

he prayed constantly and fervently to Almighty God. Before they arrived at the place selected, the river Colne had to be passed. It was then overflowed through a great flood of waters. Alban, anxious for his crown, prayed to Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, that the river might be dried up, and this took place immediately, so that the great multitude at once passed over—mightily awed and impressed by this interposition of the Almighty. A spring of water is said to have sprung up in the place of his martyrdom, from which he quenched his thirst. At the sight of this miracle the executioner appointed was converted to the faith. The Venerable Bede, and Gildas the historian, both mention these wonderful occurrences. Here St. Alban was beheaded, but the soldier who did the deed was at once struck blind. This noble martyrdom won thousands to the Christian religion, most of whom were baptized by St. Amphibalus. The town of Verulam was afterwards called St. Alban's, in his honour, and a magnificent church erected there, over the sacred grave of England's Proto-martyr. Offa, King of Mercia, founded the monastery, A.D. 793. When Henry VIII. sacrilegiously sentenced the abbeyes of England to be pulled down, and their treasures alienated, the inhabitants of the place bought the church, and, thanks be to God! it remains to the present day, and is being now carefully restored. Some think that it may soon be made the seat of a new English bishopric. God grant it! The old shrine over the precious remains of St. Alban was smashed at the dissolution; but the fragments having been found, they have been carefully put together, and this beautiful piece of workmanship is likely to be completely restored.

Thomas Walsingham assures us that the woollen garment in which St. Alban was martyred, was formerly preserved in the church of Ely, in a great chest, which was opened in 1314, the reign of Edward II. The upper portion, even then, appeared stained with the martyr's blood. With regard to the miracles recorded above, that learned and devout English writer, Jeremy Collier, thus remarks:—"As for St. Alban's miracles being attested by authors of such credit, I do not see why they should be questioned. That miracles were wrought in the Church in that time of day is clear from the writings of the ancients. . . . To imagine that God should exert His Omnipotence, and appear supernaturally for His servants, . . . in no age since the apostles, is an unreasonable fancy. For since the world was not all converted in the Apostles' time, why should we not believe that God should honour His servants with the most undisputed credentials? . . . Why [then] should St. Alban's miracles be disbelieved?"—"Ecclesiastical History," p. 52, vol. i. London, 1845.)

The old Church-of-England Collect for St. Alban's Day, anciently observed on June 22, may be thus translated:—"O God, who hast sanctified this day by the martyrdom of St. Alban, grant, we beseech Thee, that we who rejoice year by year on this his festival, may be consoled by his continual assistance, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."

May we all imitate St. Alban in his devotion to, and zeal for the unchangeable Faith of Christ's Holy Universal Church!

DE GUARRENDON.