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AN ABBOT'S CONVERSION.

By H. P. Palmer.

JOHN, Abbot of St. Albans from 1195 to 1214, was lying on his death-bed. He had already been anointed with the holy oil and was calmly waiting for the end which, as a student of medicine, he knew to be close at hand. While he lay thus, he was disturbed by the sudden entry into his chamber of William Trumpington and two other brethren of the Abbey. They began immediately to harangue the dying Abbot. Was it not pitiful, they inquired, that the Abbots of St. Albans should have the power of sending brethren to distant Cells, away from their beloved monastery, there often to close their days in anguish of heart? Had not the Abbot himself said that such a usage was a travesty of justice? Would he not now sign a charter by which the brethren should for ever be protected from this abuse—never again forced to leave the Abbey against their will?

Words were followed by action. One of the three monks, Alexander of Appleton, brought forth a charter complete in all its details and asked the Abbot if he might read it before presenting it to him for sealing. The charter guaranteed the brethren from expulsion to the Cells, or Priories belonging to the Abbey, for all future time. The Abbot's only reply was to heave a deep groan and turn away his face. The light of his life was fast flickering away; though conscious of what was passing, he could not speak. Yet once more he tried to indicate his refusal by turning away with a heavy sigh from his tormentors. But this, the only protest now possible, was treated with contempt. Alexander of Appleton angrily spread forth the charter and brought out wax and the abbatial seal. With the exclamation "Silence gives consent," he then himself sealed the document with the Abbot's seal.

The Abbot breathed his last on the following day, and his seal, as was customary, was broken in pieces. Alexander rode off quickly to London to see Stephen Langton, the Archbishop. The purpose of his visit was to request the Archbishop to confirm the charter by the impress of his own seal. Langton and Alexander were intimate friends, so the latter's task was easy. No shadow of suspicion of fraud crossed Langton's mind. Believing that the seal had been placed on the charter by the Abbot himself, he confirmed it as requested. There seemed now little prospect that the fraud and forgery would ever be detected.

Abbot John had passed "from exile to his heart's true home, from stormy seas to port," and a new ruler must be chosen without delay. But there could be no election until the King's licence to elect was obtained. William Trumpington, one of the three monks who had procured the forged charter, and another monk, were therefore sent to Poitou, where John happened to be, to ask for

this licence. They saw the King as he was in the last days of his life—prematurely aged, white-haired, worn with care, dissipation and evil passions. On receiving the petition, John reflected that until the new Abbot was appointed, he himself would enjoy the abbatial income. He therefore refused to accede to the petition until his return to London. By this delay he enjoyed a substantial increase to his revenue for more than three months.

Sir William Trumpington was cousin of the monk who had been prominent in the conspiracy to obtain the charter and who had afterwards interviewed the King. Though Sir William had never approached his cousin on the subject, he resolved to win for him the King's support by means of his relative, the Earl of Winchester. Sir William's plan succeeded, and John promised to favour Trumpington's election.

The monks of St. Albans heard of the royal design. They knew that if Trumpington were not elected, the King would exercise his veto on their choice and throw the monastery into chaos. Uninfluenced by John's interference, they would probably have elected the Prior, who was a man of remarkable attainments. Knowing the King's wishes, they decided to elect Trumpington, especially as he seemed likely to be an easy ruler and to monastic frailties "a little kind."

Trumpington then became Abbot John's successor by the unanimous vote of the twelve monks appointed to represent the whole body in electing an Abbot. The new Abbot was in the prime of life, strong, athletic, of commanding presence and with a countenance of singular beauty. No one who had seen him could readily forget him. When, however, he was presented to the King in London, John feigned ignorance of his person and demanded who he was. When he had been informed, he exclaimed with a laugh, "The very man I wanted. You did not wish to disappoint me. I hope the new Abbot may walk in the steps of his cousin." Then the King kissed Trumpington and showed by every look and gesture how pleased he was with the choice. He had little to be pleased with in anything else, for he was girt around with a ring of enemies.

Trumpington soon created surprise and disappointment in the minds of the monks. They had imagined that they would find in him a lenient master, but it was soon clear that he would "bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne" and would sweep away from his path, by dismissal to one of the Cells, any monk of talent who seemed to threaten his supremacy. There was no society which he courted less than that of the monks. He greatly preferred to move freely in the secular world, to entertain laymen and to receive their hospitality. Though attentive to his religious duties, he loved to breathe a freer atmosphere than that of the cloister with "its wise saws and modern instances." But the Abbot's worst offence in the eyes of the brethren was the breaking of the charter of which he had been one of the principal contrivers and by which they hoped to be shielded from the caprices, vagaries

and tyranny of the Abbots. Yet it was soon evident by his conduct that to Trumpington the charter was already but "a scrap of paper." The brethren were dismayed to find that the man who had sold his honour once, was ready to sell it again. The Abbey soon seethed with sullenness and sedition. The brethren gathered into groups, and freely canvassed the conduct of the Abbot. They would not endure it. They would "screw their courage to the sticking place." They would be bold and resolute. They would flout the Abbot in the Chapter-house. Walter of Rheims voiced the opinion of the more moderate, when he said: "Let us bear these affronts patiently and rebuke him in a spirit of gentleness, in the hope that he may see the error of his ways. If he is proof against this clemency, let us take a sterner line." At the meeting of the Chapter which followed these discussions, the Abbot found himself the object of a caustic criticism in which it seems probable that the Prior took part. The Abbot was charged with the offences already mentioned, but it was the breach of the charter which was the ground selected for the main attack. The Abbot's conduct was denounced as disgraceful. He was charged with an impudent defiance of the plain meaning of language—with a shameless betrayal of his troth.

The Abbot glowered upon the Prior with a malignant expression on his face, which boded no good to its object. Then, in a moment, his countenance cleared. Looking calmly at the eighty or hundred monks who sat round him, he declared that if he had carelessly caused offence, he would amend his conduct and defer to the wishes of the Convent. Not only so, but in replying to Alexander of Langley, the Abbot reiterated this pledge and added: "God forbid that I, the principal author of the charter, should act in opposition to it."

The meeting broke up and the monks left the Chapter-house for the cloister, believing that the Abbot would be as good as his word. They forgot the warning of one of the sweet singers whose hymns they had chanted so often against "trust in princes or in any child of man."

Incredible as it may seem, within a month of obtaining a pledge which men who did not pretend to the sanctity of an Abbot would have regarded as sacred, the monks were startled to discover that another of their number had been sentenced to exile in one of the Cells. The unhappy brother, who was thus treated, was broken-hearted. He wept—he entreated. Kneeling at the Abbot's feet, with hands clasped and with tears streaming down his cheeks, he begged for mercy and implored that he might not leave the Abbey, which was his home and the seat of all his affections. But, as Churchill once said of James II, marble was not more adamantine than the heart of the Abbot. The monk was compelled to leave all that he loved on earth and to go to a distant monastery, which for him was a house of bondage. There he died in great anguish of mind.

The banishment of this brother was followed within a few days

by that of another. "Moreover," says Matthew Paris, who was the chronicler of this period, "the Abbot did not condescend to amend the abuses which he had promised to correct."

The quarrel between the Abbot and the monks was openly renewed at another Chapter-house meeting. The Abbot, on entering, was at once exposed to a violent onset from his subordinates. The scene must indeed have been an animated one and well worthy of a sketch from the pencil of Matthew Paris himself. The Abbot stood at bay while the monks, one after the other, launched their missiles and impeached his justice, his veracity and his fidelity to his promises. As the indictment proceeded and the charges were relentlessly pressed home, the Abbot showed by many outward and visible signs how furious he was. His colour changed, he gnashed his teeth and his whole body was arched and convulsed with the passion which surged in his heart. Nevertheless he made a prompt reply, which was clear, cold, bitter and unexpected. Ignoring lesser plaints, he dealt only with the burning question of his repudiation of the charter. "I know," he said, "that I took immense trouble in the composition of the charter about which you revile me, and in making it effective. But I did not then realize what I was doing. So now I will break my own work in pieces. What I confirmed I will make of none effect. I know now what formerly I was ignorant of." A monk called Almaric retorted in low tones: "That is true—you are now aware that you are Abbot, a fact which you were ignorant of before." This remark was distasteful to Trumpington and was avenged later.

As the monks rallied from the stupefaction caused by the bombshell thrown by their superior into their midst, murmurs of disapproval were heard which irritated the Abbot. With the apparently innocent but significant words, "We will take counsel on this matter," he dismissed the monks and broke up the meeting.

Nicholas of Tusculum, Cardinal and Papal Legate, was a familiar figure in England towards the end of John's reign. It was he who removed the Interdict from the country, who fixed the punishment of Oxford citizens guilty of the murder of clerks and scholars and who deposed Norreys, the infamous Abbot of Evesham. To him Trumpington went for advice and support, perhaps even before the meeting of the Chapter, at which he had assumed so bold an attitude. He told Nicholas the story of the manufacture and wrongful sealing of the charter. Whether he imparted his own share in this scandalous affair to the Legate is uncertain. Unquestionably Nicholas was fully acquainted by the Abbot with the mutinous spirit of the monks. He was sympathetic and an effective plan of action was agreed on. The brethren may have been surprised and perhaps apprehensive when the Legate, doubtless attended by his usual brilliant retinue of knights, abbots and secular clergy, came to St. Albans Abbey. He soon explained the object of his visit. He wished to meet the Abbot and the brethren in the Chapter-house and discuss ecclesiastical business. After a little casual conversation, the Legate blandly remarked: "I hear that a new charter

has been executed in this house; kindly let me have a copy for examination." The charter was found and reluctantly handed to the Legate. As he perused it, his brow darkened and, when at last he had reached the end, he exclaimed scoffingly: "What a scandal we have here! Are you mad, brethren? Do you wish to renounce the obedience which you have promised and vowed to God?" The Legate followed this speech by an action which must have struck dismay into the minds of the terrified monks. He tore the charter into shreds with his teeth and flung the seals unbroken into the midst of the Chapter-house. "Cursed," he cried, "are those by whom such stratagems are employed in monasteries." The effect of the Legate's words and action was electrical. The boldest monks were quelled. "Almaric had no satirical speech to utter. Alexander of Langley's rhetoric was silent. Walter of Standuna's threats were unuttered. The haughtiness of John of Seddeford was brought low. All the enemies of the Abbot bit the dust."

No one dared to breathe a dissentient word, far less to declare that the stinging words of the prophet, "Thou art the man," might justly be said to the Abbot. Here before them was the *alter ego* of the Vicar of Christ, one with power to bind and to loose—able with a blast of his displeasure to cause a disaffected monk to spend the rest of his days in penitence and grief.

The Legate rose, dismissed the Chapter and left the Chapter-house. Even as he passed out, he turned a menacing finger at the monks and charged the Abbot, if there were any murmuring, to invoke his assistance. His warning was a work of supererogation.

The Abbot had triumphed, he was now master of the situation and proceeded to act with ruthless vigour. Reimund, the Prior of the Abbey, is described as the greatest man of the Benedictine Order living at that time. This aged monk was a scholar and had slowly and painfully collected that costly luxury, a small library of books. His devotion to literature was only second to his love for the Abbey which he faithfully served. It was this excellent person who was first selected for exile to Tynemouth Priory, the most distant and the most unpopular of the Cells. The Abbot disliked the Prior both because he had opposed him and because he was the idol of the monastery. It was, too, on the Machiavellian principle that the overthrow of the greater strikes terror into the rest, that the Abbot thus brought down the grey hairs of the Prior with sorrow to the grave. Similar harshness was shown in the case of three other monks. Among these was Almaric, who had uttered a bitter taunt at the first Chapter meeting.

Alexander of Langley, who had assisted the Abbot in procuring the charter and had afterwards demanded its fulfilment, must have dreaded the same fate. It happened, however, that the headship of the Cell of Wymondham fell vacant and the Patron, the Earl of Arundel, requested the Abbot that Alexander might be appointed as its Prior. The Abbot feared to offend the Earl, and Alexander was despatched to Wymondham. He was a man of singular natural gifts which he had improved by cultivation.

So elegant was his Latin that he was capable of inditing a fine piece of composition in that language to the Pontiff himself. His penmanship was remarkable for its clearness and beauty. He seems to have devoted all the time which he could spare from his routine duties to the study of literature. No sooner had Alexander reached Wymondham than he showed signs of mental disorder, brought about, it was believed, by an overwrought brain. He was recalled in consequence to the Abbey. When he was restored to his accustomed surroundings, his health improved. He now became the Abbot's secretary and keeper of his seal. Unfortunately bad symptoms returned and he was sent from the Abbot's apartments to sit with the other brethren in the cloisters. He soon grew worse and his disorder assumed an exaggerated form of megalomania. The treatment adopted by the Abbot affords a striking instance of the cruel methods then followed in dealing with mental disorders. The patient was flogged "to the abundant effusion of blood." He was then sent to the Cell of Bynham, where, by the orders of the Abbot, he was fettered and kept rigidly shut up. How long the unhappy man languished in his dungeon we do not know, but, when he died, he was buried, still wearing his fetters.

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The Abbot had so far distinguished himself by unscrupulousness, perfidy, harshness and a determination to move steadily forward in the path of despotism. But a great change was at hand. As time passed, the nobler features of the Abbot's character developed, while the baser fell away.

> "Consideration, like an angel came
> And whipped the offending Adam out of him,
> Leaving his body as a paradise
> To envelope and contain celestial spirits."

By love unfeigned, by devotion to duty, by sincere and unostentatious piety he atoned, at least in some measure, for the crimes, errors and excesses of which he had been guilty.

The Abbot must have rejoiced in heart when his painful struggle with the monks was followed by a journey to Rome, and by his presence at the fourth Lateran Council. At this great assembly of the clergy held in the Lateran Basilica, four hundred bishops, eight hundred abbots and priors, besides deputies of several princes, were present. Sitting under the presidency of Innocent III, who was the master spirit of the age, the Council resolved to initiate a great Crusade. It also made additions to the Canon Law, and concerned itself with the suppression of heresy. It is to be feared that the continuance of the savage onslaught on the Albigenses was the means chosen by the Council of separating the wheat from the tares. By the "merciless atrocity" of this war the Albigensian heresy was destroyed, "and with that heresy, the prosperity, the civilization, the literature, the national existence of what was once the most opulent and enlightened part of the great European family."

The Abbot, on receiving an invitation from the Pope to be

present at this Council, decided to spare no expense in furnishing himself with a retinue which would give security to his person and add lustre to his position. Moreover, two of the monks accompanied him as his secretaries. One of them is described as familiar with the Papal Court and also as learned in grammar, logic, medicine and civil and canon law. The chronicler slyly adds that the morals of this brother were not equal to his learning. The Abbot of Westminster and the Abbot of St. Albans, the latter of whom ranked above all the English abbots, made the long and arduous journey to Rome together. The massing of their retinues was of material importance in reducing the perils of travel which in those days of brigandage were so alarming. Among the spiritual questions discussed by the Lateran Council was that of the Service of the Mass, with the result that many ceremonies which had become customary were swept away. It was in the course of these deliberations that the Abbot of St. Albans made a dramatic intervention. Standing in the midst of the Council, and after a few well-chosen opening remarks, he asked a very pertinent question. It was always usual, he said, in " the Secret of the Mass " to invoke the aid and protection of certain recognized saints. Now, he continued, certain monastic houses possessed and guarded in their churches the bodies of their patron saints. The brethren of such houses would rejoice to know that they might ask for the suffrages of these saints at the proper place in the Mass. The Pope reassured the Abbot by himself answering his question in the affirmative. Innocent was much struck by the Abbot's speech and asked privately who he was. He expressed admiration of his style and manner, remarkable in so young a man, and of his wisdom in proposing his question. Innocent's commendation was praise indeed, and the Abbot was congratulated by the English bishops and abbots present at the Council.

The Abbot soon had an opportunity of seeing Innocent in a less favourable light. When the work of the Council was over and he entered the Pope's chamber to receive his benediction before leaving for England, he failed to offer the customary present. Innocent at once flamed into passion. " Are you not," said he, " the Abbot of St. Albans, who have received so many privileges from the Holy See ? Is it decent that a man of your position should go away without making a gift to me, the Pope ? " The Abbot was abashed and offered fifty marks, a sum which Innocent rejected with scorn. He turned upon the Abbot and scolded him more sharply than before. The Abbot then promised to pay a hundred marks. Not until he had offered this sum at the Pope's feet through one of his friends, did he receive the Papal benediction and permission to depart. The money was borrowed at a high rate of interest from Roman usurers.

Early in the reign of Henry III, the Abbot resolved on a personal visitation of the Cells of the Abbey. These Cells were monasteries of varying size situated in different parts of the country and under the jurisdiction of the Abbot. St. Albans' Abbey

possessed Cells as far distant from one another as Tynemouth in Northumberland, Bynham and Wymondham in Norfolk, and Hatfield and Hertford in Hertfordshire. As has already been seen, the Cells were of inestimable value in the view of the Abbots as the one means of banishing monks whom they disliked from the Abbey. On the other hand, the distance of the Abbey from some of the Cells made their superintendence by the Abbot impossible. The Priors too often exploited the revenues in their own interests. Moreover, Cells not unfrequently rebelled against the parent Abbey and bribed neighbouring landlords for their armed support. Indeed, the Abbots of St. Albans were sometimes constrained to request the Crown to send knights and soldiers to put down these rebellions.

Trumpington, when he left the Abbey on his pilgrimage to the Cells, is described as active in body, alert in mind and in the prime of life. He and the mounted monks and men-at-arms who accompanied him paused on their journey to Tynemouth to visit the Cell of Belvoir in Leicestershire. Roger of Wendover, the famous chronicler, was the Prior of this monastery. The Abbot discovered that he had squandered the revenues of his Priory. He was in consequence relieved of his responsibilities on the Abbot's return to St. Albans.

On his arrival at the ancient port of Tynemouth, the Abbot was met by the Prior, the monks and the tenants of the Priory, and by the "honourable men" of the district. The latter had ridden over from miles round to greet the Abbot. So large was this "muster of the clans" that they were likened by observers to a great army. Great preparations had been made by the Prior on behalf of the Abbot, and the swarm of guests was entertained by the latter at his own table. It was, perhaps for the first time in their lives, that, sitting at that hospitable board, northerners and southerners met together. They regarded one another almost as foreigners. Their dialects were mutually incomprehensible. To the northerner the speech of the southerner was a meaningless patois: to the southerner that of the northerner a harsh, dissonant jargon to which it was painful to listen. Yet it may be imagined that their determined efforts to overcome this difficulty and to be on friendly terms increased the gaiety and hilarity of the party. All was:

> "Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
> Nods and becks and wreathed smiles,
> Sport that wrinkled care derides
> And laughter holding both his sides."

Not long after this banquet, the tenants of the Priory lands did homage to the Abbot as their feudal lord. He kept open house during his stay: no one made excuse and his table was always furnished with guests. The Priory of Tynemouth had been for many years under the firm and beneficent sway of Ralph Gubiun "of blessed memory." For some time age and increasing infirmities had inclined the Prior to resign official cares and responsibilities. Now, he thought, his chance had come. His superior

was in his house. To him he would resign his sacred trust. Prostrating himself at the feet of the Abbot, the Prior begged him to set him free. "My lord," he cried, "let me your son depart in peace, for my end is near. I would fain make ready with tears and compunction of heart." The Abbot gently raised and encouraged the failing Prior. "Hold on," he said, "for a little while, till I can provide for the future." The Prior complied with the Abbot's wish.

The Abbot's sojourn at Tynemouth Priory had brought him nothing but credit and popularity. It must therefore have been with extreme reluctance that he started on a long journey through Durham, York and Lincoln, and at last reached the Cell of Wymondham, in Norfolk. There he was confronted with the unpleasant news that the Prior was in the habit of embezzling valuables belonging to the Priory and storing them in a hermitage, which he destined as the home of his declining years. As the chronicler puts it: "He thirsted after the property of others and was like a nomad dwelling in tents who on the morrow of each day folds them and departs elsewhere."

When the Abbot had returned to St. Albans, he deposed this unjust steward. The hermit's successor disappointed expectations; but at last Thomas the Physician, a man of the highest qualifications, was appointed. Thomas was the brother of the Earl of Arundel, the patron of the Priory, and had accompanied his father, the late Earl, on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The Earl had died there, and his son Thomas had discharged the sacred duty of bringing home his father's remains and burying them at Wymondham. Such a man as Thomas the Physician, of high birth and almost certainly a graduate in medicine either at the University of Oxford or at that of Paris, and yet devoting himself to monastic life, seems worthy of at least a passing notice.

From Wymondham the Abbot went to Hatfield. On inquiring into the state of the Priory, he was almost overwhelmed by the volume of testimony against the Prior. Following his usual practice, the Abbot deferred deposition of the offender until his own return to St. Albans.

It is very unlikely that when the Abbot bade farewell to Ralph Gubiun, the aged and beloved Prior of Tynemouth, he ever expected to see him again. It must therefore have been with the utmost astonishment that he was greeted with the news that Gubiun had travelled the long distance from Tynemouth to St. Albans on business of great moment. The Prior explained that he had been harassed beyond endurance by the extortions of Simon of Tynemouth, who claimed the right in perpetuity of sending two boarders to be maintained by the Cell at Tynemouth. Simon claimed that these "corrodies"—as they were called—had been granted by a former Abbot of St. Albans. The Prior had contested the claim, and the Court to which he had appealed had decided that the dispute should be settled by a duel between Simon and a champion selected by the Prior. A champion of unusual prowess had been chosen by the Prior and had come with him to St. Albans. Simon

had also arrived and seemed quite ready for the fray. The details of the combat which followed, and probably took place under the eyes of the Abbot, would be interesting. Yet all we know is that Gubiun's champion deceived his hopes and that victory fell to the more puissant arm of Simon of Tynemouth. The Prior was overcome with grief and vexation, for Simon's success meant nothing less than that the Priory would be saddled for ever with the maintenance and the presence of unwelcome guests. Gubiun felt that he had come to the end of his tether. He made up his mind to resign his office and, if possible, never to enter within the walls of the Priory again. He went into the Chapter-house to seek his liberty from the Abbot. "My lord," said Gubiun, "if you remember, you said to me at Tynemouth, 'Hold on a little while!' I have held on, but now it is enough; let me go because I am old." The Abbot replied by again imploring him to remain in his Priory, where his presence was indispensable, and concluded by saying, "Hold on still." The Prior's answer was a yet more urgent prayer for release, and indeed he showed such symptoms of distress that the Abbot accepted his resignation. Gubiun never returned to Tynemouth, but, as long as he lived, was the Abbot's chief counsellor, resided with him, and was his guest and "table companion."

The early years of Trumpington's abbacy had been spoilt by the internecine strife which raged in the kingdom. The quarrel between King John and Pope Innocent III had the ultimate effect of dividing the country into two hostile camps. On the one side were John, "than whom no greater tyrant ever arose among the sons of men," and John's adherents. On the other side were the Dauphin, who had been invited to become King, and the many barons who supported him. The appalling situation which arose has been described by the graphic pen of Matthew Paris: "Father strove to destroy father, brother to destroy brother, neighbour to destroy neighbour. And all this they did by plunder, extermination, burning, spoiling, disherison, torture, murder." Nor did the terror cease even after John's death, but continued until the Dauphin was driven from the kingdom.

The monasteries suffered severely in the course of this desperate contest. They were crushed equally and impartially by both parties. They possessed no effective means of defence against the marauding barons and freebooters who plundered and pillaged them without mercy. The resources of St. Albans Abbey were depleted by the havoc made on the monastic estates, and the payment of blackmail was the only means of saving the Abbey buildings from destruction by fire and the monks from extermination.

The Abbot remained calm and courageous in the midst of this terror, and distinguished himself by boldly refusing to become the liegeman of the Dauphin, even though he was surrounding the Abbey with an army.

When at last the blessings of peace returned the Abbot endeavoured to improve the financial position of the Abbey by adding to its lands and rents. He devoted his attention also to the improve-

ment of the Abbey Church, which was suffering greatly from past neglect. The aisles were roofed with oak. The tower was heightened and covered with lead, while eight pilasters enriched its appearance. The western front was completed and all decaying work removed. A new chapel dedicated to St. Cuthbert was erected. Moreover, the Abbot presented to the church an exquisite Mariola, or statue of the Blessed Virgin, marvellously graven by the cunning hand of Walter of Colchester. Before this gracious figure was a large wax candle that was always lighted at the greater feasts, when it was decked with flowers by the brethren. The Abbot found his architects and advisers in two monks of the Abbey, Matthew of Cambridge and Walter of Colchester, whose names will always be freshly remembered. The Abbot presented books to the aumbry or cupboard, which was the predecessor of the library, and succeeded in obtaining relics of repute then believed to be authentic. To the worthy performance of the divine offices he greatly contributed both by precept and by pious example. The Abbot's character completely changed for the better in his treatment of the monks. The man who had been so jealous and so tetchy became their best friend and the watchful guardian of their interests. He studied their welfare and their comfort with unfailing solicitude. New cloisters in a sunny position were as welcome as improved dormitory accommodation. Moreover, the Abbot was anxious that wherever the brethren might be they should enjoy the refinements of life. It was with this true intent for their delight that he purchased and fitted at great expense a handsome house in London, which became the monastic hostel. It possessed a chapel, chambers and orchard, a stable, a court-house and a garden. This hostel was always in readiness for guests, and was a kind of " House Beautiful " for the monks. The table of the brethren was improved by the Abbot's prudent purchase of a house at Yarmouth, where herrings and other fish could be cured and stored " to the inestimable benefit of the house of St. Alban." It was fortunate for the Abbey and for the reputation of the Abbot that after the earlier period of his rule to the date of his death, his conduct was unimpeachable; and indeed hostile criticism was hushed and was succeeded by universal praise. In none of the many details of his office was he found wanting, and he must rank as among the greatest and best of the long line of abbots.

The Abbot's departure from the world was soft and gentle; he faded peacefully away with his mind at peace.

He died loved by all, revered alike by the brethren of the Abbey and by the poor of the town of St. Albans, whose sorrows and needs were never unalleviated as long as he lived. While he still lay unburied, the Masses of the monks were broken by sobs and tears.

The remarkable change in this Abbot's character, which was a true conversion and made of him a saint, is best explained by the apostolic words, " We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."