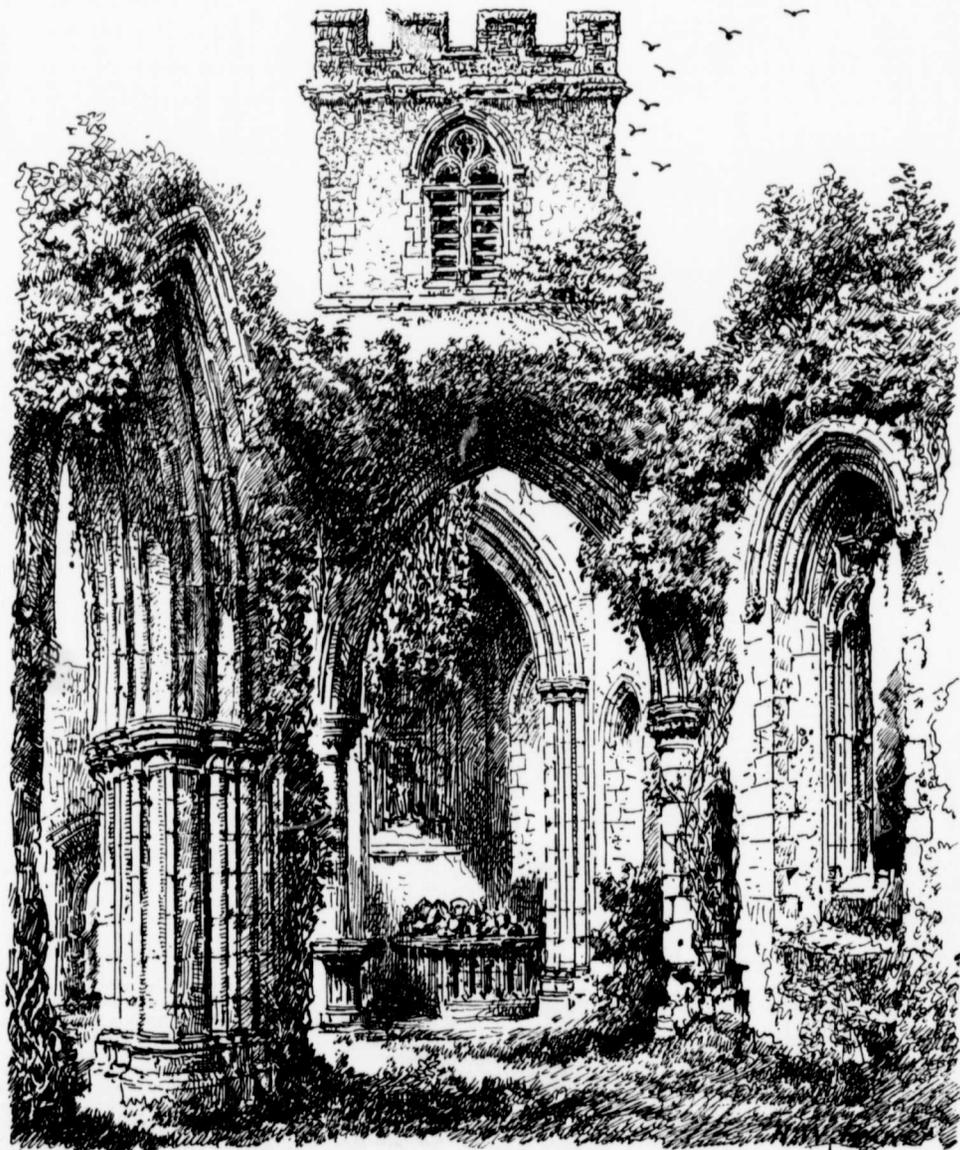


with stations not too far apart. There is a pleasant road to Ayot, the village with its new church is not interesting architecturally. Ayot St. Peter's is about a mile further on. The church here stands in an exposed and rather desolate situation; it is a tiny brick building; formerly the place was more important and bore the appellation of Ayot Montfitchet. Chauncey, the local historian, from whose history of Hertfordshire all more modern writers have borrowed, was vicar here. Chauncey was great nephew of that Chauncey who has left us such a graphic description of the declining days of the London Charterhouse, a valuable contribution to the history of the

Reformation period. So historical studies seem to have gone in the family.

A run of about two miles through pleasant, well-shaded lanes, takes one to the very interesting ancient village of Great Ayot or Ayot St. Lawrence; its situation surrounded and overshadowed by lofty elms is extremely pretty, and the little row of old gabled timber houses flanking the south side of its street are quite the perfection of village architecture. The old sign of the "three horseshoes" is a charming example of ancient metal work; the house was probably an inn in former times, but is so no longer. The opposite side of the street is occupied by a low wall, beyond which is the

old churchyard. The church itself is a picturesque ruin; the roofless walls and tower clothed with ivy and creeping plants, but peeping through the ivy are delicately-traceried fourteenth century windows, graceful arches and richly clustered columns, such as are rarely met with in ordinary village churches. The west doorway has elegantly carved leaves running along its mouldings; if you look beneath the ivy which quite covers the east window, you will find the remains of elaborate little niches which seem to have surrounded it. Beneath the tower is a fine Gothic monument bearing the effigies of a knight in full armour and his lady, and on the wall above a tablet



RUINS OF CHURCH AYOT ST. LAWRENCE.