cross Saltire,—the arms of St. Albans; another portrays the arms of St. Albans surmounted by a Crown, having a border of conventionalized foliage; a seventh shows an Angel clasping a Shield bearing three Crowns, these being the arms of St. Oswin, King and Martyr of Northumbria, and Patron saint of Tynemouth. The remaining nine devices are conventionalized forms of the foliage of the strawberry, ivy, and pink.

2 Hist. of Ver. and St. Albans, 1815.
then diverted to the right and left behind the rear portions of the houses; some large, squared stones, much weather-worn, were found a short time since in the garden of the premises adjacent to those occupied by Messrs. Thorpe and Collings, and these, in all probability, formed the remains of one of the buttresses of the old wall, one being known to have existed at the rear of the tenement of John Drye, in the time of Abbot de la Mare. In monastic days a well stood upon the site immediately behind what is now the establishment of Messrs. Fisk and Son, and probably supplied the requirements of the houses in George Street. A certain Roger Miles is recorded to have lived in a house on this spot in the fourteenth century.

The thoroughfare known as "The Cloisters" is one of the most ancient footpaths in the City; it is mentioned in the earliest records of the Monastery, and formed a means of communication between the Abbey and the High Street.

One morning in the year 1369, several thousand people were assembled to witness a remarkable funeral procession, which was marshalled in this Lane, and seen advancing from

1 Gesta III.
the Church up to the Waxhouse Gate. It was the funeral of a princess of the blood-
royal, viz., that of Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, the first wife of John of Gaunt. The
obsequies had been celebrated on the previous evening in the Church, where the body
rested on its way from the North to London. John de Buckingham, Bishop of Lincoln,
celebrated Mass. The Bishop of Cloyne preached the funeral sermon, and the next
morning the Abbot, with the whole convent habited in frocks, escorted the bier up this
road, probably issuing from the church by a door in the north aisle of the Presbytery.¹
Either in the passage or in the lower end of School Lane² the murder of a man named
Townsend took place in 1662, under the following circumstances:—A body of Non-
conformists had assembled for the purpose of hearing the funeral oration over a late
member of their congregation, and when they were ordered to quit by a certain Major
Crosby and a constable of the town, Townsend demurred, and was at once shot by
the major, who was subsequently tried for murder before Sir Harbottle Grimston, but,
apparently through the intimidation of the jury by the latter, was allowed to go free.³

¹ Fowler's Bound. Wall of Monast., 1876.
² The designation "School Lane" was applied to it upon the occupation of the Lady Chapel by the Grammar
School in the reign of Edward VI., and we find it referred to under that name in the Corporation Records for the
year 1595; it, together with the passage through the Ante-Chapel, afforded a means of communication between the
Abbey Orchard and the town.
³ Urwick's Nonconf. in Herts.
CHAPTER XVI.

ST. PETER'S STREET AND ITS BYWAYS.


An entire compendium of history is induced by the multitudinous associations of this, the essentially “Historical Street” of St. Albans. As we stand there, with the evening sun tinting the quaintly-clustered gables of old-world houses, the mediaeval Clock Tower dominating their curved ridges and standing out in bold contrast with the Abbey beyond, our thoughts wander insensibly back to the many scenes which this noble thoroughfare has witnessed in the past. The blatant horns of the Saxon kings awakened its echoes, as rude hunting-parties sallied forth to, or returned from, the chase; Norman pennons fluttered in the breeze when the first Abbot of that line was escorted to the Martyr's Shrine amid the scowls of the conquered Saxons; in feudal times regal processions and warlike pageants passed up and down the Street, until the struggles of the “Roses” drenched its soil with the blood of the best and bravest of our English chivalry. Tumultuous bands of religious iconoclasts vented aloud their ire at the fane of the local Saint when Henry VIII was sweeping Papal England with his ecclesiastical besom; then a new order of things arose, and, when the southern part of pastoral England dwelt in contentment and plenty, this historical Street saw only the fruits of peaceful husbandry passing quietly by, and the uneventful lapse of easy-gliding years.

What changes of men and manners and customs, what infinite variety of dress, civil
and military, has this old Street witnessed! What echoes have been awakened therein by shouts, cries, and words of command in guttural Saxon, melodious Norman-French, quaint Chaucer-English, nasal Cromwellian, and sturdy modern English! Eventually the Street became the fashionable quarter of the town, and then what endless array of steeple-crowned head-gear, wimples, and farthingales; what varieties of ruffs, slashed doublets, richly-laced cloaks, broad beavers, and buff boots, passed and repassed, succeeded at a later period by perukes, buckled shoes, long-flapped waistcoats, and powder and patches: Ancient exquisites, bejewelled popinjays, roystering swashbucklers, dandies, bucks, and their modern representatives, have paraded these pavements in pleasant self-consciousness of irreproachable attire; while the sonorous cries of the night-watchmen, familiarly known as "Charlies," caused the somnolescent burghers to feel devoutly thankful that the time to rise had not yet come. And thus our minds are flooded by such varied recollections of old-world times and old-world memories.

In the days when men were hanged for nearly every offence committed against the laws, there passed up this Street towards Bernard's Heath many a poor wretch to his doom, being accompanied by crowds of festive spectators, who made the event an excuse for a holiday. There, upon the left side of the road to Sandridge, and on, or near, the present cricket-ground, stood the grim gallows-tree, surrounded on these occasions by a dense crowd awaiting the procession, and eager to see the unhappy culprit suffer the extreme penalty of the law. These gallows appear to have superseded those in the Sopwell Lane district after 1381, probably by reason of the increase of houses in the latter thoroughfare.

Bow Gate was situated at the north end of St. Peter's Street, upon land now partially occupied by the premises of the Waterworks Company. It was one of the town gates and belonged to the mediæval defences, having been built about 1264, when St. Albans, from its fortified state, was called "Little London." The term "Bow Gate" is possibly a corruption of "Borough Gate"; the road from this point to St. Peter's Green was called "Bowgate" until very recent times, and ought, perhaps, to be still so designated, as it is thus marked upon a MS. map, dated 1869, which lately hung in the Council Chamber. Through this Gate and over the adjoining fortified walls poured the besieging Yorkists in 1455, when

1 Walsingham. Newcome, p. 104.
the diversion caused by the entrance of Warwick into Chequer Street had drawn off some of the defenders, thus weakening the resistance which had before kept them effectually outside the walls and ditches at this point.

Bow Gate was apparently demolished when more peaceful times came to the town, and a square stone erection, surmounted by a cross, took its place. On Benjamin Hare's map (1634) this monument is shown, but it could hardly have been standing at that period, or, if it were, it suffered demolition immediately afterwards, for in an indenture (dated 1635) setting out the Borough Boundaries are the words, "Unto the place where Stone Cross was." In Chauncey's map (1700) there is no representation of it, from which we may infer that it had then disappeared; the only memento of its existence was Stone Cross Close, being the name of the first field on the left of the road to Sandridge. The latest 25-inch map of the Ordnance Survey has, however, the name of "Stonecross" as denoting a spot contiguous to the Waterworks.

The present Harpenden Road (anciently known as Luton Lane) was, in all probability, defended by a Gate extending across the road from where the "Cricketers" Inn now stands to the opposite side. In the Parliamentary Survey of St. Albans in 1649 the "Black Bull" Inn in Bowgate is mentioned, which may possibly have been built upon the site now occupied by the "Cricketers;" in the same document Townsend Farm is also referred to.
Passing down Bowgate in the direction of the town, the ordinary observer cannot fail to notice the venerable Scotch fir with curiously-contorted trunk standing before an ancient mansion known as "Hall Place,"—the historical residence of Miss Lydekker. The external aspect of this house, with its peculiar lancet-shaped windows, its high-pitched roofs and plastered walls, is such that it excites more than passing attention, while the old iron gates, artistically wrought, which open into the little court, alone suffice to remind us of the many years that have passed since this remarkable structure was erected. The mansion formerly belonged to the Halls, or Athalls, from whom, it is reasonable to assume, the locality known as Hall Heath, not far from this spot, also took its name. In the fifteenth century it became the property of Mistress Athall, an heiress, who married one Edmund Westby, "a Hundreder." Westby was a strong Lancastrian, and tradition says that in 1455, when the Yorkist forces had succeeded in defeating the Lancastrians, he afforded King Henry VI. shelter and a night's repose in Hall Place, and that it was not until the following day that the victors came and led the weak-minded monarch to the Abbey. Westby died in 1475, and was buried in St. Peter's Church, where his monument remained until the demolition of the transepts. Interments seem to have extended to the grounds of Hall Place after the First Battle of St. Albans, for a short time since, during the removal of the stump of a tree, some human remains were there discovered. The old fortifying-wall, with its accompanying ditch, ran along the bottom of the garden.

Perhaps the most interesting object apart from the house is a "Judas" tree (*Cercis siliquastrum*), specimens of which are rare in Great Britain. This species of tree, which is so named because it shares with the elder the ignominy of being that on which Judas is said to have hanged himself, is indigenous to the south of Europe and several countries in Asia, from Palestine to Japan. A fine tulip-tree, also native of an Eastern clime, is in this garden. During the reign of Queen Anne, Dr. Compton, Bishop of London, resided at Hall Place, and, as there are tulip-trees of about the same age in the grounds at Fulham Palace, it may be conjectured that his lordship is responsible for their introduction at both places. The interior of Miss Lydekker's residence is extremely quaint and interesting,—a remark that especially applies to the
old guest-chamber in the roof, which often afforded sleeping accommodation for pilgrims to the Shrine of St. Alban.

Almost opposite Hall Place stands a row of small buildings known as the Pemberton Almshouses, which were erected in pursuance of the will of Roger Pemberton (the grandfather of the celebrated Sir Francis Pemberton), who died in 1627 and was buried in St. Peter's Church. Six poor widows were, by his directions, to receive £5 yearly, the money accruing from his manor at Shelton, in Bedfordshire, to be appropriated for this purpose. Tradition avers that Pemberton one day went into the neighbouring fields with the object of obtaining sport, but, being disappointed, he recklessly discharged his arrow upwards into the air; the arrow, in its descent, transfixed and killed a poor widow who, unseen by him, was gathering sticks behind an adjoining hedge,—so, by way of atonement for the unfortunate accident, he founded these Almshouses for six poor widows, and, to commemorate the origin of the bequest, there is placed over the outer gateway an iron arrow, or quarrel, inserted vertically into the brickwork. In Grange Street, which anciently bore the name of St. Peter's Lane, is an old timber-and-plaster residence called St. Peter's Grange, otherwise known as the "Walmons Fee." It was an outlying farm, or grange, belonging to the monastery, and was burnt to the ground during the Wat Tyler riots in 1381; the building erected on its site passed at the Dissolution into the hands of Sir Nicholas Bacon and Thomas Skipworth.

St. Peter's Church is one of three churches originally erected in St. Albans by Abbot Ulsinus upon the three principal thoroughfares leading to the monastery; the foundation therefore dates from the reign of King Edred, about A.D. 948. It is conjectured that, in consequence of a subsequent rebuilding and many restorations, no portion whatever of the original Saxon Church now remains, except perhaps the foundations; in this respect it resembles St. Stephen's and differs from St. Michael's. Of the earlier history of the Church no records are preserved. In the time of Abbot Geoffrey de Gorham (1119-46) it was granted, with all its belongings, to provide food and medicine for use in the monastic infirmary; Abbot Warren confirmed this grant, but, in 1253, it was assigned to the vicar of St. Peter's upon the ordination of the vicarage by the Bishop of Lincoln.

1 Clutterbuck.
The Churchyard was dedicated by the Bishop of Durham in the reign of King John, and in 1247 many persons, averaging nine or ten daily, were buried in it, the victims of a pestilence in the town. It is probable that during the earlier part of the thirteenth century the Church was entirely rebuilt, and that the doorway in the west end is the only portion remaining from that time. In 1254, the upper part of the tower was struck by lightning and demolished.

A carved Cross was erected in the Churchyard in 1342 by Roger de Stoke, a local clockmaker; this monument subsequently became celebrated for certain miracles which were said to have occurred there, and thus afforded a means of attracting offerings. The Cross appears to have been enclosed within a building at some later period, for we find that the "Chapel of the Holy Cross" is referred to in the reign of King Henry IV.; it apparently survived the Dissolution, for in local records it is mentioned under the date 1634. Another building within the Churchyard, but probably attached to the church structure, was the cell of an anchoress who occupied it in 1258, or even earlier; one of her successors was visited by King Henry VI. in 1458, while he was on a visit to the Abbey, and, in 1479, the "Anchoress of St. Peter's" (Katerina Holsted, a widow) was consecrated by Abbot William Wallingford with great solemnity. In 1427, an important meeting of the clergy was held in the Church for the purpose of suppressing local heretics, when three persons were arraigned and charged with the offence of holding the doctrine of the Lollards and possessing books written in the vulgar tongue; two of them succeeded in refuting the charge, but the third was condemned upon his own confession to do penance, a part of which was to publicly burn a book, that he was wont to read, at the Cross in St. Peter's Churchyard.

After each of the two Battles of St. Albans numbers of the slain were interred in

1 Nicholson's *Abb. of St. Alb.*
the Churchyard, chiefly in a strip of ground lying to the north, and the digging of a grave in this part invariably reveals the presence of human remains immediately below the surface of the soil.

"The advowson of the vicarage continued in the Abbot and Convent of St. Albans till their dissolution, upon which it came to the Crown, and was given by King Edward VI., in the first year of his reign, to the College of Fotheringay, in Northamptonshire. But that house being soon after dissolved, it again devolved upon the Crown, in which the patronage of the vicarage continued until it came into possession of Thomas Lord Seymour, of Sudley, and, upon his attainder, reverted to the Crown, and was granted, on the 17th June, 1600, by Queen Elizabeth, to Martin Heton, Bishop of Ely, and his successors; it appears that King Charles I. presented to it in 1637 by reason of the vacancy of the Bishopric of Ely, and after the restoration of King Charles II. the Bishop again presented to it."1

It is unfortunate that, during the rebellion headed by Wat Tyler, A.D. 1381, the books of the vicar were burnt by the rioters. On the same occasion the Grange of St. Peter was also consumed by fire.

1 Clutterbuck.
The Church was originally built in the form of a Latin cross, with a tower rising from the intersection of the nave, chancel, and transepts; but at the present time it consists simply of a nave, chancel, and tower, the latter being at the east end and built up from the ground. The prevailing style of the major portion of the structure is late Perpendicular, and it seems likely that it underwent rebuilding for the second time during the reign of Henry VII. The nave is divided from the north and south aisles by a series of lofty and well-proportioned arches, six being on either side; these, together with the large and graceful aisle windows, date from the fifteenth century. The general aspect of the interior of the Church is striking and picturesque, giving the impression of lightness and elegance. The tower is open to the nave and chancel by pointed arches; the east window is modern, but of good proportions and workmanship. From time to time the interior of the edifice has been decorated, several items appearing in the churchwardens' accounts for writing up sentences of Scripture, setting up the King's arms, decorating and gilding the pulpit, etc.¹ In 1657, a clock and chimes were added. A few years later the Church was reported to be in such a bad state of repair that the sum of eighty pounds was spent upon its reparation, and in 1785-6, further sums of money were raised for the purpose of carrying out necessary structural work in the building, especially in the tower, the condition of which was seriously defective. This expenditure does not appear to have produced satisfactory results, for, in 1799, it was deemed advisable to remove the bells and their

¹ *Herts Advertiser*, 1892.
framework, and take down the upper part of the tower. On the 21st November, 1801, the whole of the belfry floor, with a large amount of débris, fell into the body of the Church, this catastrophe necessitating the subsequent demolition of the entire tower. The present tower was commenced in 1802 and completed in 1806; the transepts were removed at the same time, and, with the permission of the Bishop of Ely (to whom it belonged), the chancel was shortened by upwards of thirty feet. The material of which the Church is composed externally varies considerably, but the whole of the fabric, excepting that constructed of stone, has been encased in "rough-cast," concerning which Gough remarks:—"The whole outside was plastered over by a London workman (a prevailing fashion of destroying the effect and beauty of our best parish churches), and, though done three or four times over, the plaster is now flaking off, both within and without." This description adequately agrees with the condition of the external coating of stucco at the present time.

Many remarkable memorials, consisting of incised slabs, brasses, etc., were contained in the Church previous to the restoration in the first part of the present century, but the majority of them unfortunately disappeared at that time. One of the earliest tombs was that of Sir Bertin Entwysel, who fought upon the Lancastrian side in the First Battle of St. Albans, and subsequently died of his wounds; he was buried under the place of the Lectorium in the choir, and Chauncy quotes the following inscription from his monumental brass:—"Here lyeth Sir Bertin Entwysel, Kt. . . . died 28th May, 1455." This interesting relic also disappeared in the early part of the century. An epitaph once existed to the memory of Ralph Babthorpe, squire to Henry VI., together with his son, who held the post of dapifer (grand toast-master) to the King; they both perished in the First Battle of St. Albans. The tomb of Edmund Westby, Justice of the Peace and "Hundreder," who (as previously narrated) is said to have sheltered Henry VI. under his roof, was existing in Weever's time. Westby and his wife Agnes were admitted into the fraternity of the monastery.

One of the most curious inscriptions was that under the figure of a priest upon a slab in the chancel. It was engraved upon a "rose" brass, ten inches in diameter,

1 Clutterbuck. 2 Leland. 3 Gough. 4 Cotton MS., Nero, D7.
within the petals of which appeared two inscriptions in concentric circles, the outer circle being in English and the inner one expressing more concisely the same sentiments in Latin; the former of these, divested of contractions, and spelt agreeably to more modern times, runs thus:

"Lo all that here I spent that sometime had I;
All that I gave in good intent, that now have I;
That I neither gave nor lent, that now abie I;
That I kept till I went, that lost I."

Some brasses without name or date formerly existed in the north aisle, and were supposed to have belonged to Sir Richard Lee’s family, for in the Parish Register we find that Sir Richard was buried in St. Peter’s. Of the many similar memorials that were once in the Church only four are now to be found there, and these are not in situ. One, measuring about twelve inches square, represents the family of Roger and Elizabeth Pemberton, consisting of three sons and three daughters; two other brasses, portraying a male and female figure respectively, are probably intended for their parents.

There are several monuments and mural tablets in the Church, the most remarkable being that of Edward Strong, master-mason of St. Paul’s Cathedral, who resided in St. Albans, and died in 1723. Some very ancient stained-glass, although in a very fragmentary condition, is still to be seen in a few of the windows; much of it suffered destruction during the last restoration, but apparently the greater part of it was demolished in 1644-5, when a man visited the Church and obliterated the “Popish sentiments” upon the graves and windows, for which meritorious (!) act he was paid five shillings. In 1649, the Colchester prisoners were confined within the

1 This interesting relic is said to be preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, but I have not succeeded in obtaining confirmation of this assertion.

2 MS. Note in British Museum on Drawings of Brasses, 1790.

3 Herts Advertiser, 1892.
edifice, and in connection with this an item is charged in the accounts for taking down the windows and removing the fittings out of the Church. After such a number of vicissitudes it is surprising that any fragments whatever of the old glass should still survive. In the second window from the east are the arms of Edward de Langley, fifth son of Edward III., who died A.D. 1402, and is buried in the church of King's Langley.

The Churchyard is extremely spacious and contains many monuments of interest, one of them, lying to the south of the chancel, being to the memory of the celebrated Dr. Nathaniel Cotton. The name of the Doctor is inseparably connected with St. Albans and the residence of the poet Cowper in the town, but his memory will be chiefly cherished as the talented author of "Visions in Verse," "The Fireside," and other poems of a strong moral tendency. It is also worth recording that the well-known writer, Peter Cunningham (son of Allan Cunningham, the versatile littérature), who lived for a time in St. Albans and ended his days there, was likewise interred in this Churchyard, on the north side of which (near the garden fence) his tombstone may still be seen. It is probable that St. Peter's Church was never in such urgent need of careful reparation as at the present time, and considerable interest is evoked by the munificent offer of Lord Grimthorpe to restore the edifice at his own personal expense. Constant patchings with varied materials have given the Church a very dilapidated appearance, and in those parts where decay has not been arrested the progress of neglect is fully exemplified; therefore the offer of the restorer of St. Alban's Abbey comes at a most opportune period, and is welcomed with that cordiality which it fully deserves.

The house situated opposite the west front of the Church is said to have been erected by Strong, the builder of St. Paul's Cathedral, upon the site of an older structure. St. Peter's Green appears to have preserved its former appearance almost intact to the present time; some small tenements erected in St. Peter's Churchyard overlooked it in the sixteenth century, and a well-house once stood in the centre of the Green, the well of which remained until 1886, while a small duck-pond occupied a position at its side; with the disappearance of these features we may surmise
that the open space now bears a close resemblance to its ancient aspect. Upon the eastern side stands the building formerly utilised as a workhouse, while flanking it upon the north may be seen a row of old cottages which add a touch of picturesqueness to the locality.

Hatfield Road was formerly known as “Cock Lane,” and the name is still perpetuated by the old inn called “The Cock,” at the corner abutting on St. Peter’s Street. The chief feature of interest in this thoroughfare is the Marlborough Almshouses, which stand upon the site of the ancient Manor House of Squillers; in the time of the Abbots that part of the town in which these buildings are situated appears to have been comprised in the “Manor of Squillers,” and to have been purchased by Abbot Wheathampsted at the same time he acquired that of “New Lane.”\(^1\) The name was no doubt derived from that of an ancient proprietor, for in the “Book of Benefactors”\(^2\) we read of a certain lady, Isabella Squiler, who was one of the numerous contributors to the work of rebuilding the Great Cloisters,—a costly undertaking commenced by Abbot Hugh de Eversden, and protracted until the accession of Abbot William Heyworth about 1401. We gather from various documentary statements that Squylers, or Squillers, was a small Manor extending from Cock Lane, where it joined the manor of New Lane,

\(^1\) *Registrum* I. 463.
\(^2\) Nero, D 7.
southwards as far as "Chirche Strate" (now George Street), as four tenements in this latter thoroughfare are described as being within the Manor. On the west it was bounded by the manor of Kingsbury, and on the east by that of Tittenhanger. It is probable that the southern boundary extended from George Street to Sopwell Lane, and thence along the present London Road; if so, the ancient wall upon the south of the road, beyond the Midland Railway bridge, may be reasonably associated with the Manor of Squillers.

After the dissolution of the Monastery it would seem that the Manor was united in some way with that of "New Lane," for it appears under the name of "Newlane Squillers," or "Newland Squillers." The Manor House, or "Manse," of New Lane was evidently identical with the moated mansion called "Beamonds" (afterwards "Beaumonts"), where Cromwell was entertained by his trusted friend, Colonel Alban Cox, in 1642. At that period the Manor of Newland Squillers was held by the Sadleir family, who inherited it from Sir Richard Lee, and lived at Sopwell House. In Charles II.'s reign, or earlier, it passed to the Robothams, who resided in the Manse of Squillers. Both in Hare's map (1634) and in Chauncy's (1700), the Manor House is represented as being the sole residence in Cock Lane; east of it is shown a high wall extending to the corner of the present Marlborough Road, and continued along that road for some distance upon the site of the mediæval fortifications of the town. Among other records preserved by the County historians we read that, at a Court Baron held for this Manor in the reign of James I., certain closes of land, called "Great Bullams" and "Little Bullams," as well as some land in the Borough field, were assigned by Richard Ranshaw for the "commodity" of King Edward VI.'s Grammar School in the town, and also that in 1636 Robert Robotham, the Lord of the Manor, made these lands freehold. The Robothams removed from the Manor House towards the end of the seventeenth century, and, after remaining unoccupied for a time, the building was utilised as a boys' boarding-school, which subsequently acquired considerable reputation as a seat of learning among the Dissenters. It is asserted in some old histories of St. Albans that the celebrated Dr. Doddridge, Dr. Aiken, and other well-known lights of Nonconformity received their early education at this establishment, but in the comprehensive work issued by the Rev. W. Urwick\textsuperscript{1} there is no allusion to this report.

\textsuperscript{1} Urwick's \textit{Nonconf. in Herts.}
About the year 1735, Sarah, the Duchess Dowager of Marlborough, purchased of the heirs of the family of Robotham, the Manor House and certain lands of the Manor of Newland Squillers within the parish of St. Peter; the dwelling was demolished, and upon its site the Marlborough Almshouses (familiarly known as "The Buildings") were erected and endowed for the comfortable support and maintenance of thirty-six poor persons,—eighteen men and the same number of women. These Almshouses consist of nine dwellings, each containing four rooms and having a detached garden. The Duchess had sole management of them during her lifetime, and directed that they should, after her death, be under the control of the Lord of the Manor of Sandridge. She also provided that £20 should be paid annually to the rector of the Abbey Church or the vicar of St. Peter's, "for overlooking the poor that shall be placed in the same Almshouses." The management of the charity now devolves upon trustees. This benefaction is a noble one, and continues to be admirably administered; the inmates of "The Buildings" are people in reduced circumstances who yet have some small income of their own, which, with the help of the charity, suffices for their comfortable livelihood. It affords a home, supplemented by a gift of £13 a year, for each inmate.

A peculiar and characteristic feature of St. Peter's Street was, until comparatively recent times, the number of ponds that existed in the roadway; these were constructed apparently for the purpose of supplying water to animals brought to the markets or fairs, and were known as the Upper and Lower Cock Ponds, Monday's Pond, the Hither Pond, White Horse Pond, etc. They were leased by the Corporation, at nominal rents, to adjacent householders, generally the proprietors of inns, who undertook to keep the fences and banks in repair, and to clean them out when necessary. The Cock Pond (often alluded to in the Corporation Minutes) lay opposite the inn from whence it derived its name, contiguous to St. Peter's Green; it received the greater part of the surface drainage-water which came down from Bowgate, and, being connected by closed channels with the ponds lower down the Street, the surplus water was thus enabled to supply them. From the lowermost pond a culvert was constructed which passed beneath the surface in Chequer Street and Holywell Hill to a large pond then existing in the meadow south of Lady Spencer's Avenue, and formerly known as the "Pond Wicks."
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a year, for each inmate.

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Chequer Street and Holywell Hill to a large pond then existing in the meadow south
of Lady Spencer's Avenue, and formerly known as the "Pond Wicks."
There is good reason to believe that at one of the largest of the ponds in St. Peter's Street the curious and time-honoured custom was enforced of ducking members of the fair sex, whose loquacity, in their husbands' judgment, had trespassed beyond the bounds of human patience; the ducking-stool, with its necessary appurtenances, was erected at the sole charge of the Corporation, and the offender or offenders duly dipped under the surface of the water, the condition of which (if the accounts handed down to us are reliable) was not always of that limpid and sparkling state of purity such as the culprits might have desired. The greater number of these street pools were abolished during the present century, the last to disappear being the Cock Pond, which was filled up by the authorities of St. Peter's parish in 1849.

Catherine Lane is an ancient roadway which led to a postern in the fortifying-wall of the town (near the present Folly Lane) by which pedestrians and vehicles could enter or leave the town. A number of tenements were in this thoroughfare in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and on the south side, a short distance from St. Peter's Street, were twenty acres of land called "Gumbedes" (the name being still perpetuated in the modern appellation of "Gombards"), which were granted in 1544 to John Maynard. These houses appear to have been gradually demolished, and in 1700 had entirely disappeared; Clutterbuck, a century later, shows only two or three in this locality.

A local history (published in 1815) says:—"Catherine Lane, at the top of St. Peter's Street, leads to the very neat and pleasantly-situated residence of Mrs. Emmett." This reference to a mansion recently known as "The Daltons" affords an opportunity for suggesting the probability that it was the veritable home of Mr. Jarndyce, which (as all diligent readers of "Bleak House" will remember) was placed by Dickens in St. Albans, and within sight of the Abbey Church; indeed, the quaint appearance of this old-fashioned Georgian house is just such as would have at once attracted the attention of the famous novelist.

At the south corner of St. Peter's Street and Catherine Lane, on the site of the "Painter's Arms," was the tenement, with some land attached to it, called the "Lamb,"

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1 *Herts Advertiser*, 1893.

2 The present owner has recently re-christened this residence "Bleak House."
which belonged to St. Peter's Church. Upon the western side of St. Peter's Street several ancient inns are known to have stood in Pre-Reformation times for the accommodation of pilgrims, but these hostels (the "Doble Stage," the "Pye," the "Horse-head," etc.) have disappeared.¹ Towards the southern end of the Street, apparently where the cattle-market is now held, was the ancient "Fish-shambles," or Fish-market.

During the latter part of the last century and the first years of the present, the majority of the houses in St. Peter's Street between Catherine Lane and the Town Hall underwent such considerable alterations that the former mediaeval aspect of the Street entirely disappeared; these changes were doubtless rendered necessary by the requirements of the age, and of certain residents who, during that period, dwelt on either side of this excellent and commodious thoroughfare, which resulted in its transformation into "the most 'genteel' part of the town."²

The three annual Fairs, as well as the public statute-fair for hiring servants, were held in St. Peter's Street. The Lady-Day Fair was apparently of no great importance, and but few references are made to it, but that upon St. Alban's Day (June 22nd)—a Fair for horses and cattle—was most numerously attended by dealers from considerable distances. The third, or Michaelmas Fair (held agreeably to the Charter of King Charles II.), was essentially a pleasure Fair, and the most considerable and important one of the year; to this festive gathering resorted the laughter-loving youth of both sexes for many miles round, the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood entering at the same time into the fun and enjoyment which, for a whole day and the major part of the night, reigned supreme. A hundred years ago the facilities which obtain at the present time for witnessing the highest developments of histrionic art were wholly unknown outside the Metropolis, and therefore the rural population were contented with, and found delight in, strolling players. That these uncultured exhibitions were heartily appreciated by those who witnessed them is proved by the following ungrammatical but amusing passage relating to the Fair at St. Albans:

"This fair is visited by many shows exhibiting the wonderful and marvellous! but what gives most pleasure and satisfaction is Richardson's Portable Theatre, and his company of comic and tragic performers; their theatric

¹ *Herts Advertiser*, 1893.  
² *Hist. of Ver. and St. Alb.* (1815).
representations is an indulgence to the sight of the inhabitants of the surrounding villages they but rarely have an opportunity of witnessing, therefore is a source of the highest gratification to their curiosity for dramatic performance, nor does the proprietor seem less anxious to please, than his admirers are to be pleased."

On one occasion Mr. Richardson gave several performances in aid of the sufferers by a destructive fire which broke out in the stabling of the "White Hart" Inn on Holywell Hill, and thus always secured for himself and his company of actors a hearty reception on the occasion of his annual visits.

At the north-east corner of Spencer Street, and facing towards the Town Hall, there still remains an ancient Tudor building, now used partly as offices and partly as a private residence. It was once called "The Mansion," and, in the time of Charles II., was the home of the Lady Alicia Jenning; no doubt it is the very house occupied by the Mayor when Queen Elizabeth was presented with an address on her way to visit Sir Francis Bacon at Gorbahmbury, the horses being, on that auspicious occasion, taken out of the Queen's carriage, and Her Majesty conducted down Chequer Street so that the Market-place might not become free. This historic edifice has been the property of the Kentish family\(^1\) for generations, and the present landlord (Mr. William Kentish, of King's Norton) has in his possession several deeds relating to it, dating from the reign of Charles II. The name of "Thomas Kentish, gentleman," is mentioned in the

\(^1\) The Richard Kentish who owned the premises in Charles II.'s reign was he who left the remarkable trust for the free education of five boys, now transferred to the Grammar School.
Corporation Minutes of February 1st, 1694, and from that time until a very recent date the family has been represented in our civic council by Assistants, Councillors, Aldermen, and Mayors. Some of these were Nonconformists, the old pew which they occupied in Dagnall Street Chapel being still in existence; while others were attached to the Church, and lie buried in the Abbey and St. Stephen's. Many fine specimens of old oak carving and panelling of the Tudor period exist in the house, one really magnificent example of which,—an overmantel in one of the upper rooms,—is represented in the preceding engraving. A stone mantelpiece over the cupboard in another part of the building contains the Tudor rose, and appertained, some fifty or sixty years ago, to the entrance-hall fireplace. All the ceiling that is of trellis-pattern oak was decorated in crimson and gold. The "King William" public-house adjoining was then the coachman's dwelling; a spacious garden at one time extended from the side and rear of the building to a considerable distance, but Spencer Street now occupies its site. A characteristic feature of "The Mansion" is the balcony adorning its front, which in former days was imitated, more or less, at nearly all the dwellings and inns adjacent to it; these balconies formed capital coigns of vantage at election times for ladies and others to view the excited crowds of politicians in the streets below, while the fair sex also did not disdain to occupy them when the cruel sport of bull-baiting was delighting the savage and brutal natures of the mob who clustered round the bull-ring erected in the Street at a short distance to the south of this ancient residence. Of
these balconies this is the only survivor, for, with the rebuilding and modernising of the dwellings in the locality, such adjuncts have gradually disappeared, together with many other interesting features so intimately associated with the varied fortunes of this historic thoroughfare.

Previous to the Reformation the site of the Town Hall was occupied by a hostelry, which was demolished in the sixteenth century to make room for three small Almshouses for poor widows. In the open space in front of these tenements stood the "Blue Pump," a well-known feature of St. Peter's Street. The old timbered houses themselves were pulled down in 1829 to make room for the present municipal building, the Pump disappearing at the same time, while the tenants of the homes were transferred to new cottages in Catherine Lane.

The Town Hall has a classic façade facing St. Peter's Street, with a portico and pediment supported on Ionic columns; the general appearance of the building is, nevertheless, crude and inartistic. The Hall contains a large assembly-room for public meetings, entertainments, etc., a Court House in which are held the Petty and Quarter Sessions and the County Court for the district of St. Albans, a Town-Council Chamber, and various other apartments. In the Corporation safe are preserved many interesting documents and articles relating to St. Albans. The oldest Charter is that of King Edward VI. (1554), consisting of four illuminated sheets of parchment, setting forth among other things that the town was constituted a free Borough, and the inhabitants incorporated under the style of "Mayor and Burgesses." Queen Mary, in 1553, confirmed this Charter, but the document is lost; that of Queen Elizabeth, confirming the two previous Charters, is, however, still preserved, being inscribed on three sheets of parchment and elaborately illuminated. The first Wine Charter granted by Elizabeth for the support of the Grammar School, a second similar document granted by James I., and Corporation Charters of Charles I., Charles II., and James II., are also extant, the most recent in the possession of the town being that of August 28th, 1877, which bears the Great Seal and constitutes St. Albans a City.

1 The Corporation Charters and documents were kept for centuries in the old wooden chest, strongly bound with iron, which now stands in the corridor at the Public Library. It was furnished with three locks, and in olden times one key was kept by the Mayor, another by the ex-Mayor, and the third by the Chamberlain and the Common Clerk. The first reference to this interesting receptacle in the Corporation Records is in 1587, when certain papers were placed in it, together with the public money.
The two sets of Constitutions—the bye-laws by which the old Borough was governed—afford some most interesting information relative to the management of the town a century or two ago; the older document is dated 1634, and consists of seven sheets in black and silver, bearing the autograph signatures of the Lord Keeper, the Lord Chief Justice, and two other judges. The later document (comprising ten sheets, dated 1667) contains a fanciful view of the old town, with the Abbey in the foreground, as well as an imaginary representation of St. Albans in still more ancient times. The details respecting the election of Mayors are curious; twelve Aldermen and twenty-four Assistants were elected to aid him in governing the Borough, and a Court was to be held once a month. The privilege of being a freeman of the town was
of considerable value, as no man was allowed to carry on any trade or handicraft unless he had been duly admitted; it could be claimed on several grounds, as, for instance, by the eldest surviving son of a deceased freeman, or by one who had served an apprenticeship to a free burgess for seven years; a father, himself being free, could nominate one of his sons, while outsiders could obtain it by redemption or purchase. In the Corporation minutes are many references to persons who were summoned for trading in the town without this necessary qualification.

The Town Companies were originally four in number, viz.:—the Mercers, Innholders Victuallers, and Shoemakers, each of which had a Warden; but the number of Companies was subsequently reduced to two, the Mercers and the Innholders. The more comprehensive of these was the Mercers, which comprised mercers, drapers, vintners, apothecaries, haberdashers, tailors, dyers, clothworkers, weavers, cooperers, shoemakers, glovers, barbers cheesemongers, glaziers, plumbers, braziers, tinkers, bowyers, fletchers, cutlers, carpenters, lathrenders, joiners, turners, painters, wheelwrights, sawyers, bricklayers, and tilers; while the Company of Innholders included tanners, tallow-chandlers, curriers, pewterers, musicians, ropers, victuallers, bakers, brewers, butchers, saddlers, smiths, innholders, and fishmongers.

Non-residents in the town were not permitted to sell their goods within the Borough except on fair-days; this prohibition protected the trade of the freeman, while higglers and others were not allowed to buy or sell any goods on market-days until the market-bell rang.

The Mayor, as Clerk of the Market, had the power of fixing the price of all victuals sold in the Borough. Flesh- and fish-tasters were appointed, whose duty it was to see that no corrupt flesh or fish was sold; the Leather Sellers were chosen to examine all leather, and, if it was sufficiently tanned and prepared, to put a stamp upon it, and to seize all leather offered for sale not bearing such a stamp. The Viewers of the Market at the Cross had to see that all food offered for sale there was wholesome, and to properly regulate the Market. All strangers coming to reside in the town had to bring a testimonial with them and find security for their good behaviour, unless they were men of worth or ability; the Constables of every Board and the Wardens of each Company were to search the town for

1 Gibbs' Corp. Rec.
2 The custom of ringing the market-bell at nine o'clock on Saturday mornings is still retained.
strangers once a month. Eight viewers (answering to our inspectors of nuisances) were appointed to search out annoyances, encroachments, etc., and report to the Court.\(^1\)

There are in the possession of the Corporation many bonds and deeds relating to the Moot Hall, the Clock House, the Parsonage House, the Free School lands, etc.; also some leases of the Wine Licences, dating from 1557, a number of receipts for taxes paid during the Civil Wars, and other interesting documents. Of the many letters among the Corporation papers (some of which belong to the sixteenth century), one in particular is of special interest. It is in the handwriting of John Thomas Hylocomius, the Master of the Grammar School, and is dated November 21st, 1583.\(^2\)

Adjacent to the Town Hall is the upper end of Victoria Street, which, in the reign of Richard II., was known as "Shropshire Lane." In the "Gesta" we learn that, during the disturbances resulting from Wat Tyler’s rebellion in 1381, the townsmen broke down the fences and gates of the Abbot’s Warren, or game preserves, of "Shropshereslane" and other places.\(^3\) Chauncy identifies this Lane, in his map, as that which is now called Victoria Street, but known, until 1876, as "Sweetbriar Lane." In olden times, when the bow was the Englishman’s invincible weapon, the burghers and ‘prentices of St. Albans trooped down this narrow thoroughfare to the archery-butts, for practice or for competition. They passed through the gate or postern, and

\(^1\) Gibbs’ Corp. Rec.

\(^2\) The Letter reads as follows:—

"Right Worshipful Mr. Mayor,—Your humble and obedient servant, John Thomas Hylocomius, the Schoolmaster of this Free School, being requested by this bearer, good man Kente, desirith most earnestly of your Worship not to take in evil part this my bold enterprise to trouble your Worship. Because he is a poor man I could not in conscience refuse. His request is, I would help to intreat your Worship that you would be so good unto him, and with Mr. Williams, our parson, that by your authority and appointment he might declare in the pulpit unto the people, and commend the miserable estate of this poor man, that some men may be ordained to gather a collection of the well-disposed and devout people. Thus, Right Worshipful Mr. Mayor, I earnestly desire you to grant us this charitable deed, and which the Lord will see and reward in the day of His appearance. No more, but praying your Worship to pardon me, that I write thus negligently and inordinately unto your Worship, for the man was very hasty, and I scarce well at ease and so cold that I could scarce hold the pen in my hand, and he standing and urging me till I had done.—21st November, 1583, in my School. JOANN. THOMAS HYLOCOMIUS."\(^1\)

\(^3\) Gesta Abb., III. 288.

\(^1\) Gibbs’ Corp. Rec.
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⁴ Gesta Abb., III. i88.
⁵ Gibbs' Corp. Rec.
over the ditch which marked the town boundary at the spot where Marlborough Road now crosses Victoria Street, and, turning towards their left, they could see the targets in Long Butts Field, which lay between the modern Marlborough Road and Lattimore Road, to the north of Victoria Street.

In the fourth year of King Henry VI., Thomas Heyne petitioned the Abbot for licence to cut turf on Bernard's Heath, in order that the "neighbours dwelling in one lane in Holywell [Chequer Street then formed part of Holywell Street] might erect two archery-butts in the bottom of Monk-dych."¹ This refers to the deep ditch (the Tonman Ditch) which formed one side of Long Butts Field, and was a part of the town defences; the present Marlborough Road is formed in the bottom of this mediaeval excavation, and the removed earth may still be seen heaped up in the gardens upon the town side of it. The defences were no doubt assailed at this point, as well as others, in the First Battle of St. Albans, as testified by some spear-heads and other military relics which have been unearthed there.

South of Long Butts Field was a piece of ground known in Chauncy's time as the "Levye Lands,"—a term implying that the military levies encamped and drilled at that spot, and the space occupied by them appears to be that which is now bounded by Victoria Street, Marlborough Road, London Road, and Lattimore Road. Upon the "Levye Lands" the soldiers were drilled who were furnished by the town in 1588, at the time of the attempted invasion of England by the Spanish Armada. The total number of men raised in Hertfordshire was two thousand, of which number fifty-two were provided by St. Albans. The corslets necessary for the local force were supplied by the different Companies or Guilds, and the inhabitants; the men were armed with "quallivers,"² muskets, bills, and bows, and rapiers for the officers; a large quantity of lead was taken off the roof of the Abbey Church and probably cast into bullets, and a goodly supply of powder purchased. Under Robert Gostwick, the energetic mayor of that time, these warlike and expensive preparations were actively pushed forward, constant drills enforced, and the "Levye Lands" presented the appearance of a military camp, when the burgesses (who had willingly and loyally seconded the efforts of their chief magistrate to defend the hearths and homes of

¹ Herts Advertiser, "Antiquities of Sweetbriar Lane." ² Culivers (?)
the fatherland from foreign invasion) assembled to encourage the levies upon whom devolved the responsibility of maintaining the honour of the town.

The Tonman Ditch anciently constituted the western boundary of these lands, and a conjectured portion of the defensive wall may still be seen near the junction of New Kent Road with Marlborough Road. Respecting this part of the town defences, one of the Abbey Chronicles states:—“There is along the path which leads from the lane called New Lane, as far as to Sopwelle-lane, a certain defensive ditch (*fossa defensiva*), of a good depth and height, dug out of the fields of the Almoner of the Monastery, for the protection of his fields, and the gardens of the townsmen, situated in that quarter of old time; there being an intermediate space of five feet or more for the reparation and cleansing of the said ditch, as often as needed, by the Almoner, to whose province this appertains. The upper (north) end of this ditch was assigned, with the sanction of the Abbot, in former times on that side which leads to the fields of the Almoner, for Archery Butts.”

The name of the defensive gateway at the eastern end of Shropshire Lane is not known; it may possibly have been the “Man Gate” to which Wheathampsted refers.

With regard to Sweetbriar Lane, not a house stood there in the time of Chauncy. In 1822, three tenements were in existence upon the north side, which are probably those still remaining nearly opposite the School of Art. Hedges at that period bounded the road, while on either hand were stiles leading into the fields, the latter being now nearly covered with bricks and mortar.
CHAPTER XVII.

THE MARKET PLACE AND FRENCH ROW.


Probably no portion of St. Albans so vividly recalls the past, with all its multitudinous associations, as the Market Place and its adjuncts. During the early ages of the Christian era the vast extent and Cyclopean fortifications of mighty Verulam, as seen from this elevated position, struck the simple Briton with awe and wonder, while subsequently from the same spot the bloodthirsty and marauding Northman beheld the city overthrown, and mournful in its desolation. Then a grand and stately pile of buildings rose upon the near slope of the hill, and a great centre of English monachism took root and flourished; under its protecting ægis simple dwellings clustered around
the Market Place, and formed the nucleus of the town of St. Albans. It was due to the fostering care of successive mitred Abbots of the great monastery that the future City slowly increased in size; larger tenements took the place of huts, and soon the Market Place teemed with life and activity as the inhabitants of surrounding districts flocked thither to buy and sell. From the time of Edred the Saxon King of England, from that remote and hoary past when the Market was founded by Ulsinus, this place has been, through varying vicissitudes, the commercial centre of St. Albans, and probably but few towns can claim such venerable antiquity and continuity for their places of barter and exchange.

The name of "Market Place" has no doubt descended from that time, but the appellations "French Row" and "Market Cross" are more recent. The derivation of that of French Row has caused many surmises on the part of historians. Matthew Paris alludes to the fact that some French prisoners were detained, in 1216, in a tenement in this quaint street, which may have been named from that circumstance, or possibly by reason of the road being occupied by the troops of Louis of France during his hostile visit to the town in 1217. The first known reference to French Row is to be found in a deed (dated 1385, in the reign of Richard II.) in the Corporation safe, where it is called, in the Law Latin of that day, "Vicus Francorum;" in another document (dated 1403) it is designated the "French Row," or "Cordwainers' Row," from whence it might be inferred that a colony of boot-makers had appropriated the street in the interim between
the dates of the two parchments; another term, that of "Cobblers' Row," which occurs in documents of the sixteenth century, may therefore refer to the same place. In the days of Abbot Wheathampsted, when the "Annales" saw the light, this narrow thoroughfare was again known as French Row—a cognomen it still retains, although the terms "Women's Market" and "Back Street" have been applied to it within comparatively recent years.

The Market Cross once adored the open space in front of the present Clock Tower, and around this spot are many interesting and picturesque structures, rich in associations with bygone times. The "Red Lion" Inn (or, as it is generally termed, the "Great Red Lion," in contradistinction to the two other "Red Lions" in the town) boasts of an antiquity so venerable that it effectually enlists our respect and attention. In monastic times we find it referred to as the "tenementum juxta Magnam Crucem," when it may possibly have served as a house of entertainment for pilgrims; and it is more than likely that the subterranean passage still existing under the roadway, from the "Red Lion" to the southern side of the High Street, also dates from those early days. The title of the house no doubt originated in the badge of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, who bore the lion of Leon and Castile on his arms in token of his claim to the throne of those countries; before the period in which he flourished it may often have been used
to represent the lion of Scotland. In the sixteenth century this Inn was known as "The Lyon," to which a reference is made in our Corporation records in 1703, in connection with a lease of the premises; and in 1741, and subsequent years, we find many entries there relating to the adjournments of the Courts to its hospitable roof. During the last century the "Red Lion" was re-fronted and modernised, and when Verulam Street was constructed a portion of the rear premises was appropriated for the town improvement.

The "Fleur-de-Lys" Inn (formerly known as the "Fleur de Luce") derives its euphonious appellation from the arms of France, and tradition asserts that within the walls of the ancient building which formerly covered this site, and of which a few time-worn vestiges are still visible, the captive King John was temporarily detained when first intrusted to the care of Abbot de la Mare by the chivalric victor of Poictiers. At some period before the dissolution of the monastery a subterranean stable existed behind these premises, the remains of which were brought to light when Verulam Street was cut through the gardens, the latter having at one time reached down the hill and joined those at the rear of the "George" Inn. At the Reformation the "Fleur-de-Lys" underwent repairs.\(^1\) and it is probable that, in the time of Queen Anne or the early Georges, the house was extensively altered, or even rebuilt. In 1721, a miller obtained leave from the Corporation to set up an oatmeal mill against the gateway of the "Flower-de-Luse," for which he agreed to pay eightpence per annum. A coach ran to London from this establishment during the last century and the beginning of the present, and the quaintly-picturesque view of the old hostelry, as depicted by Schnebbilie,\(^2\) represents the rear portion of the coach-entrance. In the British Museum is a drawing in water-colours of the old kitchen of the "Fleur-de-Lys," which shows a wide and deep ingle (wherein were roasted the huge joints prevalent in bygone days) with a double mantelshelf over it.

Adjacent to the "Fleur-de-Lys" stand three ancient tenements that but recently formed a single building known as the "Christopher" Inn, which was absolutely one of the oldest, best-known, and at the same time most notorious of mediæval hostels in St. Albans. The charm of antiquity and pictorial attractiveness inseparable from this time-worn structure imparts to French Row, in no small degree, the pre-eminently characteristic

\(^1\) Survey of St. Albans, 1556.
\(^2\) Vide Illustration p. 207.
appearance of an old-world thoroughfare; for nearly four centuries this brick-and-timber structure has battled bravely with storm and wind, heat and cold, and, through the lapse of tardily-passing ages, the gray shadow of the Curfew Tower has slowly crept over its gabled roofs and projecting eaves day after day and year after year, like the darkness cast by the gnomon upon a sculptured dial. Beneath its timbered gateway massive beams of oak may be discerned—warped, bent, and twisted by the superincumbent load they have borne so long; the now scanty remnants of fluted pillar and carved capital tell us of prosperous days when Tudor workmen wrought the oak into strange devices, while the curiously-designed bracket at the rear (of which two were formerly in existence, one on either side of the passage) attracts attention by reason of its quaint grotesqueness. In the rooms of this old building but little remains to indicate their former grandeur, so much has the interior been altered and modified to suit the varied requirements of successive owners and tenants. The Inn, no doubt, originally occupied the whole range between the "Fleur-de-Lys" and the present "Wheatsheaf" Inns, and it has been suggested that the "Padoxatorium" of the "Gesta" is synonymous with either the present structure or its predecessor in monastic days; the name occurs in the Survey of the town in 1556, and in the records of the Corporation we find it mentioned in 1591, when the Court met in one of its spacious rooms and transacted municipal business. Subsequently the Civic Fathers often foregathered within its hospitable walls, to "eat, drink, and be merry" at the town's expense whenever opportunity offered, for every national rejoicing, were it but the birthday of the reigning sovereign, the anniversary of a British coronation, or the natal days of the princes, furnished an excuse for conviviality; on great occasions, such as a proclamation of Peace, the storming of a fortress, or the celebration of a Victory, free and lavish hospitality was exercised, a quantity of the wines and spirits being consumed at the public cost; at these times the
neighbouring gentry were also entertained right royally, bonfires were lighted, and amusements provided for the common people, who were ungrudgingly regaled with copious libations of home-brewed ale and unlimited supplies of cake.3

A spacious yard and garden, extending to what is now Verulam Street and reaching in one part to Dagnall Street, once existed at the back of these premises, and in the yard were deposited the stones of the Eleanor Cross when the civic iconoclasts demolished it early in the eighteenth century, of the subsequent fate of which precious fragments of ancient Art there is, unhappily, no record. In the once large extent of the "Christopher" Yard stands a row of cottages crowded together, wherein epidemics formerly recurred periodically, while (strange locality for such a structure!) a handsome brick mansion, with an imposing entrance and other adjuncts of undoubted respectability, sprang into existence behind the old Inn during the last century, and disappeared completely in the early part of the present.2

About a hundred years ago the old Inn began to decline in popularity with its hitherto better class of frequenters, and entered upon that shady course of transactions which subsequently rendered it unpleasantly notorious. It opened its portals to the worst characters in the neighbourhood, it sheltered vagabonds and wanderers of all descriptions, and with police-court cases its name was intimately associated; thus the "Christopher" became a byword and a reproach. In the later Georgian and early Victorian periods, large numbers of Irish labourers flocked to St. Albans during the harvesting season, and upon

1 Gibbs' Corp. Rec.

2 In the summer of 1765, David Garrick and Quin (the latter of whom was remarkably fond of good living) made a trip to St. Albans where, on visiting the Abbey Church and being shown the bones of Duke Humphrey, Quin jocosely lamented that so many aromatics and such a quantity of spirits should have been wasted in preserving a dead body. The friends afterwards returned to dine at the "Old Christopher" Inn, and, whilst the wine was circulating, Garrick composed the following verses, which he termed

QUIN'S SOLILOQUY.

A plague on Egypt's arts, I say!
Embalm the dead! On senseless clay
Rich wines and spices waste!
Like sturgeon, or like brawn, shall I
Bound in a precious pickle lie,
Which I can never taste?

Let me embalm this flesh of mine,
With turtle fat, and Bordeaux wine,
And spoil th' Egyptian trade!
Than good Duke Humphrey, happier I,
Embalmed alive, old Quin shall die
A mummy ready made!
such occasions the "Christopher" invariably surpassed itself; fierce brawls and fights, generated within its wicked precincts, overflowed and spread among the excitable Hibernians without, and at times assumed such alarming proportions—the whole of French Row and the Market Place resembling a Donnybrook Fair—that the old watchmen, and subsequently the police, finding themselves utterly unable to cope with the struggling mass of humanity, had perforce to let the uproar die out of itself, the incident generally terminating in a run upon the local druggists for lint and plaster, followed by a rich harvest of fines in the morning*; at the Police Court. The denizens of the small cottages within the Yard also enjoyed an unenviable reputation as confirmed breakers of the public peace, and thus the ancient place ended a brilliant youth by a disreputable old age; some years ago it closed its doors, and, as a hostel, passed out of existence. At the present time the greater part of the ancient building is closed and advertised for sale, so it is more than probable that, in the near future, it will be razed to the ground to make way for a more modern and convenient erection, and thus will be removed another of those links with the past which, year by year, are unfortunately disappearing from the old City of St. Albans.

The "Dog" Inn stood adjacent to the "Christopher," but in comparatively recent times it was demolished and rebuilt. The majority of the other houses in the Row have either undergone the same transformation or have been so altered as to entirely obliterate the external appearance of antiquity.

French Row was, for a considerable period, known as the "Women's Market"; to it flocked on Saturdays the country women for many miles around, bringing in their baskets various kinds of farm- and dairy-produce for sale.1 The narrowness of the old street, however, militated somewhat against the convenience of the site, and, to prevent waggons and other carriages passing through when the Market was being held, a bar was placed across the road opposite the "Fleur-de-Lys" Inn in 1772. The Poultry Market was removed in 1804 to the Market Cross, probably through lack of sufficient accommodation in French Row.

The Moot Hall is undoubtedly one of the most interesting and ancient buildings

1 This recalls the fact that at one time it was the duty of the town to provide poultry for the use of the Royal household, but the obligation appears to have been set aside by the payment of a composition.
in St. Albans, and it is no exaggeration to say that it equals, if not surpasses, in point of antiquity, any other timbered house in England. The earliest document relating to this structure is dated 1283, where allusion is made to two shops being converted into a tenement in the Flesh Market, near the “Bothelingstock”; the termination of this word perhaps refers to the well-known method of punishment by the stocks, or it may be derived from “stoc,” a boundary (in which case the large stone in Dagnall Street may have been the boundary-stone), and various suggestions have been made regarding the meaning of “Botheling.” The tenement being named the Moot Hall, it would seem that the leading men of the town met within its walls to exercise the same functions as our Town Council, as well as those of the County Court. Before 1283, one of the two buildings just mentioned was the Charnel House (i.e., Flesh House) of the monastery, and as such it was conveyed by the Charter of Incorporation of King Edward VI. to the Mayor and Burgesses for their Common Hall. In 1381, John Ball and other notable insurgents were tried for their lives in the Moot Hall before Chief Justice Tressilian, and subsequently nearly a score suffered death by hanging upon the gallows near Sopwell Lane. Within its venerable walls, in 1455, Henry VI. held a council of war early in the day upon which the First Battle of St. Albans was fought, and the leaders of the army were still sitting when Warwick made his unexpected and determined attack upon the fortifications of the town. In one of the lower rooms of the Hall were kept the stocks and the pillory; the latter was erected, when required, in the Market Street opposite the present “King’s

1 In Saxon times the assembly answering to our Parliament was termed the Witanagemoot (or mote); a Shiremoot was placed over each county, and a Hundredmoot over each of its divisions. The Moot Hall of St. Albans may therefore have served as the place of meeting for the Hundredmoot of Cashio.

2 The building has also borne the names of The Stock House, The Compter, The Counter, and the Town Hall.
Head" Inn, the stocks being placed in the same street adjacent to the Moot Hall. Many references are made in the records of the Corporation to public punishments inflicted on offenders by order of the Justices. We read, for instance, that early in the eighteenth century a pound was given to the constables for whipping pickpockets, and five shillings for setting a man in the pillory, while another five shillings were spent upon them for refreshments when an evil-doer was whipped round the town. The fire-engines belonging to the town were also kept in the lower part of the Moot Hall, the stables being specially altered in 1738 to accommodate the two large ones; these engines, with their carriages, cost £40 in 1655, for they were made of brass, and specially adapted for the "beating and drowning" of fires. In the upper rooms of the Hall were held the Quarter Sessions for the Borough and the meetings of the Common Council, the last-named body comprising the Mayor, Aldermen, and twenty-four Assistants chosen by the Mayor and his coadjutors. The Assistants were summoned from time to time to give their help and counsel to their superiors upon knotty questions concerning the welfare of the burgesses, and were also appointed examiners of weights and measures; their sapient method of carrying out the latter duty was to appoint a certain day when all tradespeople were to attend with the weights and measures they generally used, in order to have them tested, but, needless to say, duplicate sets of both weights and measures were prevalent in the town. In the large upper room were held balls and public assemblies, which were attended by the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood, while the Trade Guilds also used it as a meeting-place; several fine specimens of ancient stained-glass, displaying coats-of-arms, shields, etc., once adorned the windows of this room, but they have entirely disappeared.

The lower part of the Moot Hall was for many years available as a gaol. That portion of it which was appropriated for the use of the female prisoners communicated with the street by an aperture through which they could freely converse with passers-by, but on Sessions day it was found necessary to close this window by means of a shutter, in order to prevent spirits and other intoxicants being transferred to the inmates. The lot of the unfortunate male prisoners was an unhappy one, for the room in which they were confined was so dark that it was hardly possible to tell night from day; there was no

1 Vide Benj. Hare's Map, 1634.
fireplace, and the total allowance of food consisted of only a pound-and-a-half of bread per diem. The great cost of reparation which the ancient structure entailed upon the town, together with the increasing necessity for better and more ample accommodation, led to the erection of the present Town Hall in 1829-30.

The Moot Hall was sold by auction in 1831, since which date a part of the frontage has been removed and rebuilt; but, notwithstanding this, there yet exists some evidence, in what now constitutes the business-premises of Messrs. Gibbs and Bamforth, of the character of the original design. During recent excavations at the rear of the building extensive remains of massive foundations came to light which were unquestionably of Roman origin; while associated with these were several specimens of pottery and glass, together with a number of stags' horns. These ancient relics were discovered in a cluster of deep circular pits similar to those found at Silchester, and were excavated by the Romans for the purpose of disposing of town rubbish.

The Market Place has been known at various times as the "Flesh Market," "Flesh Cheaping," the "Shambles," and the "Butchery"; that part of it lying between the north end of French Row and Dagnall Street was occupied by the Corn Market, or "Wheat Cheaping," and the Leather Market, or "Leather Shambles." Upon the sites of the houses recently erected in the Market Place, and facing the Moot Hall, formerly stood two inns,—named respectively the "Hare" and the "King's Arms,"—which were
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demolished in 1772; lower down, near the Corn Exchange, a quaint tenement partially supported upon two thick columns forms a well-known feature of the Market Place.

The Corn Exchange (erected in 1856-7) stands upon the site of the old Market House, which was presented to the town by Earl Spencer about 1791; it would appear that the Earl was so dissatisfied with the mean character and appearance of this structure, that he refused to allow the townspeople (in whose hands he had apparently left the whole matter) to place his arms thereon. The Market House consisted of a double wooden roof supported by eighteen plain timber posts, and was surmounted, after 1811, by the figure of Justice taken from the old Market Cross, to which I shall presently refer. From a very remote period a Market had been held upon the site, but the first covered building was probably that erected between 1588 and 1591. The narrow way at the rear of the Corn Exchange is the ancient "Pudding Lane," and the "Pudding Shamble" of Edward III.'s time was no doubt the open space wherein the Market was held.

Facing the Corn Exchange, and separating the Market Place from French Row, stands an extensive block of buildings which gives to this part of the town a charming picturesqueness such as is seldom to be found in these utilitarian days. The house forming the northern portion of this block had at one time (according to a scarce print in the British Museum) two artistically-designed bow-windows in the second floor, facing St. Peter's Street, which greatly enhanced its generally quaint appearance. The adjoining tenement and those abutting on the Clock Tower have (shop-fronts excepted) well preserved their original characteristics,—as witness Shepherd's drawing of 1807,1—

1 Vide Engraving in The Beauties of England and Wales, 1812.
although probably three centuries have passed since their erection. Owing to a comparatively recent outbreak of fire, several old timbered houses south of the Corn Exchange have been entirely destroyed. The "Boot" Inn, which was happily untouched by the conflagration, still bears an unmistakable air of antiquity in its outward appearance, while the house adjoining it to the south is represented in an old print in the British Museum with its upper story projecting far over the pavement, this striking feature being now supplanted by a modern re-fronting. In "Boot" Alley, to the rear of these dwellings, the handiwork of the nineteenth-century builder is by no means strongly apparent, and a glimpse of this remnant of old St. Albans is refreshing after viewing some of the staring erections which the exigencies of the present time appear to necessitate.

In 1703, shortly after the demolition of the Eleanor Cross, a Market House was ordered to be built upon the site which the monument had previously occupied; it was octagonal in form, and supported upon posts at the corners, the roof being surmounted by a figure of Justice; there was a well in the centre, and the erection generally was considered to be ornamental as well as useful. In 1777, a waggon collided with the Cross and damaged it; in 1810, a similar accident occurred, and, being considered dangerous, this structure was taken down, and protective iron railings put round the Pump; a print of 1849 shows it in the same state with the addition of a lamp-post. In 1871, the Town Pump (as it was termed) was removed, and a Drinking Fountain, presented by Mrs. Worley and designed by Sir Gilbert Scott, was placed there in its stead.

There is an old-world character about the primitive street market. At night, when the oil lamps are flaming away, and the air is filled with loud cries of the vendors of all kinds of wares, the scene is most picturesque and attractive, appealing more forcibly, perhaps, to the stranger than to the born-and-bred Albanian,\(^1\) who is naturally accustomed to look upon such a sight as a matter-of-course. The old-fashioned houses, illumined by the fitful glare of the flickering lights, form a fitting background to the well-laden stalls, enabling us to realise how this busy spot must have appeared many centuries ago. Doubtless, this quaint street market will one day be a thing of the past; but there are some among us who will sadly regret the time when the utilitarian spirit of the age brings about the removal of such an interesting link with bygone generations.

\(^1\) Lord Grimthorpe first applied this name to the people of St. Albans.
CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CLOCK TOWER AND THE CURFEW BELL.


One of the most conspicuous and interesting features in St. Albans is the Clock Tower, which stands in the very heart of the City, in close proximity to the picturesque Market Place and to that quiet, mediæval thoroughfare, French Row. This lofty edifice exhibits a marked individuality essentially its own, and asserts itself, by reason of its height and commanding position, from nearly every point of view in and around the town. The poetical glamour of romance pervades the quaint old structure, on account of its origin being unknown until a comparatively recent period; such sentimental associations are often the result of that reverential respect which is naturally conceived for what survives from prehistoric times. Tradition says that two Roman dames of Verulamium once lost their way in the darkness on this then benighted spot, when they suddenly espied the distant lights of home, and were enabled to reach their destination in safety; as a token, therefore, of thankfulness for delivery from the dangers which had threatened them, they afterwards caused to be erected at this point a Beacon Tower,—and such (according to the legend) was the origin of what is now known as the Clock Tower. In the bestowal upon it of the title of "King Canute’s Tower" our minds are filled with memories of the ancient glories of Kingsbury, which ceased a thousand years ago. Matthew Paris asserts that the Kingsbury Tower was standing in his time, and, in the absence of any definite records of the position it occupied, it was natural to assume that a connection existed between the present structure and the ancient Saxon tower.

Doubtless Newcome is responsible for fostering the supposition that this is the
tower left by Ethelred, and his assertion, though not insisted upon, appears to have been generally accepted. There is, however, in the Corporation safe at the present time a number of documents relating to the Clock Tower, one of them being a deed dated the 29th of June, in the fourth year of King Henry IV., A.D. 1402, in which Alicia, the relict of Ralph atte Lee (the latter being doubtless the same who figured so prominently in the Peasants' Revolt), conveys "to Geoffrey Fyllynder and others all her right in a vacant piece of land lying in the town of St. Albans, in the street of the French, sometimes called Cordwainers' Row, which contains in width eighteen feet, in length thirty-two feet." Another deed, dated 141, includes a reference to the Clock Tower which implies that it occupied a part of the land formerly described as being vacant, and this document apparently escaped the notice of Clutterbuck, for he cites a later one, dated 1427, where the Clock House is mentioned. By the incorrect transcription, however, of "triginta et octo pedes" in the former document and "triginta et duo pedes" in the latter for the length of the ground, a doubt might arise as to whether or not these two statements had reference to the same spot. From these records we must infer that the present structure was built between the years 1402 and 141, and that the purpose for which it was erected was doubtless to hold the Curfew Bell and the clock.

In 1490, the Clock House was leased to John Newberry and others, the tenants covenan ting to keep and rule the clock in the said tenement, and to ring the Curfew Bell between eight and nine o'clock in the evening and at four o'clock in the morning,—the latter time being the hour at which the apprentices commenced their daily labours! In the Corporation safe there are many subsequent leases of the Tower. From an early period smaller buildings appear to have been erected against it; for example, in 1594, we read of Mr. Robert Woolley's lease being renewed for twenty-one years at the annual rent of 20 shillings for the Clock House, shop, and all the rooms and buildings thereof; and in 1703, Robert Evans paid £2 17s. for his standing under the Tower, the lease being granted the same year to Alderman Marston at £5 per annum. In 1720, a shed, or "lean-to," was erected on the west side of the Tower, to form a shelter for the market people. Here, also, stood a box for the use of night watchmen, which was not removed till 1830. The tenants of the Clock House in 1731,

1 Newcome, p. 508.
Anthony Thorpe and his son, were exempted from quartering soldiers there in consideration of their keeping the clock going and in good repair. In 1773, the Tower was let at £8 per annum. In 1794, several gentlemen subscribed for a new town clock, the old one being taken down and sold; its successor, however, was apparently not obtained until 1804, when the Corporation voted £40 towards the cost, the remainder being defrayed by Earl Spencer, Viscount Grimston, Hon. James Walter Grimston, M.P., Mr. W. S. Poyntz, M.P., and the Mayor, Mr. Thomas Baskerfield. In the same year the sum of £38 9s. 6d. was expended on repairs to the Tower.

In 1807, the Government obtained permission to erect a Telegraph upon the roof, concerning which a local history says:—“On the top of it during the late war was placed a telegraph communicating with Yarmouth and the Admiralty: the amazing celerity with which information was conveyed from the Admiralty to Yarmouth was truly astonishing,—intelligence having been sent and an answer returned in the short space of five minutes, a distance by the route of the mail of upwards of 200 miles. The telegraph has been taken down within the last year, but the small room beneath it, fitted up for the use of those who worked it, still remains.”1 “The apparatus, as represented in drawings of the period, consisted of a lofty framework of wood, upon which were suspended large movable wooden discs, having in the centre a circular aperture, and the variation in the position of these discs indicated the nature of the messages.”2 A contemporary print shows that, after the removal of the semaphore, a chimney was erected on the summit, but the unsightly shed on the roof was not taken down until 1852.

About that time the dangerous condition of the Tower occasioned a committee being appointed, whose report was sent to Professor Donaldson, and his suggested alterations were adopted. In 1858, the building being still insecure, it was resolved to restore it; the consent of the Treasury was obtained, Professor Donaldson was again in request, subscriptions were collected, and, with Mr. Hill as architect, the work was carried out in 1865-6, a new clock

1 Hist. of Ver. and St. Alb., 1815.  
being also added at a cost of £152. The dilapidated dwelling-house at the base of the Tower was demolished, and thus another picturesque feature was lost to the town; for many years this quaint tenement bore the sign of the "Elephant and Castle," and it is said that one of its occupiers (who was living in 1885) was employed, when a boy, to travel between Gorhambury House and the St. Albans Post Office with letters, which he usually did riding on the back of a large dog.\(^1\) The restoration was carried out in a most conscientious manner, every characteristic feature being faithfully preserved and the old work retained wherever possible; the time-worn aspect, however, which it formerly presented and which constituted its chief charm, necessarily disappeared, and the renovated structure contains but few vestiges of its rugged and picturesque predecessor.

The Curfew Bell has always been a subject of much controversy and speculation, and many conflicting statements have been made respecting its origin and antiquity. The account given by Mr. John Harris, at the meeting of the Archeological Association in 1869, is generally accepted as the most reliable. The Bell weighs about one ton, its diameter is 3 ft. 10\(\frac{1}{2}\) in., and its note F natural. It is inscribed \(\textit{Missi De Celis Habeo Nomen Gabriellis}\). The final cross is identical with that at the end of the inscription on the sixth bell in All Saints' Church, Sudbury, Suffolk; so, as this church belonged to the Abbots of St. Albans, it seems probable that the latter bell was made in the town. The Curfew Bell is a beautiful piece of casting, the letters being in high relief and most skilfully executed. With respect to its age, we find from the Abbey records that Abbot Michael de Mentmore, about 1335, caused two bells, named "Amphibal" and "Alban," to be recast, and also provided another great bell called "Gabriel," all of which were dedicated, while "Amphibal" and "Gabriel" were deputed to be rung at Curfew. How the latter came into the possession of the Corporation is not known; having been cast in 1335, it is evidently older than the Tower (which, as previously stated, was erected between 1402 and 1411), while the Abbey bells in their entirety were not owned by the town until 1552. We may therefore conjecture that some transaction regarding this Bell took place between the monastery and the townspeople during the Abbacy of William Heyworth, the 32nd Abbot (1401 to 1421), concerning whose

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THE CLOCK TOWER AND THE CURFEW BELL.

rule nothing is recorded except the fact that he was highly esteemed for his piety and good conduct. The frame of the Bell has been frequently repaired, and some portions of the original framing may still be incorporated with the present one; it is almost certain that the bearing brasses and bolts are of the same age as the Bell itself. The Curfew was rung as recently as 1862, but was discontinued after the restoration of the Tower upon a petition of some of the inhabitants, its sole use now being for striking the hours.

In the same chamber is another bell, known as the Market Bell, which is sometimes used as an alarm for fires. It weighs, with the clapper, 75 lbs., and is inscribed, Thos. Robins Mayor of St. Albans 1729. It was cast by Richard Phelps, who, in the same year, also produced the eight larger bells of the peal in St. Peter's Church.

The lower story of the Clock Tower is now used as the workshop of a saddle and harness maker, and a peep through the low-arched doorway reveals an interior which is strikingly picturesque, for here may be seen the men busily occupied at benches bestrewn with appliances necessary for their trade, the ecclesiastical character of the architecture constituting a most effective background. We surmount the winding stairway—narrow and dark—and, arriving at the summit of the Tower, what a magnificent view of town and country lies before us!

In the foreground we look directly upon a congregation of roofs, especially noting the old red roofs that form a conspicuous feature of mediæval St. Albans, and which the late Richard Jeffries thus eulogised:—“A city—as something to look at—depends very much on its roofs. If a city have no character in its roofs it stirs neither heart nor thought. . . Red-tiled roofs have a distinctiveness, a character; they are something to think about.” From the foreground of this delightful picture the eye wanders towards the horizon. To the north we see, at the further extremity of St. Peter's Street, the massive tower of the church embowered in foliage; to the west, the setting sun fills with departing glory the grassy undulations of Gorhambury Park, and illumines the Church of St. Michael; the aspect towards the south is limited, for near us rises that splendid pile, the Abbey, its architectural proportions being easily realised from this point of vantage; finally, there is the eastern prospect, beginning at that old hostelry, the "Peahen," and continuing in the direction of the Great Metropolis. Surely such an impressive panorama as this is a sufficient reward for our enterprise in climbing to the roof of the famous old Clock Tower!
CHAPTER XIX.

GEORGE STREET AND ROMELAND.

George Street—Derivation of the Name—The “Cage”—An Ancient Building—The “George” Inn—The Oratorium—The Old Inn and the Coaching Days—“Corner Halle,” or the “Hostry”—The Old “Antelope” Inn—Spicer Street—Dr. Cotton and the Collegium Insanorum—The Poet Cowper—The “Verulam Arms” Inn—Discovery of Roman Pottery.


This steep and narrow thoroughfare, anciently designated “Chirche Strate,” derived its present name in mediæval times from that famous hostelry, “The George and Dragon,” now known under its abbreviated title of “The George.” Church Street formed part of the southern boundary of the ancient manor of Squyler, or Squillers (which manor was purchased by Abbot John Wheathamsted), four tenements of that monastic property being described as standing in this thoroughfare. At the upper part of the Street, where it joins Verulam Road, there is a vacant piece of land upon which originally stood an ancient house that encroached upon the road; in the coaching-days this was a most dangerous corner, and many accidents occurred there, but in the early part of the present century the old structure which caused this serious obstruction to traffic was purchased by the Corporation and demolished. Near this point also stood the “Cage,” in which nocturnal offenders against the peace were invariably incarcerated for the night, prior to their being taken before magistrates on the following morning. It consisted of a square roof supported upon stout oaken posts, and presented a cage-like arrangement of vertical wooden bars, between which the miserable delinquents could be easily seen, standing or reposing upon a litter of straw provided for their accommodation.

1 Amund. II. 262. 2 Ibid. I. 463.
The fine old timber-and-brick house at the north-east corner, with its quaint gables, projecting upper-story, and grotesquely-distorted contour, imparts a characteristic aspect to this part of the hill, enabling us to realise the picturesque appearance which the thoroughfare once presented. The building dates from the fourteenth or fifteenth century; in the upper portions are still preserved some good examples of early carving in oak, one specimen in the Perpendicular Gothic style, which occupies a prominent position over a mantelpiece, being especially worthy of notice, while the massive timbering of the roof and the giant beams of English oak, incorporated in the walls and other parts of this ancient structure, will apparently enable it to battle successfully with the devastating effects of Time and climate for many more years to come.

Adjacent to this venerable and weather-worn erection stands the famous "George" Inn, one of the few remaining links that connect us with the magnificent monastic foundation which once rendered St. Albans a cynosure of ecclesiastical dignity and power. In the days when the fame of Britain's First Martyr drew thousands of devotees to worship at his costly Shrine, the old hostelry of "The George and Dragon" (or, as it was designated in 1448, "The George upon the Hupe") opened its portals to the weary pilgrims, and afforded them rest and comfort both of body and soul, for, in the "Oratorium"\(^1\) (or private chapel, attached to the building and forming a part of the premises), the wanderers could, by hearing Low Mass, prepare themselves for the sight of the Holy Shrine they had travelled so far to behold. This chapel was licensed for the celebration of Mass in 1484, the proprietor being Thomas Hethnes; but after the Reformation period it was adapted for baser purposes, and eventually became part of the stables. Records are in existence which trace the fortunes of the hostelry in unbroken succession from the year 1483 to the present time, and there still remain many parts of the old structure incorporated with the more modern erections and additions. In the coaching-days the "George" was a well-known house and a favourite place of call, for its excellent accommodation and particularly its famous home-brewed ale were justly celebrated. In its capacious stables and coach-houses swarms of ostlers, grooms, coachmen, postboys, and guards were continually passing and re-passing; coaches arrived and departed in rapid succession, accompanied by post-chaises,

\(^1\) *Registrum*, II. 269.
private diligence, and long strings of pack-horses bearing manufactured goods of all kinds en route for London; all of which, combined with the inevitable accompaniment of noisy coach-horns, ostlers' cries, postillions' shouts, and the confused hubbub of passengers' voices, resulted in a scene of commotion, bustle, and haste such as only a flourishing coaching-inn could produce. The "George" was also enabled to boast of a coach of its own, which, in the early part of the present century, left St. Albans at eight o'clock in the morning for the "Ram" Inn, Smithfield, starting on the return journey at two o'clock in the afternoon. At the rear of the main coach-entrance is a fine example of eighteenth-century carving, removed from Holywell House upon its demolition in 1837.

The house adjacent to the "George" Inn upon the western side stands upon the site of a tenement which was given to the Grammar School by Richard Platt during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the date being unknown; it was burnt down in 1745 and the present building erected soon after, the rent of which is still utilised for the maintenance of the School. 1 Between the "George" and the "Antelope" Inn at the corner of Spicer Street some old-world tenements yet remain, the interior apartments of which belong to the Jacobean and Georgian eras; it is asserted that underneath these buildings there is a subterranean passage running parallel with the road, but this probably was a large drain originally connected with the "George" Inn. The "Antelope" and the Abbey Schools stand upon the site of "The Hostry," a monastic building, which, in the time of Abbot John de Hertford (1235 to 1260), afforded accommodation for the

1 Gibbs' Gram. Sch.
guests of the fraternity and for the chief persons in their retinues; it was also known by the term "Domus angularis," one of the chief apartments in it being the celebrated Queen's Chamber. Subsequently it is described as the "Corner Halle," and doubtless it fulfilled the useful function for which it was primarily erected until the Reformation, as we find from sixteenth-century documents that the Keeper of the Abbot's Hostry, or Guest House, is described as living in Chequer Street. Afterwards the buildings were utilised as barracks for the levies furnished by St. Albans, but eventually they were wholly or partially demolished, and an inn erected there which is known to us as the old "Antelope." In 1824, Buckler made a drawing of the inner court of the old hostel, and the interior thus shown, with the gallery which ran round it, is of an essentially  

1 *Gesta*, I. 324. There is considerable doubt respecting the locality of the "Hospice of Corner-Halle." The late Dr. Ridgway Lloyd, in his "Altars," etc., quotes the following:—"Moreover he [Abbot John de Hartford] acquired a great house in a street called 'Chirche Strate,' very suitable for guests, which belonged to John Fitz-Moyses; this house pays thirty shillings yearly. It is a corner-house, and common to the street which runs towards the East, and that which goes to the North; it is before the Abbey Gate.' This Gate was probably Wax-house Gate; Corner-Halle seems to have occupied the angle formed by George (formerly Church) Street and French Row, where a public-house called the 'Great Red Lion' now stands, or the opposite angle, found [formed?] by the Market Place and High Street, where is now a tobacconist's shop."

The Rev. H. Fowler, in his "Boundary Wall," etc., locates the site as that now occupied by the "Antelope" Inn and the Abbey Schools in Spicer Street, and I have inclined to the latter suggestion by reason of the expression "the Abbey Gate," which appears to imply the "Great Gate," and not the "Wax-house Gate," the last-named being invariably referred to in monastic annals under its complete appellation.
interesting character. We must deplore the fact that the exigencies of modern requirements necessitated the removal of such a picturesque relic.

The majority of the tenements on the south side of George Street present a somewhat modern appearance, as new fronts have in many cases been substituted; the interiors, however, are as a rule quaint and interesting, possessing rooms of low pitch with small windows looking to the rear, together with narrow passages and corridors having unsuspected steps in unlikely places, which only the builders of olden times could have had the wit to conceive and the audacity to execute. The gardens at the rear of these houses occupy

![Old House in College Street](image)

Formerly the Collegium Insanorum.

a part of the site of the monastic cemetery, and many traces of interments have been discovered in them; at one time there were no gardens attached, the boundary-wall of the monastery being so close to the present George Street that space did not permit of their formation. The following passage, quoted from the “Gesta,” is interesting as bearing upon this subject:—“The wall also of the Cemetery of the Monastery was destroyed, upon which wall most of the tenements in Chirche Strate and Halywelle Strate are built, and which had been a safe and unfailing boundary between the town and the Monastery; the wall was demolished for the sake of the stone, which was used
for other purposes."1 This occurred during the abbacy of Thomas de la Mare, and it is probable that the subsequent gardens were formed by encroachments upon the Abbey possessions.

Spicer Street is an ancient roadway, probably so-called from the rents being appropriated to the office of the Spicer in the monastery; the oldest building now existing in it is the "Vine" Inn, which dates from the sixteenth century. College Street was not built until the beginning of the present century; it derives its name from the fine old building still standing at the junction of this thoroughfare with Dagnall Street, which formed at one time the "Collegium Insanorum" of Dr. Nathaniel Cotton, who was buried in St. Peter's churchyard. It has been suggested that the building is of ecclesiastical origin, and, as such, may possibly be the "All Souls' Chapel" of the monastic records; the plastering upon a portion of the southern wall has been recently removed, and reveals stonework beneath which appears to bear out the supposition. But undoubtedly the chief interest which the building now possesses is that it once formed the temporary home of William Cowper, for, during one of the attacks of that mental disease from which the poet suffered (a form of religious madness), he was placed under the care of Dr. Cotton, and resided in the College for two years (1763-65), where, under the skilful and humane attention of the worthy doctor, he was apparently cured, and thus safely enabled to take up his residence in Huntingdon. The room which the poet occupied is on the ground floor, facing the street, and is indicated in the accompanying sketch by the window in the centre of the building. The carved mantelpiece and oak panelling that adorned this apartment in Cowper's time were unfortunately removed about ten years ago, having been purchased by a London dealer.

In Verulam Road, adjacent to Christ Church and almost opposite College Street, is a residence standing within its own grounds, which, in coaching-days, was known as the "Verulam Arms," and formed a favourite "house of call," while the stables, formerly attached to the inn, stood upon the spot now occupied by the Church.

Several discoveries of Roman pottery and other remains have at times been found in Verulam Road and its vicinity. A vase, now in the possession of Mr. A. E. Gibbs, was found in 1882 by some workmen whilst excavating the basement for a new house in Worley

1 Gesta, III. 418.
a number of jars and other vessels were also brought to light, these varying in height from two inches to a foot, and being of divers shapes and various materials. Like those unearthed in Verulam Road in 1875, within a short distance of the same spot, the larger vessels were made of common clay, and are of a very rough and porous nature. The use to which some of these were put is patent, for they were full of mould and calcined bones, though the object of burying the smaller vessels is not so evident. The proximity of this spot to the site of the discovery in 1875 points to the probability that this locality was used as a burial-ground by the Romans. Although the larger and coarser vessels seem to be almost too rough to come from the hands of a Roman potter, yet the marks of the wheel upon them prove them to be of Roman origin. The presence here of a fine piece of Samian ware,—a saucer,—confirms this supposition; it is about seven inches in diameter, and has a moulded rim, while upon it are stamped some letters, probably the name of the maker. Altogether about a dozen pieces of pottery came to hand, but no coin or other similar object was discovered by which their approximate age could be ascertained.

ROMELAND.

This interesting portion of the old City appears to have acquired its present triangular proportions in comparatively late years. In all probability during the Saxon and part of the Norman period the ground was rectangular, one side being formed by the front of the Abbey Gateway with its flanking walls; another, by the west front of the Abbey, the west front of St. Andrew's Church (when built), and the wall reaching to George Street; a third, by the Romeland Hill; and the fourth, by the line of wall extending along the western side of the present School playground. The great space so formed would present an imposing approach to the monastery, as well as affording room for the marshalling of processions and accommodation for the numerous retinues of the kings and queens who so frequently visited the monastery.

In early Saxon times the view to be obtained from this commanding point must have
been a beautiful one. Where the lower part of Fishpool Street now takes its course the old "Salipath" wound down the slope, and thence between the great lake and Kingsbury; on the right was a well-timbered wood with here and there a flanking-tower emerging from the foliage, or a peep of the encircling wall of the Saxon Palace, whose towers and turrets were clearly defined against the sky. Upon the left hand the chaotic ruins of Verulam appeared, with the curling smoke from some of the Roman houses which still stood, but were then occupied by Saxon hinds, and where also lurked many a Saxon outlaw, bankrupt, and robber. The old ruins, the contour of which was picturesquely softened by distance, sloped down to the great Fishpool, whose broad waters filled the whole of the wide base of the valley and stretched far away towards the horizon.

With Norman times came changes to Romeland. The "Salipath" disappeared and "Fischi-pole Strate" occupied its place; where it abutted on Romeland, at the present Wellclose Street, stood a massive gateway across the road, called the "Bone Gate"; Wellclose Street was then merely a rural footpath known as "Dagenhalle (or Dagnall) Strate," its course being diverted at its northern end towards the centre of the town. This latter portion still retains the original name. The site of Romeland House was then occupied by a small tenement, and east of it, but remote from the road, stood the monastic building used as a School House by the mediæval Grammar School.
“Hockerhulle,” or the King’s Street, ran from the Bone Gate to the junction of “Spicere Strate” with “Chirche Strate.” On the eastern side the open space of Romeland was bounded by a high, crenellated, stone wall, separating it from the burial-ground of the laity, or general inhabitants of the town.

At the Abbey Churchyard gate (upon a site now partially occupied by the residence of Canon Liddell) an important building formerly existed, known as the “Polyandrium;” it was erected by Abbot William de Trumpington, and dedicated by Thomas, Bishop of Durham, as a charnel-house, in which were deposited the remains of those who died during the terrible time of the Interdict under King John. The lower parts of the present house are of monastic origin, and a portion of the original structure may be seen near the entrance-gates to the Abbey Churchyard. The Great Gateway reared its imposing front against the southern side of the square, having buildings attached to it for the free scholars of the School and the custodians of the Gateway.

The capacious court-yard, formed in the manner just described, was appropriately called “Roumeland” (meaning “roomy land”), and many historical persons have entered its precincts when visiting the great Benedictine monastery. Concerning Saxon monarchs after Offa’s time there is nothing definite recorded, but, from the interest taken in the religious community by every king, from Offa to Edward the Confessor, and thence to Hardicanute and Harold, we can hardly doubt that the ancient sovereigns of England have often been within its bounds. In 1066, William the Conqueror arrived here in hot indignation after his impeded march from Berkhamsted, and it is not improbable that Rufus was present in this locality about the year 1093. In 1114 came also Henry I. and Queen Matilda, with a large number of the chief earls, barons, and nobles of England and Normandy. The handsome and conceited King Stephen visited Romeland in 1152, and Henry II. in 1184, both monarchs being right royally entertained at the monastery. In 1215, King John appeared in this historic place at the head of his army, and he was shortly afterwards followed by the Dauphin, Lewis of France. Henry III. paid six visits to St. Albans, and here also, in 1252 and 1264, Queen Eleanor of Provence was received. Prince Edward (afterwards Edward I.) came hither during the lifetime of his father; Edward II.,

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1 This word signifies a cemetery, and was coined by Arnobius about 297 A.D. 2 Gesta Abbat. I. 269.
Albion: Historical and Picturesque

The Abbey of St. Albans, as it lay on the Eton Street, ran from the Dane Gate to the junction of the St. Albans and the Great North Road. On the eastern side the original site of the former church-yard was occupied by a high, crenellated, stone wall, separating it from the building-ground of the Abbey and surrounded by walls of the town.

The Abbey Churchyard gate (upon a site now partially occupied by the residence of Sir John Liddell) was an important building formerly existed, known as the "Polyandrion." It was erected by Abbot William de Trumpton, and dedicated by Thomas, Bishop of Durham, as a chantry-house, in which were deposited the remains of those who died during the terrible time of the Interdict under King John. The lower parts of the present house are of monastic origin, and a portion of the original structure may be seen near the entrance-gates to the Abbey Churchyard. The Great Gateway reared its imposing front against the southern side of the square, having buildings attached to it for the free scholars of the School and the custodians of the Gateway.

The spacious area-yard, formed in the manner just described, was appropriately called "Polyandrion," meaning "many lands") and many historical persons have entered its portals when visiting the great Benedictine monastery. Concerning Saxon monarchs that there is nothing definite recorded, but, from the interest taken in the religious establishment by every king, from Offa to Edward the Confessor, and thence to Hardicanute and Ethelred, we can hardly doubt that the ancient sovereigns of England have often visited its bounds. In 1066, William the Conqueror arrived here in hot indignation after the sanguinary march from Berchampsted, and it is not improbable that Rufus was present at this locality about the year 1093. In 1114 came also Henry I., and Queen Matilda, with a large number of the chief earls, barons, and nobles of England and Scotland. The handsome and conceited King Stephen visited Romeland in 1139, and Henry II., in both monarchs being right royally entertained at the monastery.

By 1199 King John was imposed in this historic place at the head of his army, and he was strongly defended by the Dauphin, Lewis of France. Henry III. paid six visits to St. Albans, and three were in 1265 and 1266, Queen Eleanor of Provence was received. Prince Edward (afterwards Edward I.) came thither during the lifetime of his father Edward II.
in 1311; Queen Philippa, in 1346, with the infant Edmund of Langley; and Richard II., in
1381; whilst the unfortunate Henry VI. knew Romeland well. Edward IV. also visited
this locality, as did probably Richard III. King John of France, “good Duke Humphrey,”
and a long list of bygone notabilities, are remembered in association with this open space,
where, as a general rule, they alighted before entering the sacred precincts of the monastery.

Let me essay to give a description of such a scene as was frequently witnessed in
this historic spot during the Plantagenet period. It is early morning in Romeland.
The great gates are closed in the “Magna Porta,” but before them is a crowd of
indigent poor waiting for the daily doles. The clank of armour is heard, and a
knight and his esquire dismount to pay their morning orisons at the High Altar of
the Abbey, the sun glinting upon the polished steel as they pass under the central porch.
Here, with cored gown and voluminous hood, a weary palmer stays his steps, and,
leaning upon his staff, thinks of the burning plains of far-off Palestine, comparing
them with the healthy freshness of the morning’s air. The free scholars, with tonsured head
and clad in cassock down to the feet, run nimbly by; lay brothers of the fraternity pass
to and fro on their several duties; up “Hockerhulle” and “Chirche Strate” go cumbersome carts
laden with country produce; herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, droves of geese, wagons
piled with hay and corn are all bound for that mighty London, which then, as now,
seemed to absorb everything. Presently, from the Abbey issues a gorgeous procession
of ecclesiastics with swinging censers and raised banners; soldiers arrive, couriers halt for
refreshment, and vassals of the Abbey come to swear allegiance to their lord. So the busy
day goes on for Romeland.

Here is another picture. It is August 26th, 1555, in the reign of Queen Mary.
The doors of the Great Gateway are opened wide, and through them the Water Gate of
the monastery can be seen, with the King’s Stables to the right; most of the other monastic
erections have perished, only heaps of débris and jagged walls indicating where these
buildings stood. The Abbey is there, but it looks bare and crude, for the church of St.
Andrew has disappeared from its north side. The Grammar School building has also
vanished, the Bone Gate no longer bars the way, and Romeland itself is curtailed by
the fencing-in of a piece of ground on the western side called “Hyde’s Close,” now the

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playground attached to the Grammar School. In the centre of the remaining space (where the grass now grows freely, and where at the present day a yew-tree stands) a short stout post has been erected, to which an iron chain is attached, while around it many faggots are placed, with others in reserve. It is the time when the Marian persecution is at its height, and this post and chain are a well-known feature of the times; they tell us that St. Albans is to have a second martyr, and that Tankerfield is about to be sacrificed for his faith. And this brings me to the notorious incident with which Romeland is so intimately connected.

Until the persecution under Queen Mary commenced George Tankerfield was a Papist, but the merciless cruelties practised by the Romanists caused him to become an ardent Protestant. He was arrested, lodged in Newgate, and in due time brought before Bishop Bonner, by whom he was condemned to the stake.

From his London prison Tankerfield was delivered into the hands of two Hertfordshire officers, Edward Brocket of Hatfield, High Sheriff of Herts, and John Pulter of Hitchin, who was Under Sheriff. He was brought to St. Albans, though why this was done is not very apparent; "the probability is that the sufferers were distributed by Bonner's direction over his diocese for execution, because Protestant belief prevailed in many parishes, and it was desirable to strike terror into its votaries everywhere." Tankerfield was burnt in St. Albans because a strong Protestant element existed, represented on the one hand by the Ferrers, the Maynards, the Pembertons, and Sir Nicholas Bacon (lately come to Gorhambury), and on the other by a tyrannical and furious Romanist majority, headed by the Rector of the Abbey, William East, and by the Mayor of the town, Henry Gape.

The old inn where the Sheriffs stopped with their prisoner was the "Cross Keys," part of which, though considerably altered, still remains. Tankerfield was temporarily

1 Foxe's Book of Martyrs.
2 George Tankerfield was born in York in 1527; he removed to London, and lived in a house in Fleet Street, at the corner of Chancery Lane.
3 At the same time two other men were sentenced and subsequently suffered death in Hertfordshire, namely, Thomas Fust and William Hale, the former being burnt at Ware and the latter at Barnet.
4 Cussans' Hist. of Herts.
5 Urwick's Nonconf. in Herts.
handed over to the care of the host, his conductors having received invitations to a marriage-feast at a house not far from the town; eventually, when they had attended carefully to this important part of the day's proceedings, they returned to the inn and led Tankerfield to Romeland, where he was to suffer death. When bound to the stake an effort was made by the Rector of the Abbey and the Mayor to shake his faith, but in vain; and a certain knight (was it Sir Nicholas Bacon?) spoke sympathisingly to this victim of religious zeal. Thus, with the utmost firmness, George Tankerfield sealed his faith with his life.

To the first martyr at St. Albans a magnificent fane is dedicated, but to the second not even a mural tablet or simple cross is erected; indeed, to many of the inhabitants his very name is unfamiliar!

In the seventeenth century Romeland was waste ground upon which were erected a "pound" and several sheds, one part of it (measuring about ten poles) being let, in 1715, for ninety-nine years at an annual rental of ten shillings. About 1700, Mr. Vandermeulen pulled down the old structure at the corner of Wellclose Street, and erected the present Romeland House; the blocks of stone and the flints used in the foundations and lower parts may possibly have been obtained from the preceding house and the old Grammar School building, but the time when the latter was demolished is apparently not recorded. A break occurs in this wall in Wellclose Street, and tradition states that through it Miss Vandermeulen eloped with her lover, Mr. Fowler, then organist at the Abbey, who subsequently committed

1 Gibbs' Corp. Rec.
2 Vide Map of Monastery, &c., by the Rev. H. Fowler, 1876.
suicide, his body being found in the public passage which at that time ran through the Abbey. At about this date substantial tenements were erected in Romeland, some cottages and other unimportant dwellings being built opposite Romeland House. Of these, a picturesque group known as "Blue Row" was demolished in 1823 by order of the Corporation. On the occasion of a comparatively-recent burial the old well belonging to these cottages (from which Wellclose Street is said to derive its name) came to light in the lower corner of the present triangular piece of ground. Probably the "pound" had disappeared before then; it is shown on a map published in 1766,¹ but not on Clutterbuck's in 1822. Some of the inhabitants seem to have used the vacant land as a drying-ground, for in 1810 "those persons who had encroached on Room Land by erecting drying-posts were ordered to remove the same."²

At various times this open space appears to have given rise to a considerable amount of friction and discontent among local bodies; for instance, in 1827, the Council suggested they should erect upon it a Town Hall, and during the same year the Justices wished to acquire it for the purpose of building a Court House there; in 1836, a National School was proposed for the site, but in 1837 the churchwardens of the Abbey parish expressed a desire to utilise it for extending their burial-ground, and, after much negotiation, it was finally sold to them in 1839. The small piece of land sloping down in front of the houses on the bank was purchased by the Corporation in 1884.

Such are some of the various changes and vicissitudes which have been experienced by this remarkable site,—a site possessing so rich a mine of interesting associations, not only with St. Albans, but also with bygone events that have made their mark in the unfading history of the English Nation.

¹ Vide Map by Andrews and Wren. ² Gibbs' Corp. Rec.
CHAPTER XX.

ST. MICHAELS

AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

The Village of St. Michaels—Blacksmith's Lane—The Cricket-Ground—Darrowfield House—St. Germain's Farm—Festivities on "Oak-Apple Day"—The "Bercherie"—"Gommerstone"—St. Michael's Mills—Roman Relics—St. John's Lane—The "Salpath."


The memorials of full nineteen centuries of the history of St. Albans are apparent to the observer stationed upon the little bridge which spans the diminutive River Ver at St. Michaels. The grassy strath lying low by the banks of this meandering
stream once formed the bed of the great Roman lake, from the ancient northern confines of which stretch the shady gardens that lead the eye to the crest of Kingsbury's plateau, so rich in memories of the Saxon sway. Almost concealed by the dense foliage of distant trees the massive Norman tower of Paul de Caen is observable, while the little straggling street, creeping picturesquely down to meet the bridge from the unpretentious Saxon Church, carries the mind through mediæval to modern English life. Quaint old cottages, beetle-browed and low of pitch, die one by one before the onward wave of stern necessity, but several yet survive, enabling us to realise the charming aspect this quiet rural street once presented, and still, to a considerable extent, retains.

Blacksmith's Lane led formerly to the well-known Cricket-ground, by which latter name the first large field upon the right of the private road to Gorhambury continues to be known. An important and influential club existed here at the commencement of the present century, for the purpose of fostering and encouraging our national pastime; a spacious pavilion for luncheons, dressing-rooms, etc., was erected, so that St. Michael's Cricket-ground became a favourite rendezvous for the local devotees and ardent admirers of the manly game. On the same piece of ground the County Militia at one time received their annual training. By the "Six Bells" Inn, near the centre of the Street, a few quaint old-fashioned tenements with their inconveniently low-pitched rooms are still standing. The comparatively large residence terminating the west side of the Street to the south was erected at least two hundred years ago; almost facing it are the ornamental wrought-iron gates of Darrowfield House, once occupied by the Countess of Caledon, but now the occasional home of the Dowager Countess of Craven. St. Germain's Farm lies beyond this mansion, and reminds us by its name of the celebrated missionary Bishop who, near this spot, expounded the Gospel so many centuries since. Within the precincts of the adjacent Churchyard stands the old Schoolroom, built upon the site of a former structure which appears to have fulfilled the function of a Union for the village; while the present St. Michael's Schools usurp the position once occupied by the forge and dwelling-house of the local blacksmith. An old farm-house, with its many outbuildings, was the predecessor of the elegantly-designed Gorhambury Lodge.
From the Lodge to the open spaces about the bridge were annually placed, on May 29th of each year until comparatively recent times, an almost continuous line of stalls and booths, the proprietors of which being attracted thither by the celebrations that always occurred in St. Michaels upon "Oak-apple Day." During these festive occasions the village street was decorated with flags and branches of oak, the inn signs receiving especial attention at the hands of the loyal inhabitants. But the principal charm of the celebration was the procession of the "Mayor of St. Michaels," a feature of which was a man dressed in a most fantastic and gorgeous manner, who rode upon a donkey, embellished with the gayest trappings procurable; this important personage arrogated to himself the title of "Mayor," and was obsequiously waited upon and addressed by that appellation by his grinning attendants. From this holiday pageant probably arose the erroneous supposition (still credited by some of the inhabitants) that a separate Mayor at one time represented St. Michaels. Another special feature of "Oak-apple Day" was the greasy pole set up in the spacious yard attached to the "Angel" Inn,—a large and important hostelry which stood at the junction of Verulam Road with Branch Road, and upon the site now occupied by St. John's
Lodge. Substantial prizes were given to those who succeeded in attaining the summit of the pole, while, as an appropriate conclusion to the festive day, dancing by torchlight took place around it until a late hour.

The ancient "Bercherie," or "Birchery," of Kingsbury, mentioned in an indenture of 1635 in connection with the Borough boundaries, was a house utilised for the feeding of cattle, and stood apparently upon some part of the now vacant land to the south of Mud Lane. "Gonnerston" (alluded to in the same document) was a well-known Borough boundary, "being a stone remaining on the street over against the farthest corner of the now dwelling-house of one Richard Richardson, which is the farthest house in Fishpool Street, or 'Salipath,' within the Borough."^2 The stone now resting against the western wall of the "Black Lion" Inn occupies the position assigned, and is no doubt the landmark mentioned.

The prettily-situated St. Michael's Mills,—known also by their misleading appellation of "Kingsbury Mills,"—cover a considerable area of the land adjacent to the bridge, and form a picturesque feature of the locality. From the rear portion of the Mills an old roadway once extended by the side of the river in the direction of Redbourn, and in March, 1813, a Roman coffin containing an almost perfect human skeleton, together with a few vessels composed of thin white glass of great beauty and exceeding rarity, was found during an excavation by the side of the road, at a short distance from the Mills:^3 The stone coffin itself now lies in St. Michael's Churchyard, while its former contents are among the treasures preserved at Gorhambury.

A portion of Branch Road was anciently known as "Kingsbury Lane," and, before Verulam Road was constructed, ran through the premises of what is now Kingsbury Brewery, thus being continuous with "Claypits Lane,"—the present Folly Lane. About half-way up Branch Road the entrance to a second lane once appeared, the chief part of which still remains as that running from Verulam Road to Oster Hills; it was called

^1 Spelt "Gunner's Stone" on Hare's map (1634), and also known as "Gomerston" and "Gumerston."
^2 Indenture of 1635, and Gibbs' Corp. Rec.
^3 The skeleton mouldered away upon exposure to the external air. The vessels were partly filled with liquid which, on being analysed, appeared to be water mixed with earth, and had probably oozed through the pores of the stone lid. No inscription could be traced on the coffin.
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Corp. Rec.

The position caused away upon exposure to the external air. The vessels were partly filled with yellow-brown, indistinct vessels, appeared to be water mixed with earth, and had probably moved through the grove to the same end. No remnants could be traced on the coffin.
“St. John’s Lane,” apparently by reason of a monastic stone cross, known as “St. John’s Cross,” which formerly stood near it. The site of this Lane may easily be traced across the field upon the west side of Branch Road.

The lower part of Fishpool Street was anciently designated “The Salipath,” probably because it formed the sally from the southern extension of the fortress-palace of Kingsbury. Tenements of some description have doubtless occupied the sides of this ancient roadway since that remote period when a Saxon Abbot drained the Great Mere of its waters, and we find a few references to them in monastic annals, as well as in subsequent local documents. The oldest of these dwellings is, perhaps, that of “Cappyd Hall,” mentioned in 1388, and again when in ruins in 1556, which stood somewhere to the north of “The Salipath.” To the south of the Street lay some property appertaining to St. Bartholomew’s Priory in London.

The row of small cottages opposite the “Black Lion” Inn, with their lichen-covered roofs, quaint dormers, and leaded casements, impart to the western end of Fishpool Street an effect which is eminently picturesque, while the view to be obtained from this point,—the bridge spanning the little stream, and the narrow winding street of St. Michaels terminated by the old Saxon Church partly hidden in dense foliage,—equals the pictorial charm of many a vaunted “Continental peep,” and presents one of the prettiest views to be found in and around St. Albans. A little to the east of the cottages aforesaid may be observed an almost similar structure, adjacent to which a building of red brick exhibits audacious enterprise on the part of the architect, who has boldly placed its chimney upon the public footpath. A residence adjoining contains many vestiges of an elaborately-moulded front, and facing it, upon the other side of the road, is a tenement bearing the name “Shakespeare’s Cottage,”—an overhanging, timbered structure, dating perhaps from the sixteenth century, but which certainly can have no other connection with the “Immortal Bard.” It boasts, however, of an oak doorway of Perpendicular pattern, which appears to be of monastic origin. East of this house is a number of tenements of all dimensions and styles, jumbled together in a most confusing manner, and exhibiting a surprising originality of design on the part of the respective builders, for every house possesses a charming individuality of its own.
The old Manor House of St. Michaels is situated on the south side of Fishpool Street, its grounds covering a considerable area and extending to the river. The earlier history of the Manor House appears to be involved in obscurity, the generally accredited account being that the House and its surroundings were granted by an Abbot of the monastery to an ancestor of the Gape family,—the present owners. Portions of the building are undoubtedly of great antiquity, the date, 1512, carved in the ceiling of the old "Oak Room," carrying that part back to the early years of Henry VIII., and the time when the monastery flourished. Unfortunately, no documents of historic importance relating to the House appear to be in existence.

Within the past few years some interesting old tenements upon the north side of the Street, and facing the Manor House grounds, have been demolished in order to provide necessary space for more modern erections; behind this part of the road, and probably in or near Mud Lane, was situated the ancient "Black Cross," one of the many cruciform structures which abounded in mediæval St. Albans. It gave its name to the locality immediately surrounding it, and a mention of this district by name in the Corporation Records
occurs under the date 1591. The bend in the road probably forms the eastern termination of "The Salipath" portion of Fishpool Street, and near this point is an inn, called the "Queen," which is remarkable for possessing, in the basement at the rear, a cusped niche containing the mutilated remains of a seated figure. The mouldings of this recess belong to the Decorated period, and it has been conjectured that the cellar was used as a private chapel during the early days of the Reformation. The room above, on the first floor, exhibits evidence of having once been of a very ornate character; it is a relic of Tudor days, the moulded ceiling, with the Tudor rose and fleur-de-lis in alternate compartments, still being in excellent preservation. An arched fireplace of the same date (now the receptacle for a modern stove) is likewise in good condition, but the oak panelling with which the apartment is lined has, probably for sanitary reasons, been whitewashed throughout.

Nearly opposite the "Queen" is an old house which literally "hangs" together, and exemplifies in a remarkable manner the inherent tenacity of timber-and-brick buildings. Adjacent to this distorted structure are some good examples of Queen Anne and classic door-heads, while several dwellings exhibit traces of moulded fronts. The "Crow" Inn is undoubtedly of considerable age, and possesses for its principal entrance a doorway of Perpendicular pattern, suggesting a monastic origin. A building opposite the "Crow" has an overhanging front, the under portion of which, strange to say, slopes downwards towards the west at nearly the same gradient as the declivity of the hill at this point.

1 Gibbs’ Corp. Rec.
Upon the southern side of Fishpool Street, and immediately adjoining the "Crow" on the left, stands Godmersham House, a wing of which invariably attracts attention by reason of the excellent moulded-plaster work that adorns it; but the effect of the enrichment is somewhat marred by the excessively-dark colouring of the panelled spaces within the ornamental bordering.—a recent restoration which is rather overdone. The projecting portion of this building occurs at the third story, instead of at the second, as is almost invariably the case in St. Albans, and the interior of this part of the house, as well as that of the main building (which has been refronted), is extremely and picturesquely quaint.

From various indications furnished by some of the dwellings remaining in Fishpool Street, it may be inferred that, at one time, they afforded residences for a good class of tenants. The decadence of this thoroughfare may no doubt be coincident with that of the coaching era, so that, with the decline of the immense vehicular traffic once passing through it by day and by night, the Street has gradually assumed the quiet and almost stagnant condition which is now its predominant characteristic.
ST. MICHAELS.

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH.

With the exception of the famous Abbey, the Church of St. Michael is undoubtedly the most interesting ecclesiastical edifice in St. Albans. This ancient structure stands within the site of Verulam, and Matthew Paris tells us that it was built by Abbot Ulsinus at the same time as he erected the Churches of St. Peter and St. Stephen,—i.e., A.D. 948.

It was suggested by Sir Gilbert Scott that St. Michael's Church is the Basilica of Verulamium adapted for Christian worship, and although its shape and appearance, if the aisles and tower be omitted, are certainly strangely similar to the Roman Courts of Law, yet many evidences seem to prove conclusively that it is of Saxon origin. The evolution of the present structure from the original erection of Ulsinus is interesting. The Saxon church, in all likelihood, simply consisted of a nave (not so lofty as at present), with a short, depressed tower at the west end of the same width as the nave. The thick walls were pierced by small windows on either side, and were probably either unglazed or covered with semi-transparent parchment. As the Roman Catholic ritual increased in grandeur, and processions became an important part of the services, aisles were constructed and a clerestory added, whilst the walls were pierced by four arches on each side. This occurred about the year 1190. Very shortly afterwards the south aisle was again altered to form a chantry, the altar being subsequently discovered and placed in the chancel, where it still remains. Thus were the main features of the building evolved, but many alterations, additions, reconstructions, and restorations have modified and changed its general character. The extremely rude piers are evidently mere slices of wall, and the arches are more recent than those small, plain, round-headed ones of Roman brick in the clerestory wall above them, for the latter bear no relation in position to the pier arches, one of which actually cuts off the lower part of the more ancient opening above it. These pier arches are now unequal in number, there being three on the north side and four on the south; of the southern, two open into the chapel, one is partially built up and communicates with the porch, while the last, or westernmost, is entirely closed. The original clerestory windows were filled in, and others of a later
type inserted, during one of the many alterations which the fabric has, from time to
time, undergone.

The Church tower is much more recent than the other parts of the structure, being
Perpendicular in style; the great blocks of Hertfordshire conglomerate upon which it
rests unconformably, indicate that they were the foundations of a much older tower. It
has been reasonably surmised that these foundations are of Roman origin, and that
upon them once stood the Temple of Apollo.1

Indeed, the whole Churchyard seems to have a substratum of Roman masonry, and much difficulty
has at times been experienced in digging graves by reason of the presence of these massive foun-
dations. The boundary-wall of the Churchyard is said to rest upon Roman brickwork, and at a short
distance to the west of the tower the base of a circular classical column may still be seen.

The exterior of the Church before the restora-
tion of 1866 presented a strange appearance, it
having been patched in some parts, plastered
in others, and being generally dilapidated all
over; so ruinous, in fact, was its aspect that the
introduction of numerous buttresses, which now
constitute such an important feature of the building,
seemed absolutely necessary to prevent its entire
collapse. In the interior were high family-pews,
some furnished with fireplaces and fireirons, but,
as they completely blocked up the space, they
were demolished in the restoration, although some of the oak "linen-fold" carving
upon them may still be seen incorporated with the woodwork of the modern pews. The
present porch was added at the same time, as well as two new windows,—one in the

south side of the chancel and the other at the east end. In the east side of the north aisle a blocked-up window was discovered, which was also re-opened.

The Jacobean Pulpit, with its quaintly-designed sounding-board, staircase, and supports, is a splendid specimen of contemporary carving; and is in excellent preservation; while the curious stand attached to it for containing the hour-glass in olden times is an interesting early example of hammered ironwork, and, no doubt, of the same age as the Pulpit.1

At one time a gallery of considerable interest existed at the west end of the Church, the front portion having come from the old Manor House at Gorhambury; it was, however, removed during the restoration by Sir Gilbert Scott, when many other examples of ancient carved woodwork also disappeared.2

Of the memorials here preserved the most interesting is that placed in a niche upon the north side of the chancel,—a life-size presentment of the illustrious statesman and philosopher, Francis Bacon, Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, whom Pope alluded to as “The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind,” and Tennyson honoured as “large brow’d Verulam, the first of those who know.”3 The statue is of alabaster, beautifully executed by an Italian sculptor, and represents the Lord Chancellor seated in a chair, in an attitude of deep contemplation.4 Beneath is a Latin inscription

1 In Fosbroke’s British Monachism appears the following reference to hour-glasses in churches:—“A stand for an hour-glass still remains in many pulpits. A rector of Bibury [Gloucestershire] used to preach for two hours regularly turning the glass. After the text, the esquire of the parish withdrew, smoked his pipe, and returned to the blessing.”

2 It is a matter for sincere regret that the so-called “restoration” of a church is often simply an excuse for the demolition or abstraction of many of the salient historical features of the sacred edifice, the adaptability of the existing materials etc., to modern requirements or to the embellishment of the building being seldom deemed worthy of consideration, and thus, as a rule, with the introduction of modern innovations, the expense increases in direct proportion as the historical interest decreases.

3 The Palace of Art.

4 A facsimile of this celebrated monument to him

"Who from the gloom
    Of cloister'd monks and jargon-teaching schools
    Led forth the true Philosophy,"

has been placed in Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge, at which seat of learning Bacon received his education. There is another replica in the National Portrait Gallery.
written by the accomplished Sir Henry Wotton (Provost of Eton College, 1624-39), of which the following is a translation:—

FRANCIS BACON.

Baron of Verulam, Viscount St. Alban's,
or, by more conspicuous Titles,
Of Science the Light, of Eloquence the Law,
Sat thus.
Who, after all natural wisdom
And secrets of Civil Life he had unfolded,
Nature's Law Fulfilled:
Let compounds be dissolved!
In the year of Our Lord, 1626; of his age, 66.
Of such a man, that memory might remain,
Thomas Meautys,
Living, his Attendant, dead, his Admirer,
Placed this Monument.

Sir Thomas Meautys had been private secretary to Lord Verulam, and was faithful to him through the chequered and troubulous times which befell that distinguished man. Upon the death of his patron, Sir Thomas inherited his possessions as cousin and next heir; he appears to have been buried in the Church, for upon a flat stone near the Communion-table are the remains of an inscription in which the name of "Meautys Kt." may be deciphered.

In the nave is a brass with the following inscription:—

Here lyethe Henry Gape and Florens his Wyf,
Who owte of this world chayngd his lyfe,
In the Monethe of September, the seventh day,
In the yeare of salvacyon, 1558, the truthe to say:
Whose sowll we wylle, as love doth bynde,
In Heavene wythe Chryst a place to fynde.

Among other memorials in the Church there is one to the first Steward of St. Albans, John Maynard, Esq., who expired in 1556; and another to Thomas Wolvey, a master-mason, who died in 1430, and to whom the production of the celebrated

1 In 1554 Henry Gape was Mayor of St. Albans, and the family of that name still residing in the town are his direct descendants.
medallions of Sopwell Nunnery has been attributed. George Grimston, son of Sir Harbottle Grimston, Master of the Rolls, is also buried here, and there are a few remains of ancient brasses.

In 1808, a curious Fresco came to light upon the removal of some boards that had served as a cover or lining of the medieval rood-loft, between the chancel and the nave. This mural decoration (which was well preserved) represented the Day of Judgment, and exemplified the grotesque realism of monkish belief. The greater part of the design was painted in distemper upon the wall, but the lower central portion was executed in oil-colours upon a board shaped so as to fill up the arch in the wall. This particular fragment may still be seen in the Church. At the same time another picture was discovered on the back of a wooden tablet which had been affixed to the wall, viz., the portrait of a King, believed to be Henry VI.; this was also painted in distemper, but what has become of it I am unable to say.

The Church and its undulating burial-ground exhibit many traits of rural simplicity, in combination with that pleasing picturesqueness so invariably associated with a village church and its immediate surroundings. Under towering elms and aged yew-trees

"The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep," in peaceful companionship with ancestors of the noble house near by; ancient stone monuments with carved emblazoning stand side by side with simple memorials of wood, the latter exhibiting every stage of decay and nearly all possible deviations from the vertical. Against a dark background of trees the old Church, with its quaint timbered gable and simple tower, presents a scene which is most attractive and pleasing, though its erstwhile charming aspect, as it cosily nestled among luxuriant foliage, is sadly marred

1 An engraving of this remarkable work of Art was published by Clay and Scriven in 1809, and dedicated to the Right Hon. James Walter Grimston, Viscount Grimston. A similar painting was recently found in a Suffolk church, the execution of which is not so crude as that of the relic in St. Michael's.
by the recent removal of a presumably-dangerous lime-tree and a venerable, but utterly unoffending, yew. That reverential feeling of solemnity which is inevitably induced by the contemplation of “God’s Acre,” and by the remembrance of those silent slumberers beneath the sward, is strongly experienced in this quiet spot. Such thoughts as these spring afresh even when, at a distance, one hears the old-world music of the bells as it is borne by the wind from the rugged tower over cornfield and meadow, filling the mind with memories of the many departed centuries that have left their traces upon the old Church of St. Michael.

GORHAMbury.

The interest which clings to the name of Gorhambury is cosmopolitan, so numerous are the associations appertaining thereto. Pre-eminent before all the rest is that which encircles, nimbus-like, the personality of our greatest English philosopher, the immortal Francis Bacon. Apart, however, from the lustre thus shed upon the spot by the renowned Chancellor, Gorhambury possesses a past history of venerable antiquity, for as far back as the reign of King Stephen the first mansion was erected there (circa 1128), the builder being either Geoffrey de Gorham, Abbot of St. Alban’s Monastery, or a near relative. A succeeding Abbot, Robert de Gorham, here entertained the King right royally.

The descendants of the family of Gorham continued to enjoy possession of the estate for several generations, one, John de Gorham, being mentioned in the time of King Edward I. in relation to feudal tenure; it belonged to the Earls of Oxford for a considerable period, and towards the end of the fourteenth century was tenanted by a Dowager Countess of Oxford. In 1395, it was re-annexed to the Abbey, but, at the Dissolution, Gorhambury came to the Crown, and was among the large estates granted by Henry VIII. to Ralph Rowlatt. On his death in 1543, his son Ralph became owner of the property, and subsequently, in 1561, sold it to Nicholas

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1 The foundations of the original houses here built by Robert de Gorham were discernible in Newcome's time (1795). They were situated eastward of the new mansion, and near the row of chestnut-trees mentioned in Evelyn's Sylva.

2 Williams' Hist. of Ver. and St. Alb.
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2 William's Hist. of Ver. and St. Alb.
Bacon, who was afterwards knighted and appointed Lord Keeper of the Great Seal under Queen Elizabeth.

Sir Nicholas Bacon erected a stately mansion at Gorhambury between the years 1563 and 1568, the picturesque ruins of which are still to be seen to the west of the present residence. Here, in 1571, in 1573, and again in May 1577, the Lord Keeper had the distinguished honour of entertaining Queen Elizabeth, many of whose State-papers are dated from the house. The Aubrey MSS. record that the residence of Sir Nicholas was one worthy of a royal visit, being imposing and palatial in its outward appearance, while the halls and apartments were decorated and furnished in the most sumptuous and elaborate style then prevailing. Sir Nicholas was a favourite with Elizabeth, and his son Francis relates that when Her Majesty first visited him at Gorhambury she exclaimed, “My lord, what a little house you have gotten!”—to which the Lord Keeper wittily replied, “Madam, my house is well; but it is you that have made me too great for my house.” The privilege of entertaining Royalty was apparently no sinecure, for, during the four days Queen Elizabeth resided at Gorhambury in 1573, the expenditure was equivalent to nearly one-third of that incurred by five years’ building of the mansion, viz., £577 6s. 7½d.

Upon the decease of the worthy knight the Manor became the property of Anthony, his fourth son, who, being studiously inclined and much engaged in travelling, allowed the mansion to lapse into a bad state of repair, and in this condition, upon his comparatively early death, it was inherited by his famous brother Francis. Gorhambury House was the residence of Lady Anne Bacon, widow of Sir Nicholas, until her decease soon after that of her son Anthony.

The facts concerning the life and fortunes of Lord Chancellor Bacon, Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, are so familiar, and constitute such a well-known feature in the history of English Literature, that it would be superfluous to treat of them here. Suffice it to say that when Bacon became owner of Gorhambury he appears to have occasionally lived at this residence, but found it extremely inconvenient by reason of dilapidation and an insufficient water-supply. His father had, at great expense, formed a

1 Ashmolean Lib., Oxford.
catchment-basin and a central tank in Pré Wood, whence the water was conveyed by gravitation through covered pipes to the mansion upon the opposite declivity; the remains of these works are still visible, and a portion of the original piping, made of thick lead, was recently discovered there during an examination of the locality. Bacon anticipated so much difficulty in effecting the necessary alterations and improvements that he determined to erect a new residence altogether, choosing as a site for it that spot of land contiguous to the present Redbourn Road at Bow Bridge, known as the "Pondyards," the plentiful supply of water at this point apparently deciding him to make the selection. The new mansion, which he called "Verulam House," cost about £10,000; it has been elaborately described by Aubrey, who states that it was "the most ingeniously contrived little pile" that he had ever beheld.

At one time Bacon conceived the extraordinary idea of rebuilding Verulam; he actually commenced this enterprise by erecting a house within the Roman walls, but of the nature of this structure and its subsequent fate no records apparently exist. After his disgrace and fall, during the five years preceding his decease, Bacon lived alternately at the "Pondyards" and Gorhambury, and there penned some of the best of his immortal works. He died in 1626, when Gorhambury became the property of Sir Thomas Meautys, his private secretary and a distant relative. Henry Meautys, brother of Sir Thomas, succeeded to the estate, but did not live long to enjoy it; the widow of Sir Thomas married Sir Harbottle Grimston, who purchased the reversion of Gorhambury and
Kingsbury in 1652 of Henry Meautys, heir-at-law to Sir Thomas Meautys. Thus came this pleasant demesne into the possession of the Grimstons, the present head of whom, the venerable Earl of Verulam, is quietly passing the declining years of a well-spent life within the walls of the family mansion.1

About forty years after the death of the Lord Chancellor, Sir Harbottle Grimston sold the house at the "Pondyards" to two carpenters for four hundred pounds,—the price of the materials,—and it was at once demolished. "Its site may still be traced, but probably the only remnant of it known to be in existence is a handsomely-carved oak door, now the front door of 'Kingsbury,' St. Albans."2 The well-known Ponds in which Bacon took such keen interest soon became choked with reeds and flags, thus making it difficult now to trace their former outline. The mansion of the Bacons at Gorhambury was inhabited until the erection of the present residence, built between 1778 and 1785 by James, third Viscount Grimston, from designs by Sir Robert Taylor; the old house was then partially demolished, and soon fell into a state of decay.

The principal feature remaining to us of this interesting architectural relic is the entrance-porch leading into, and forming part of, the original hall; it is a square projection of stone which rises to the height of the building, and still retains many traces of elaborate marble inlaying, statues, and columns.4

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1 The Grimstons are descended from Silvester, a Norman, who bore the standard of William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings, and subsequently did homage to that monarch for the grant of land at Grimston, Co. York.


4 The Hon. Charlotte Grimston, in her History of Gorhambury (circa 1826), states that the building consisted of a quadrangle of about seventy feet square, in the centre of which was the entrance; on each side were small turrets. The door of entry led through a cloister into a court, in the interior of which, and facing the entrance, was a porch of Roman architecture. From the porch an ascent of four or five steps led to the upper end of the hall. Beneath the window of this porch is this inscription, now almost illegible:

Haec cum perfecit Nicolaus tecta Baconus,
   Elizabeth regni lustra fuere duo;
Factus eques, magni custos fuit ipse sigilli;
   Gloria sit soli tota tributa Deo.
   Mediocria Firma.
An octagonal tower (yet standing) is apparently in a most insecure condition, and adjacent thereto is an alcove containing the mutilated fragment of a once elaborate statue of Henry VIII., in gilt armour; this life-sized figure was produced by order of Sir Nicholas Bacon, who owed so much of his advancement to the king. A long gallery was constructed at this part of the mansion by him, in which Queen Elizabeth found delight, so elegant were its proportions and chaste its decorations; it was built especially for the Queen's benefit, and one of the two entrances thereto was reserved for the sole use of her Majesty.

The present Mansion of Gorhambury stands upon a well-chosen eminence in the extensive Park, at a short distance from the celebrated ruins. It is a massive rectangular edifice in the Corinthian style, having a portico with columns supporting a pediment, and has been largely added to in comparatively recent years. It contains many handsome apartments, among which the entrance-hall may justly be considered as the most imposing. The library contains some of the earliest editions of Shakespeare's works, the same that were so enthusiastically referred to by the late Mr. Halliwell-Phillips, who asserted them to be of great value, and that they would alone suffice to render any library famous. A rich collection of paintings is preserved here, the most interesting of these, besides the representations of the Lord Chancellor and

1 *Jour. of Archæol. Assoc.*, Vol. XXVI.
his father, being the portrait of Queen Elizabeth, which was presented by Her Majesty to Sir Nicholas Bacon as a mark of her royal favour. The grounds attached to the house are both extensive and attractive, while in the Park many venerable trees of abnormal dimensions may be found, including one measuring twenty-one feet in girth, called "Queen Elizabeth's Oak," and some really magnificent cedars.

When gazing at these vestiges of the residence of so eminent a man as Francis Bacon, a sensation of genuine regret is experienced that such a splendid mansion should have been allowed to succumb to the sad ravages of Time. It is difficult to realize to-day that royal feet have trod the ground where now the elder-tree luxuriantly flourishes and tangled undergrowth spreads unchecked; that the decaying walls and window-mullions, almost hidden from view by twining masses of ivy and other parasitical growths, were once associated with the sumptuous and luxurious residence of the most remarkable philosopher of the Elizabethan era. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*
THE TOKENS OF ST. ALBANS.

A DESCRIPTIVE account of the Tokens of St. Albans, together with illustrations of them, may be claimed as a distinctive feature of the present volume, inasmuch as this special subject has not hitherto been thoroughly dealt with in any purely-local publication. It is also of value by reason of its being complete, for although only eight Tokens relating to the City are known to exist, the most comprehensive work relating to Tokens enumerates but seven. Through the kindness of Mr. A. E. Gibbs, of St. Albans, and Mr. R. T. Andrews, of Hertford, in lending excellent examples of these Tokens, the accompanying drawings have been made, which exactly represent the specimens in their collections. As the object and use of Tokens are not generally known, an account of their origin will not be devoid of interest.

The small coinage of England from the earliest times was of silver, but, in all transactions which required money of inferior value, base foreign coinage (such as blackmail, turneys, abbey-pieces, crockards, dotkins, staldings, etc.) was used as well as leaden English Tokens, all being illegal, and against the circulation of which many severe laws were enacted by our earlier kings. The regal silver coinage was also inconvenient by reason of the diminutive size of some of the pieces,—the silver halfpenny of Elizabeth weighing only four grains. The need for small change being urgent, leaden Tokens (generally of inferior workmanship) continued to be issued by tradesmen until 1613, when James I. granted a patent to John Baron Harrington to coin copper farthings. The monopoly was grossly abused, for the coins were issued in unreasonable quantities and were of a merely-nominal intrinsic value, as they weighed only six grains each. The abuse arising from the accumulation of these farthings upon the hands of small tradesmen, and the refusal of the patentees to re-change them, became at last so great that, in 1644, a strong public protest resulted in their suppression, and the House of Commons ordered them to be re-changed from money raised on the estates of the patentees. Tokens then began to be issued by tradesmen as before, but illegally; the earliest date is 1648. Sometimes the issuers themselves coined them in rude presses; for the convenience of re-changing the numerous varieties of Tokens, tradesmen kept boxes with several divisions into which they were sorted, and, when a sufficient number was collected, these were returned to the issuers to be re-changed for silver. In the Metropolis the re-changing of Tokens—eventually became a distinct trade.

1 Boyne's Seventeenth-Century Tokens.
Tokens of 1648, 1649, and 1650 are scarce, but after 1650 until 1660 they are plentiful, nearly the whole of them being farthings; halfpennies are few, and there are no pennies. Those of a date subsequent to the Restoration of Charles II. in 1660 are the most abundant; halfpennies are common among them, and there is a considerable number of pennies.

With respect to the Tokens in which St. Albans is specially interested, the first on the list has the following inscription:—

**Obverse.** John Tisdalle = his half penny. **Reverse.** In St. Albans 1667 = I.E.T.

Besides alluding to the old abbreviated form of spelling the word “penny,” it may be pointed out that the initials which appear in the centre of the majority of these Tokens are those of the issuer and his wife; for example, in the first illustration of the St. Albans series the upper letter, “T,” is the initial of the surname, while “I” stands for the Christian name of the former, and “E” for that of the latter. Examples of this also occur upon some of the other coins.

The second Token, that of Henry Gladman, is of exceptional interest:—


It was issued by mine host of “The George and Dragon,” that mediæval hostelry now known by the more concise cognomen of “The George” Inn, the then proprietor being a relative (perhaps a son) of Ralph Gladman, who was Mayor of the town in 1652, and one of the principal burgesses.

The third Token is that of Thomas Nash, which is inscribed as follows:—


The Token of Thomas Hudgson is here engraved for the first time:—


The peculiar arrangement of this inscription is worthy of notice; there is no date, but the occupation of the issuer (“mealman,” or corndealer) is clearly indicated.

Ralph Bradbury’s Token is the fifth of this series:—

**Obverse.** Ralph Bradbury = [The Grocers’ Arms.] **Reverse.** Of Saint Albons = R.E.B.

The arms are a chevron between nine cloves. A grocer of the period has been thus described by Admiral Smyth:—“In country places a grocer comprehended a most extensive
dealer in hardware, gingerbread, bobbins, laces, haberdashery, mouse-traps, curling-tongs, candles, soap, bacon, pickles, and every variety of grocery, besides which he sold small coins for money-changing. Tea, the staple by which grocers now make gross fortunes, had not then obtained its footing, for this lymph must then have been beyond the means of most sippers, seeing that in 1666 a pound of tea cost sixty shillings, and money was then at a far higher value than in the present century. The more ancient name for grocers was 'Pepperers,' from the drugs and spices which they sold."

The sixth and seventh Tokens belonged to Edward Camfield and John Cowlee respectively, the former bearing the earliest date in the St. Albans series:

*Obverse. Edward. Camfield = E.E.C.*  
*Reverse. In. Saint. Albans. = 1656*


The original method of spelling the word "Baker" reflects a certain amount of credit upon John Cowlee, who perhaps struck the coin himself; he apparently had a lingering doubt respecting the orthography of the word, and so introduced the scales and wheatsheaf in the design to prevent misconception. The octagonal form of this Token is very distinctive, and certainly unique so far as St. Albans is concerned.

The eighth and last in the list of these Tokens is that of Richard Finch:

*Obverse. Richard. Finch. = [A Swan].*  
*Reverse. Of. St. Albans. 1666. = R.M.F.*

The years 1665 to 1669 are the most prolific in Tokens, and particularly 1666 (the year of the Great Fire of London), while in 1670, 1671, and 1672 they again became scarce. Tokens were in circulation for exactly a quarter of a century; originating with a public necessity, in the end they became a nuisance. These coins were issued by nearly every tradesman as a kind of advertisement, and, being only payable at the shop of the issuer, were very inconvenient. In 1672 their use was prohibited by Royal Proclamation, and the Government introduced an authorised copper coinage.¹

¹ Boyne's Tokens.
tokens belonged to Edward Camfield and John Gower. The earliest date in the St. Albans series:—

ST. ALBANS. BACKER. Return. His Halfpenny. (Stilo)

787. The spelling the word "Baker" refers to a certain amount of corn
in the first person, perhaps struck the eye himself; he, apparently, had a strong
of the word and an intimation of the mode and situations
The conclusion, based on Sir Thomas, is only

807. The name of some tokens is that of Richard Fitch,

817. The name is recorded 1656, S.E.C.

837. They are the more precisely in London, and particularly 1666

827. They were issued by nearly every

847. A Royal Warrant, and the

857. A Royal Warrant, and the
REFERENCES TO PLAN.

1. The Gallows.
2. Bow Gate and Stone Cross.
3. The "Cricket Inn".
5. Lenton Lane.
7. Townsend Farm.
10. The "Cock" Inn.
11. Cock Lane.
14. "Bleak House" ("The Dalton").
15. The "Dable Stage" Hostelry.
16. The "Lamb" Hostelry.
17. Fish Shambles.

18. The Mansion.
19. The Ball Room.
20. The "Castle" Hostelry.
21. Shropshire Lane (Sweetbriar Lane).
22. Postern (the Man Gate?).
23. Long Butts Field.
25. French Row.
26. The "Great Red Lion" Inn.
27. The "Fleur de Lys" Inn.
28. The "Old Christopher" Inn.
29. Moot Hall.
30. Wheat Cheaping.
32. Pudding Lane.
33. Foot Alley.
34. Clock Tower.
35. St. Stephen's Hill.

36. Eyewood Lane.
37. Bridge over River Ver.
38. Holywell House (the "New Berry").
39. The Holy Well.
40. Ivy House.
41. Torington House.
42. "Oldest" London Road, in King's Orchard.
43. The "White Hart" Tap.
44. The "White Lion" Inn (Sopwell Bar).
45. Green School.
46. The "Hare and Hounds" Inn.
47. The Cotton Mills.
48. The "Crown" Inn.
49. The "Post Boy" Inn.
50. The "Trumpet" Inn.
51. The "Bell" Inn.

52. The "White Hart" Inn.
53. Old Rectory.
54. Sweetbriar Tenements.
55. The "Two Brewers" Inn.
56. The "Saracen's Head" Hostelry.
57. Row of ancient hosteleres.
58. The "Old Wool Pack" Inn.
59. The "Peahen" Hotel.
60. The "Chequers" Hostelry.
61. The "Key" Hostelry.
62. Malt Cheaping.
63. The "Red Lion" Inn.
64. The Eleanor Cross.
65. Chequer Inn.
66. School Lane.
67. The Cage.
68. The "George" Inn.
69. The Hostelry (Corner Hall).
70. The "Vere" Inn.

71. College Inn (Hustings).
72. The "Verulam Arms" Inn.
73. Great Gateway of the Monastery.
74. Bow Gate.
75. Medieval Grammar School.
76. Hockerhull.
77. Hyde's Close.
78. The Pound.
79. The "Chequers" Hostelry.
80. The Birchery.
81. Gonnerston ("Black Lion" Inn).
83. Kingsbury Lane.
84. Clay Pits Lane.
85. Black Cross.
86. The "Queen" Inn.
87. The "Crow" Inn.
88. Godmersham House.

Tonman Ditch shown thus: —— Probable boundary of the Fortress-Palace of Kingsbury shown thus: ——

Part of Site of Verulam

Saint Albans.

1892
APPENDIX.

THE SITES OF THE MONASTIC BUILDINGS AND ENCLOSURES.

Although the great Benedictine Monastery of St. Albans has ceased to exist for over three-and-a-half centuries, yet the great influence it exercised in the past, the almost unbounded power swayed by the Abbots, the princely hospitality it lavished upon honoured guests, and the encouragement there given to learning (by fostering erudition without its walls as well as within its sacred cloisters), have left indelible traces on the ages following its destruction,—traces which will not be effaced for centuries to come. The site whereon stood the most powerful Monastic establishment in England cannot but possess an interest attractive alike to those who dwell adjacent thereto and remote from it; therefore, bearing in mind this fact, I have here endeavoured to so describe the various localities of the vanished Monastic points of interest by existing marks, boundaries, or structures, that an exact or approximate localization may, I trust, be easy.

North of the Abbey Church an extensive open area once existed upon the space now occupied by the Churchyard, the gardens to the rear of Holywell Hill, High Street, and George Street, and the houses and gardens east of Romeland. The eastern portion of the oblong so formed was the Vineyard, enclosed north and east by the Monastery Wall, south by the “Syentries Wall” (probably a corruption of “Cemetery” Wall, and extending eastwards from the north buttress at the east end of the Lady Chapel to the boundary), and west by a wall running at the side of the pathway to the Wax-House Gate. Of the Vineyard, the major portion is now occupied by the grounds of the Bank, the carriage-entrance of which, in Holywell Hill, is one of the ancient openings into the yard.

North of the North Transept some foundations may be seen whereon stood the Sacristy, or house of the Sacrist, an important functionary of the Church, who superintended the building-works and attended to all repairs. The Sacrist’s Chequer lay between his house and the lane now known as “The Cloisters”, his garden reaching from the rear of the easternmost houses in George Street to the Abbey Church. A bell-foundry formed one of the workshops attached to the Sacristy, and in Abbot de Mentmore’s time (1335-49) the bell named “Amphilalus,” having been fractured, was recast here.1 At the west of the Sacristy and its Garden was a Cemetery wherein the laity appear to have been buried; it occupied the whole of the space enclosed by the boundary-wall of the Monastery there, with the exception of that whereon stood the Church of St. Andrew2 and the “Polyandrium.”3 Of the Monastic buildings contiguous to the Great Gateway the house for the Free Scholars was attached to the north side, extending from a point adjacent to the archway westwards to the present boundary of the playground; west of the Gateway itself were the Seneschal’s House, the Almonry, and another dwelling, the latter also appertaining to the Free Scholars. The “Magna Curia,” or Great Courtyard, lay to the south of the Great Gateway; it was square in shape, and the Gateway stood in the centre of the northern side, the area thus enclosed covering an acre-and-a-half of ground. Upon the west side was part of the Long Stable erected by Robert de Gorham, which Matthew Paris tells us would easily stall three hundred horses,4 and probably extended southwards to a point near the division of Abbey Mill Lane; it was not destroyed at the Dissolution, but was apparently used by Henry VIII. and subsequent sovereigns until the time of Charles I.,—perhaps Oliver Cromwell also quartered his horses there. A part of this building, then known as the King’s Stables, may be seen upon the left of De Lievens’ drawing. In a map of 1818 a row of cottages is shown upon the site of this building, and these were called the King’s Stables; they stood slightly to the rear of the present private residence in Abbey Mill Lane (known as Abbey Gate), and under the drawing-room floor of this house.

is the King's Well. West of the Long Stable was the Stable Yard, the boundaries of which are roughly indicated in Hare's map of 1634.

The following appears in Matthew Paris' Historia Majora under the date 1252:—

"Three days after this, Geoffrey de Lizian, purposing to lodge in the Monastery of St. Albans, sent forward his avant-courier to give notice of his coming, and announce his intention. This official, on arriving at the gate of the Monastery Court (the Great Gate), without a word of salutation, accosts the porter (janitorem), thus:—'Ho, there! my lord is coming; he is at hand; his will is to lodge here. Where is he to be quartered?' 'Where it pleases him,' answered the porter. 'Nay,' replied the man, 'my lord's excellency is of the blood royal; he will lie nowhere but in the royal palace, yclept the king's house (Regis Regia). 'Right so, Master Marshal,' answered the janitor, 'nathless an't please ye, 'tis the wont for those who would be our guests, to crave our hospitality in terms of courtesy, and not demand it as their right, for our house is a House of Charity.' The Marshal, with a savage glance, retorts,

'The Fighting Cocks' Inn.
Formerly known as "The Old Round House."

'Cease your prating, sirrah, and show me the Marshalsey, where we are to stall our rouncies.' Thereupon he was shown the long guesten stable, wherein some three hundred horses can be stalled with ease. It so chanced that there was a goodly company of worthies, both religious and lay, accommodated that day in our Monastery, and their beasts withal well put up and foddered. With impudent effrontery, in swaggers the Marshal, and seeing the grooms and horses of the guests, he waxes wroth; thereupon, with ribald threats, he invades the stable, snaps the halters, turns all adrift, and will not suffer one stable-boy to harbour in the place, albeit it was most spacious." The historian then laments that the times were such that the Lord Abbot (John de Hertford) found it prudent to smother his just indignation at these affronts.1

The southern boundary of the Great Courtyard was occupied by a very long and beautiful range of buildings erected by Abbot John de Hertford in 1235, for the upper servants of the Convent; this would cross the

1 M. Paris, Hist. Maj.
APPENDIX.

Abbey Mill Lane at a point a few yards north of the stable-entrance on the west side, and a slight elevation of the earth in the field opposite corresponds with the site. This structure was converted into garner by Henry VIII.; it had been built of stone, was roofed with tiles, and had three chimneys. A portion of the eastern boundary of the Great Court may be easily traced, inasmuch as the foundations of the wall forming it were exposed to view a few years since when the superincumbent soil was removed; some fragments of stone-carving were discovered upon that occasion, and when the earth was replaced the trace of the excavation was, and it still remains, plainly visible. The foundations thus disclosed formed part of the walls of the Guesten House, erected for noble visitors by Abbot de la Mare; in the engraving of the Abbey on page 72 the wall itself is shown as standing.

The Great Cloisters were built by Paul de Caen, and subsequently added to by Trumpington; they were ignited by lightning in 1214 and consumed, being constructed chiefly of oak, covered with lead. The Cloisters were afterwards renovated, but were completely demolished in 1328, when the Norman columns on the south side of the Nave suddenly gave way; ten years later the rebuilding of the Cloisters in stone, with tracery of a most elaborate description, was commenced by Wallingford, the work lasting until 1401,—the time of Abbot William Heyworth. The blank arcading seen upon the south wall of the Abbey sufficiently indicates the ornate and beautiful nature of the design, and also shows their extent on the northern side; similar arcading, but less decorative in character, was also visible upon the west wall of the South Transept until Lord Grimthorpe’s restoration. The Great Cloisters formed an exact square, and the site occupied by them may be discerned in the irregular ground at the north-east of the Abbey Orchard. In the centre of the Cloisters was a well, and the present pathway crosses the site of the north wall of the well-house protecting it.

To the west of the arcading upon the south side of the Nave an angle occurs where the western part of the wall sets back somewhat; at this point a doorway (now occupied in the Nave by the iron door of a safe) formerly existed, which led from the Abbey to the Forensic Parlour (where the monks had intercourse with persons from the outer world), as well as to the western part of the Cloisters. In 1381 the rioters tore up the mill-stones from the entrance to this Monastic apartment. Over the Forensic Parlour was the Abbot’s Chamber and Chapel, one window of which, looking into the Church, still remains.

The Chapter House stood east of the Cloisters and south of the Transept, the southern wall of the Slype being really a part (about one half) of the north wall of the Chapter House. The latter was an oblong structure; the present public footpath covers about a half of its area, and the wall of the Rectory garden runs lengthwise exactly through its centre. It was erected in the time of the first Norman Abbot, and rebuilt in 1153 by Robert de Gorham,—a subsequent restoration occurring in 1476. The bodies of eleven Abbots were buried in the Chapter House, together with other notabilities, not the least of whom was Robert of the Chamber, father of Nicholas Breakspear. The following account (culled from a local newspaper) of the exposure of a portion of the lower part of the Chapter House is of interest, as the remains were said to furnish the most magnificent examples of Transition-Norman architecture in England:

1 Survey of Edw. VI.
2 In connection with these chimneys I may suggest that they were probably the first built in England,—a historical point not hitherto claimed, I believe, for St. Albans.
3 Vide Engraving of Abbey, p. 72. ante.
“During the week we have had the rare opportunity of inspecting the recently-discovered remains of the walls and responds in situ of the Chapter House of the Abbey, built by Robert de Gorham, eighteenth Abbot, who ruled the Monastery from A.D. 1151 to A.D. 1166. These remains were discovered about two months since, while some workmen were engaged in laying gaspipes on the south side of the South Transept, and the ground was re-opened on Tuesday last, to enable Sir Gilbert Scott, R.A., and a distinguished party of visitors to inspect them. So far as the excavations have proceeded, they have resulted in the laying bare of the whole of the north-west corner of the Chapter House, with its late Norman responds, sedilia, and beautiful tile pavement. The Rev. Canon Venables, Precentor of Lincoln, was also present, and took notes as the various archaeological treasures were brought to light. Before the ground is again made good (as a public footpath is over the spot), casts will be taken of the various mouldings and carvings, which, to the antiquary and architect, are simply invaluable. It seems a great misfortune that such Art treasures must again be buried, but, under present circumstances, such a measure is unavoidable.”

The Monastic Cemetery was bounded upon the west by the eastern wall of the South Transept, and on the north by the Abbey and a portion of the “Syntories Wall;” southwards the wall by the pavement approximately marks its termination, while eastwards a wall had been built (running north and south through the spot now marked by a triangular grass-plot) that separated the Cemetery from the Sumpter Yard which occupied the space farther east, terminated by the Boundary Wall.2 The latter, if standing, would pass through the front doorway of the old Rectory House, and a postern, forming the entrance to the Sumpter Yard from Holywell Hill, would be also near this point.

Returning to the Cloisters we find the present configuration of the field in which they partly stood a useful feature in locating the important buildings once existing there. If an imaginary square of similar dimensions to the Cloisters be mapped out to the south of them, it will include the sites of two erections, viz., the Refectory,—an oblong building upon the north of the square,—and the “Oriolum,” a similar house upon the south, with the Kitchen Court between them, containing a cistern in the centre, from which ran a large drain. East of the square was the Little Cloister, which led directly into the eastern aisle of the Great Cloisters; the pathway running north and south by the present wall at the east of the field exactly marks the position of the Little Cloister and about half of the aisle referred to. The western side of our imaginary square was occupied by the Kitchen, the south-eastern angle of whose foundations is now plainly to be seen in the pathway near the seat (situated at the intersection of the two cross paths); this building (oblong in form) extended north and south, and had a similar erection,—the Cellar,—lying to the north, by the side of the Great Cloisters. West of the Cellar was the Abbot’s Kitchen.

With respect to these buildings, the Refectory was probably built by Abbot Paul, but is first mentioned in Abbot Geoffrey’s time (1119-1146); John de Cella rebuilt it in an elaborate manner, which (together with the Dormitory) cost the Convent their wine for fifteen years. Many gifts of napery and plate were made for use in this important part of the Monastery. The “Oriolum,” or Oriol, most likely erected by Abbot Paul, was restored in 1235; it was a noble structure, and apparently served as a place of indulgence for Monastic invalids, the Abbot also dining in it upon special occasions. The Kitchen and Cellar were erected by the first Norman Abbot, but were entirely rebuilt from the foundations towards the close of the fourteenth century. It is conjectured that the structure containing the Royal Apartments occupied a position between the Conventual Kitchen and the Great Courtyard. The remaining portion of the field between the Oriol and the fence towards the south appears to have been partially taken up with granaries and other farm-buildings.

The entrance to one of the formerly well-known “Monk Holes” was once to be found about 100 feet south of the seat before mentioned, which is apparently over the most northerly point to which it has been traced; it no doubt served the purpose of a drain for the Kitchen and other buildings lying to the north of it.5

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1 *Herts Advertiser*, Oct. 20, 1877.
2 Charter, Edw. VI.
3 *Gesta*, I. 54.
4 *Gesta*, I. 10.
A second drain led southward through the field from the cistern in the Kitchen Court, and, bending a little to the east, ran under the present pathway towards the "kissing-gate" in the south-east corner of the enclosure, passing under the wall at that point into the next field.

The cottages in Orchard Street, with their gardens, stand upon the site of the Servitors' Lodgings, south of which, and occupying the north-western angle of the large field known as the Great Orchard, was "Le Hey Bern," 1 or Hay House, and in the south-western angle Hare, in his map (1634), shows a grange.

The Water-gate of the Monastery stood a few yards to the north of the spot where the bifurcation occurs in Abbey Mill Lane, the archway through its centre spanning the road; it had been rebuilt entirely by Abbot de la Mare (1349-96), and was a battlemented structure resembling, in some degree, the present Clock Tower, but covering a larger area. It is described in the Survey of Edward VI. as a "Squar Gate-house, called Hames Gate, wherein Mr. Parker, one of the quytes, lyeth." Stukeley states that the Gate was demolished in 1722.

The Boundary Wall of the Monastery passed downwards from the Water-gate upon the western side of the road leading to the private residence at the Silk Mills, and then joined the eastern wall of St. German's Gate, the lower portion of which structure forms, in all probability, the cellars and basement of the "Fighting Cocks" Inn. No doubt

1 Regist. II. 225.
can exist with regard to the Monastic origin of the lower parts of this interesting old hostelry, which are composed of stone blocks laid with considerable care upon massive foundations, and are apparently sufficiently deep to prevent all dampness rising in the cellars, although the floor is below the level of the adjacent river. Tradition states that the brethren kept their fishing appliances in the Gate. A subterranean passage of some kind formerly led into the basement from the direction of the Monastery. At St. German's Gate the bodies of monks who died at Redbourn were met by the Abbey servitors, and thence conveyed to the Monastic Cemetery for interment. It seems possible that the upper portions of the old Inn date from a period shortly after the Dissolution. This strange-looking octagonal structure was at first known as the "Old Round House," but subsequently the present name of the "Fighting Cocks" was given to it on account of a cock-pit which once flourished there. The bank where the house stands is a portion of the embankment which, in Saxon times, restrained the waters of the King's Fishpool.

The modern water-mills at the Abbey Mills occupy the same position as the Conventual Mills, which are known to have stood within the Monastic enclosures, and were, of course, devoted to the purpose of grinding corn. The "Brasery," or Brew House, was also located at this spot. The pathway, leading from the Mills to Lady Spencer's Avenue, with its accompanying hedge and ditch, is of modern construction; the southern termination of the Great Orchard, in Monastic times (i.e., the Boundary Wall of the enclosures), extended about half-way between it and the river, a few trees still marking the site. Spanning the road which curves round to the stables in the private grounds of the Abbey Mills the Derne Gate (Derne, i.e. secret) is supposed to have stood. Between the southern Boundary Wall of the Monastery and the River Ver was the Long Mead, where lay the Kitchener's Pond, no longer in existence.

The land lying immediately to the south of Lady Spencer's Avenue is the old "Pond Wicks," the trunk of a venerable elm-tree marking the position of a portion of a former fence which separated the "Wick" from that low-lying part of the field adjacent to the river known in medieaval times as "Aumeresnor," or Almoner's Swamp. The peculiar projection of the centre of the lowest part of the field into the stream was caused by the discharge at this point of the sewage of the Convent into the river, which became diverted from its course by the consequent accumulation of the soil. The site of the old drain (or subterranean canal, as Stukeley termed it) may be traced downwards through the two fields by a depression which runs from the Avenue, past the old tree just mentioned, and in a straight line towards the river. In the centre of the "Pond Wicks" stood the Apple House, superseded, in later days, by a pond which received the surplus water from the ponds in St. Peter's Street by way of Holywell Hill.

A "wall of defence" is supposed to have occupied the same position as the modern wall upon the north of Lady Spencer's Avenue; at its eastern termination was Halliwelle Gate, facing towards the narrow road there, while at the western end of the wall (where the entrance to the path leading to the Abbey is found) the Almoner's Gate was located, fronting the river. The black gate in the wall near this spot marks the place where the old drain passed from the field above, which it traversed in a straight line from the point to which it has been traced on the previous page. The second "Monk Hole" was here situated, and the passage was penetrated for 24 3/4 feet to the north, where its continuation was broken by the falling-in of the arch; the height was 3 ft. 9 in., and the breadth at the bottom about 2 feet. If a line be traced from the aforesaid black gate northwards in the direction of the Saint's Chapel of the Abbey, but turning at right angles to the left to meet the "kissing-gate" at the upper part of the present footpath, it will mark the eastern and part of the northern limits of the Great Orchard. Between Holywell Hill (or, rather, the boundary behind the houses there) and the eastern limit of the Orchard was the Laundry Garden, bounded upon the north by the dry ditch that forms such a prominent feature in the field, upon the north side of which was a "muddle wall." North of the Laundry Garden was the "New Ordnance Orcharde" attached to the office of Master of the Works, established by Abbot Wheathampstead; its north boundary is accurately marked by the wall going westward from the rear of Ivy House and forming the front garden wall of Orchard House, near the western extremity of which a depression running to the south marks the western boundary formed by a ditch and another "muddle wall." North of the "New Ordnance Orcharde" was the Infirmary Garden; the lane leading from Holywell Hill, and forming the entrance to Orchard House, divides the site of the garden into two equal parts, Orchard House occupying the extreme

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1 Gesta, I. 453.  2 Lib. Benef. fo. 23.  3 Vide p. 186, ante.  4 Hare's Map, 1634.  5 Gesta, II. 310.  6 Vide p. 228, ante.  7 Vide p. 185, ante.  8 Survey of Edward VI.  9 Survey of Edward VI., and Anecd. I., 279.
western portion of the southern half, as a wall ran thence towards the north and terminated at the present Sumpter Yard in the bend of the wall at the entrance to the Rectory. West of Orchard House, and between it and the fence by the side of the public footpath, stood the Infirmary, Library, and Scriptorium.1

The Infirmary and its Chapel were built by the first Norman Abbot,2 and, in the time of Abbot Warine de Cambridge, the offerings at the altar in St. Peter’s Church were assigned for its support; in it, upon a stone, were laid the bodies of departed brothers, and the dying were brought thither to receive extreme unction. Strict rules were laid down for the guidance of the inmates, and excommunicate and lunatic monks were at times confined within its chambers. In Edward VI.’s time there still stood the “Fermory” and its Chapel. North of the Infirmary was the Infirmary Court, occupying the western part of the field which lies to the north of the lane leading from Holywell Hill (already mentioned), and also a portion of the grounds of the present Rectory; the “Rere Dorter” and the Long Dormitory, were between the Infirmary Court and the present footpath leading towards the South Transept of the Abbey. The wall of modern construction by the side of this footpath stands upon the foundations of the western portions of the Chapter House, Long Dormitory, and “Rere Dorter” respectively, taken in order from the Skye. The Long Dormitory, first built by Abbot Paul, was replaced by another and nobler building in John de Cella’s time, and completed with beds of oak by Abbot Trumpington; it was revaulted in 1536.

The Chapels of St. Nicholas and St. Cuthbert stood east of the Long Dormitory, and, consequently, in the grounds in front of the Rectory, the carriage-drive crossing the sites of both Chapels. The Rectory itself is upon the site of the Prior’s House, and behind it, reaching towards Holywell Hill, is the Prior’s Garden, where stood the Chapel of St. Simeon, and also a Dove House.3 The Chapel of St. Nicholas was a dormitory chapel built by Robert de Gorham, 1151-66, and restored in 1596 by Abbot Moote; the records of the Monastery were kept in lockers beneath it, constructed for the purpose by Wheatampsted. St. Cuthbert’s Chapel was originally erected by Richard de Exaquio as a thank-offering for the healing of his withered arm by contact with the body of St. Cuthbert at Durham. In 1214, Trumpington re-erected the Chapel in carved stonework. The Prior’s House was probably built in Abbot Moote’s time, and we read that, in 1428, there was an altar in the Chapel of the Prior of the Monastery, dedicated in honour of St. Simeon;4 this Chapel occasionally served for consecrations. The buildings appertaining to the Prior do not appear to have suffered demolition at the Dissolution, as they are mentioned as still standing in the time of the Survey in the reign of Edward VI.

[For the major portion of the information contained in this chapter I am much indebted to the published accounts of the researches of the Rev. H. Fowler, M.A., and the late Mr. Ridgway Lloyd; also to the Rev. Canon Liddell’s compilation of unpublished MSS. of the latter distinguished archæologist.]

AN ANCIENT TIMEPIECE.

An Ancient Timepiece.

There has lately come into the possession of Mr. G. H. F. Nye, of Palace Chambers, Westminster, what is believed to be one of the earliest Timepieces introduced into this country. Upon taking it apart there were found within a brass cylinder two faded and time-worn papers, with inscriptions stating that the Timepiece was discovered in the Monastery of St. Albans, in digging out the ruins of an old wall. This curious relic, which is in splendid preservation and evidently of great antiquity, is of beautiful design and workmanship, the dial and case being supported by the bronze figure of a slave, exquisitely modelled. The following are exact transcripts of the two papers, the first of which appears to be of a much older date than the second, the writing having almost faded away:

[No. 1]—“The watch was found in the ancient Monastery of Saint Albans in digging out the Ruins of an old Wall, and is supposed to be nearly the first Timepiece brought into England, being made in Italy. The Silver Plate in the centre of the Dial shows the different aspects of the Sun and Moon during their Annual Revolutions—viz., the

1 Vide p. 146, ante. 2 Gesta, I. 60. 3 Gesta, III. 440. 4 Amund, I. 448.
Conjunction $\varnothing$, Square [Quadrature] $\Box$, Trini [Ascending Node] $\mathcal{R}$, and Opposition $\varnothing$. The gold plate shows the day of the month the year round and also what sign the Sun is in for every month in the year."

[No. 2.]—"Lunar and Solar Clock. The outside circle on the dial plate shows the hours of the Solar days, the upper hours being those of the day and the lower hours of the night. Immediately within the hour circle is that on which is marked the days of the months, and beside them the signs of the zodiac, the days of the month and position of the sun is [sic] indicated by the moving point affixed to the inner circle. The three other circles show respectively the Moon's age, the time of Her passing the Meridian, and the time of high water. It should be observed the innermost circle showing the time of high water may be adapted to any port or place by setting the known time of high water at New or Full Moon to $29\frac{1}{2}$ on the circle showing her age. It is now set for the time at Hull. For London it should be set for 2h. 50m., Liverpool 5h. 10m., and Bristol 6h. 50m. The time of high water at Hull then is 6 o'clock. This circle is moved by inserting a pin in one of the small holes and pushing it gently round."

**APPENDIX.**

A valuable paper from the Garter King-at-Arms, touching the precedency of the Mayoress over other ladies, is preserved in the Corporation records:

"Whereas you require my opinion in a matter of difference touching precedencye for the giving, or taking of place, by the Maiors Wife of the Burrough of St. Alban, of gentlewomen within the saide Towne, and especially at this tym of the wife of one Mr. Ffrowick esquire, and Steward there; whoe contendeth with the said Maiors Wife for priority of place when and as often as they come together. My opinion thereof is (and not wthoute Conference had wth others of or office) That albeit the Maiors wife (vulgarily called the Maioresse) doth not in the administracon of Justice, or Civill government paticipate of her Husband's authorty or jurisdiction, Yett wee hould (according to the Civill Lawe) Muller sequitur conditionem viri, that is to saye, the wife is bettered by the reputacon of her husband's condicon, and cannot be severed from the same without his bleamishe and detrement, which doth inferre the Maiors is wife to have prioritye of place before Mris Ffrowick and other gentlewomen esquires wives that reside and inhabit within the Townes jurisdiction. The Mairesse of London during her husband's Maioraty houldeth the end of the board above all other of her sex that shall come as guests, as also at all publique meetings, bancketts, funerall feasts, or weddings within the Citye the wyves of Noblemen and of pryve Counsellors excepted wch sildome happeneth: She weareth her gowne of scarlett furred with sables (wch no Ladies can doe but of her classe) Chaynes of gould and pearle; with Jewells and billements and precedeth other Ladies Knightes wives her auntients in the Citty jure mariti without question. The Maiors wyves of the City of Yorke; though their husbands ordinariylie be no Knights, Yet during their Lyves they are styled and repected Ladies, but goe under all Ladies Knightes wyves: They weare frenche whoods, and other attyres of gentlewomen, and during the tymes of their husbands Maioralty take place of other Towne Ladies Aldermens wyves their auntients in all publiques meetings and assemblys within the City of Yorke and the Cathedrall churche of the same. Bristol, Coventry, Westchester and other incorporated Townes, doe obscurce the same order for decorum and Comlynes sake as well as of right and Duetye. But yett in places neuterall, and forthe of the Townes jurisdiction, and Libertyes thereof, where the Maior is not dignifyed, the Mairess cannot challenge preheminence in going or taking place, before other gentlewomen esquires wyves, that will stand vpon yt, But is to give them place, according to their husbands Degrees or their owne birththyghts. Mr. Ffrowick I acknowledge bearth an name of auntient gentrye; his wife (no doubt) may doe the like, and being a Counsellor of the Lawe, and a Justice of the peace also, hee deseareueth a good respect among you, yett having the Stewardshippe there by the Maior and Burgesses free election, as an officer subordinate, I should rather think he shoule houldy hymself behoodyinge unto you for the same, and to his power support, and mainteyne yor auntient Customs, then by fulfilling the private humor of his wife, to give example for others to doe the like, to the breeding of Disorder, brectache of peace, and confusion in a well ordered governement. Wch wthoute doubte upon better advisement being a Justice of peace and a principall member of yor Corporation under the Maior will foresee and avoyde, and endeavour
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to doe that wch shalbe fytt and expedient for a man of his quality to doe, wch I hartylye wishe, Concluding wth this sentence Bonum facit non gradus, sed virtus, non dignitas sed honestas.”

"WILLM. SEGAR Garter Principall King of Armes."

(Endorsed) “Opinion of Wm. Segar Garter Principal K: of Armes touching the Preceedency of the Maioress of St. Albans, before other Gentlewomen.”

"VERULAM HOUSE.”¹

“When Sir Nicholas Bacon the lord keeper lived, every room in Gorhambury was served with a pipe of water from the ponds, distant about a mile off. In the lifetime of Mr. Anthony Bacon, the water ceased. After whose death, his lordship [Francis Bacon] coming to the inheritance, could not recover the water without infinite charge: when he was lord chancellor, he built Verulam House, close by the pond yard, for a place of privacy when he was called upon to dispatch any urgent business. And being asked, why he had built that house there; his lordship answered, ‘that since he could not carry the water to his house, he would carry his house to the water.’”²

The following is Aubrey’s description of “Verulam House”:—“His Lordship was the chiepest architect; but he had for his assistant a favourite of his, a St. Albans man, Mr. Dobson (father of Dobson, the celebrated portrait-painter), who was his lordship’s right hand. There were good chimney-pieces; the rooms very lofty, and very well wainscoted; there were two bathing roomes, or stufes, whither his lordship retyr’d afternoons as he saw cause: all the tunnels of the chimneys were carried into the middle of the house, and round about them were seats. From the leads was a lovely prospect of the ponds, which were opposite to the north-east side of the house, and were on the other side of the stately walke of trees that leads to Gorhambury House, and also over that long walke of trees, whose toppes afford a most pleasant variegated verdure, resembling the works in Irish stiches. In the middle of this house was a delicate stair-case of wood, which was curiously carved; and on the posts of every interstice was some pretty figure, as of a grave divine with his book and spectacles, a mendicant friar etc., not one thing twice; on the dores of the upper storie, on the outside, which were painted dark umbre, were figures of the gods of the Gentiles; viz., on the south doore 2nd storie was Apollo; on another, Jupiter, with his thunderbolt, bigger than the life, and done by an excellent hand; the heightnings were of hatchings of gold, which, when the sun shone on them, made a most glorious show. This was his lordship’s summer howse; for he said one should have seates for summer and winter, as well as cloathes. The kitchen, larders, cellars, etc., are under ground. From hence to Gorhambury is about two little miles; the way easily ascending, hardly so acclive as a desk; three parallel walkes lead to Gorhambury in a straight line; in the middlemost, three coaches may pass abreast; in the wing walke, two: they consist of several stately trees of the like growth and height, viz.:—elme, chesnut, beach, hornebeam,

¹ Vide p. 284, ante.  ² Vide “A Collection of Apothegms; New and Old.” By Sir Francis Bacon.
Spanish ash, cervice tree, etc., whose tops, as aforesaid, do afford from the walke on the howse, the finest show that I have seen. The figures of the ponds were thus; they were pitched at the bottomes with pebbles of severall colours which were workt into severall figures, as of fishes, etc., which in his lordship's time were plainly to be seen through the clere water, [though] now overgrown with flagges and rushes. If a poor bodie had brought his lordship halfe-a-dozen pebbles of curious colour, he would give them a shilling, so curious was he in perfecting his fish-ponds, which I guess doe containe four acres. In the middle of the middlemost pond in the island is a curious banqueting house of Roman architecture, paved with black and white marble, covered with Cornish slate, and neatly wainscoted. . . . The glass windows of the gallery were all painted, and every pane with figures of beast, bird or flower; perhaps his lordship might use them for topiques of local memory." These windows were carefully preserved at the demolition of the old building, and are now placed in the conservatory at Gorhambury House. They are in good condition, and the designs referred to are very quaint and curious, the panels presenting a good example of enamel painting.

**Roger Pemberton.**

Roger Pemberton, a St. Albans worthy and founder of the Pemberton Almshouses, was Chief Justice of the King's Bench in the time of Charles II. He was removed from his high place on account of his moderation and humanity, and resumed his practice at the Bar, where he was accounted with Pollexfen one of the two best lawyers to be found in all the Inns of Court. At the trial of the Seven Bishops, both Pemberton and Pollexfen were counsel for the defendants, and the former, by his masterly management and fearless questioning, went far to gain the great victory.1

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ERRATA.

Page 39, line 27. For correct location of St. Cuthbert’s Chapel, vide p. 297.
Page 40, line 16 (first word), for “John” read “Thomas.”
Page 56, line 27, for “Chapel” read “Chappell.”
Page 164, note 2, line 1, for “Englands,” read “Englonda.”
Page 209, line 9, for “Half Moon Inn,” read “Red House.”
Page 258, line 5, for “the same,” read “a conversation of the Lee.”