

minute and particular. In order to narrate the doings of Prior Richard in the 13th century, he took us back to Magiovinum, a Roman town of the era before Christ. This was certainly laying a firm foundation for Prior Richard's rule, and we appreciated it accordingly. In due course we found that Prior Richard was Prior of Dunstable in England, somewhere about the year 1205. Prior Richard, you see was getting a local habitation and a name. For a time our author confined himself to *facts*, and so long all went "merry as a marriage bell." We felt no reason to doubt our author's *facts*. Indeed, his having taken us back to Magiovinum, and the days before the Christian era, was *prima facie* evidence of their accuracy. Magiovinum gave us a certain *faith* in his *facts*. Soon, however, our author began to revel in that luxury of authors, *deductions* from *facts*; and then, alas! our *faith* was rudely shaken, for we found that he indulged *too freely*, in fact, we may say, *much too freely*. Like Falstaff's lunch, his deductions were "too much bread for so unconscionable a little sack"

The first deduction which startled our *faith*, was the one that "Richard when he became Prior of Dunstable, must have been *young*, because he had only yet reached the grade of *deacon*." This we felt was inaccurate with the inaccuracy of ignorance, and our esteem for our author declined accordingly. The fact of a monk being only yet a *deacon*, is, certainly, no proof of youth, since many monks are known to have died at an extreme old age "having yet only reached the grade of *deacons*." Not only Priors but even Cardinals (teste Antonelli) have died *only deacons*. This, however, is a minor point, and is valuable, perhaps, only in as much as it was the first *deduction* which caused us to look with distrust upon our author. We drew the salt-cellar nearer to us and proceeded with our reading.

Prior Richard, was no less a personage than Richard de Morins, one time a young canon of Merton, but who, afterwards as Prior Richard of Dunstable, played no inconsiderable part in the English history of England's Kings, John and Henry, of noteworthy mem-

ory. In his estimate of Prior Richard, our author says:

"There can be no doubt, that the profession for which Richard de Morins was best suited, was *law* rather than *divinity*; that he was a clever man of the world; that he had two great objects constantly in view—the aggrandizement at all risks of the monastic establishment with which he was identified, and the gratification of his own pride and vainglory."

These are grave assertions to be brought against any monk's character, let alone against one of Prior Richard's reverend and exalted station. Let us examine them. *Primo*—Richard de Morins, was best fitted for *law* than *divinity*, (and had therefore "missed his vocation.") *Secundo*: he was "a clever man of the world" and, therefore, by implication, not fit for a monastery.) *Tertio*; he had two great objects constantly in view—the aggrandizement of his monastery *at all risks*, and the gratification of his own pride and vainglory. One would have supposed that this estimate of Prior Richard's character, would have been arrived at from overwhelming documentary evidence, and would be sustained by overwhelming proof. *No such thing*. On the contrary, what proof is offered is of the flimsiest. Behold it:

"The evidence to his character has been left us under his own hand, for, no sooner had he become Prior of Dunstable, than he began two records *which appear* not to have existed in the monastery before: one a chartulary, or register of the charters and legal proceedings of the house; the other a chronicle; and the grand object of both was to record the actions of Richard the Prior."

How far this proof sustains the three propositions it is intended to prove, would be somewhat hard to determine; that the author himself did not think it self-sustaining is evident from the fact, that he finds it necessary in order to bolster its weakness, to supplement it by an assertion of his own, which at once *begs the whole question*: "the grand object of both, he asserts, was to record the actions of Richard the Prior." It is astonishing what strong powers of divination some authors have—especially if they happen to be Protestant authors writing upon Catholic subjects. "The grand object of both." How could any one tell "the grand object of both," short of divination? The writ-