

**St. Wulfstan and his Connection with
St. Alban's Abbey.**

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To the making of the English race no single century contributed so much as the eleventh. It opened with the Saxons in possession of the land; it witnessed the overthrow of their power and that of the Danes established; it closed with the triumph of the Normans. It saw the introduction of two new elements; it saw each in turn strive for the mastery with its predecessor; it saw old and new on the way to settling down together, in process of time to form our English race.

St. Wulfstan's long life of nearly ninety years (1008-1095) is virtually one with the course of the century. Born under a Saxon king, he passed through the Danish interlude, and lived to serve William the Conqueror, to take part in the coronation of William Rufus, to see the permanent triumph of the Normans. Of all the men who played great parts during the century of whom record has come down to us, Wulfstan alone touched the national life in its three phases—Saxon, Danish, and Norman.

As a Churchman, he was the link between the Early English and the Norman Church. He was the last Anglo-Saxon bishop, and the last saint of the Anglo-Saxon Church.

Merely to have lived through so long and so varied a period, merely to have seen changes so momentous, would confer no mean distinction, and should more than suffice to merit and engage our interest. But so to have lived through such times, so to have borne himself through such changes, as to retain the love of his Saxon fellow-countrymen, to gain the respect and admiration of the conquering Normans, and, finally, with the

applauding assent of all, to be awarded a place among the saints of their common Church, is to achieve a distinction so far beyond the opportunity and beyond the reach of ordinary men as at once to arrest our attention and compel our interest.

That this distinction was Wulfstan's, I am fully persuaded; and I have ventured to write this paper, not in the expectation of presenting what should pretend to be an adequate portrayal of such a character and career (for at this distance of time, and with the merely fragmentary records that have come to us that would be vain) but in the humbler hope of winning, in some degree, your appreciation of the greatness of his life and work, and your love for the man himself.

The story of his life may be taken as falling, fairly naturally, into two parts: before, and after, 1062, the date of his appointment to the see of Worcester—not that the mere becoming a Bishop made any difference to the man, but that the position naturally widened the sphere of his work and influence. Before that year he was leading the restricted life of a monk, the helper of his brethren in spiritual things, the friend and consoler of the poor in their daily struggle. After it, he was the trusted friend and adviser of princes and prelates, and through his influence with them a powerful factor in determining the issues of the national life. In the later period the benignant light of his gracious character shone no less brightly or steadily than in the earlier, but it carried further.

It is impossible, in making such a division in the story of a man's life, to avoid altogether a certain arbitrariness. Wulfstan's influential friendships did not, of course, spring up in a day on his becoming a bishop. But, this understood, the arrangement is in the main as true as it certainly is convenient, and I shall therefore follow it, adding, at the close, a few notes on his relations with St. Albans.

In 991, Oswald, Bishop of Worcester, granted a manse and some property at Long Itchington in Warwickshire, belonging to the see, to his man Elstan. Elstan's wife was Wulfgeva, and in 1008 she bore him a son, whose name, Wulfstan, was a combination of theirs.

He was educated at Evesham, and, later, at Peterborough, the monastery of which had at the time the most famous School in England. Here he received all that an Anglo-Saxon School could give. He was inured to hardness and self-control, taught to rise early and to bind and illuminate books. Latin he may have learnt through conning the pages of the Psalters which were produced in the Abbey scriptorium.

Aelfric, seventh Abbot of St. Alban's Monastery and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1023, has left behind him a Latin and Saxon Dialogue. This was probably written for Peterborough School, so that from it, too, Wulfstan may have gained some knowledge of Latin. It gives us some curious glimpses of the life in the Monastery Schools. The following extract from it is taken from Thorpe's *Analecta*:—"The master asks, 'Hast thou been flogged to-day?' 'No,' replies the boy, 'for I have behaved myself warily.' But he will not answer for his companions. 'Why do you ask me? I must not tell our secrets. Each one knows whether he was whipt or not.' (Evidently the schoolboy code of honour is of old standing!) 'Who wakens you to night-song?' asks the master. 'Sometimes I hear the knell and rise; sometimes the master wakes me roughly with his rod.'"

By mutual consent Wulfstan's parents, in their old age, took monastic vows. After the father's death, the boy was persuaded by his mother to leave the world, and in the monastery at Worcester, where his father had served God, Wulfstan received the habit and order of a monk. He entered the service of Brihtege, Bishop of Worcester, by whom in 1033 he was ordained priest. His biographer, William of Malmesbury, speaks of him as rising through the various offices—master of the novices, precentor and treasurer of the Church, and finally, in 1038, prior. It will be remembered that in a Cathedral Monastery like that of Worcester the Bishop was Abbot, and that the Prior therefore was the immediate head of the Society.

When entrusted with the custody of the Church, he was constantly there, spending days and nights before the altar. Every day he visited the eighteen altars in the old church, bowing seven times before each.

Dr. Thomas, in his "Survey of Worcester Cathedral," written in 1736, says: "In these exercises he continued a whole day and night together; once, it is said, for four days and nights together, whereby he incurred such danger that had he not hastened, by sleep, to refresh nature, he would have died; and, when nature enforced him to take some repose, he laid not himself down on a couch or soft bed, but on some bench or form in the church, and made the book he read the pillow on which to lay his head."

One striking practice of his shows that even in his discipline of others he was unsparing of himself. If one of the brothers was absent from the midnight service, Wulfstan would take no notice of it at the time; but when the others had left the church and returned to their beds, he would quietly go and wake the absentee, return with him to the church, and make him go through the appointed office, himself staying with him and making the responses.

But this constant service of God in His temple by no means precluded him from serving his fellow-men. We read of him sitting for hours at the church-door, hearing and settling disputes, and helping those who were in need. He also travelled much about the country—careful, in each village he came to, first to "salute the Church"—baptizing the children of the poor, who at that time were often refused free baptism by the secular clergy.

When Prior, too, he preached to the people—a much-neglected work in that age. Wulfstan's view of his duty in the matter is shown in his reply to a monk who protested that it was the office of a *Bishop* to preach and that of a *monk* to keep silence: "My brother, the word of God is not bound."

From the character of the man, and bearing in mind that he thought that the English people were, in the incursions of the Danes, being punished by God for their sins, we can well believe that the description William of Malmesbury gives of his preaching is no more than true. "His words," he tells us, "his words, as he uttered them to the people from on high in his pulpit, seemed to be the voice of thunder issuing from the shrine of a prophet or evangelist: they lightened like

bolts upon the wicked: they fell like showers upon the elect."

One delightful story I must not omit. The incident probably occurred during this part of his life, and may therefore best be told here. One day, it is said, as he was celebrating mass at the altar, the savoury odour of roast goose so interfered with his devotions that he, "not being able to conquer it, by reason he was hungry," and being filled with shame in consequence, vowed never again to eat that particular meat! This, doubtless, is the foundation of the tradition that he was a vegetarian.

Thus from story and tradition we are able to form a picture of the man as he was in his daily life during these quiet, somewhat uneventful years—little known probably beyond Worcester and its neighbourhood, a man plain and homely, earnest in devotion, his life lying not so much in the silent cloister as in the market place and village, among the poor and the despised. He had learned the secret which the church at large took so long to learn, that (as an American writer puts it) "God is not more easily found in solitude than in the stress of daily life; that the soul makes her own peace quite as often in the strife of cities as in the loneliness of woods; that in loving, and doing, and suffering it is possible to be closer to the Divinity than in simple meditation."

St. Gregory said of St. Benedict that he was "learnedly ignorant and wisely unlettered," and I do not think we could get a better description of St. Wulfstan. You will, I am sure, feel the full force of the truth of its application to him when we come later to a dramatic episode, the most dramatic, indeed, in his career, in the course of his relations with the Normans.

We cannot wonder that his sincere, simple goodness, joined to his great tact in dealing with men, gradually won for Wulfstan the friendship of nearly all the leading men of his time. His position, later, as Bishop, naturally gave greater opportunity for such friendships, but one of the closest and most notable of them all, that with Harold, Earl Godwin's son, the ill-fated King Harold of the battle of Hastings, belongs to this earlier period. With this man, eloquent in speech, wise in

council, having a perfect knowledge of the laws of the land, a fitting leader for the English people, devoted heart and soul to the service of his country and loyal to her wayward and half foreign King, Edward the Confessor, Wulfstan seems to have been in perfect sympathy. As for Harold, he would at any time travel thirty miles out of his way that he might receive the benefit of the saint's exhortations and prayers, and Wulfstan repaid his devotion by loyal and vigorous service in the day of need.

After Harold's accession, in 1066, when he had difficult and delicate work to perform in settling the northern earldoms, Wulfstan accompanied him, and William of Malmesbury attributes the credit of the expedition to the saintliness of the Bishop. On this journey, as on all, we can picture him, with his book open on the pommel of his saddle, chanting with his monks, as they travelled slowly north, the psalms, the litanies and the office for the dead. Often, we learn, he would say over and over to himself the verses of which he was specially fond—"prayer verses" he called them—and we feel instinctively that Dr. Thomas's description of him must be true:—"Standing, lying down, or sitting, always in his mouth a psalm, and always in his heart his Saviour." On this note, and none could be more fitting, I close this brief record of the earlier part of his life.

In order to understand fully the unique position in the national life that Wulfstan held from this point onward, we must try to trace from its beginning the Norman influence in ecclesiastical affairs. Of this influence the true starting-point is the accession of Edward the Confessor, in 1043. It was not, it is true, till 1066 that the military triumph determined which race should rule England, but the struggle for supremacy between the English and the Normans—between the foreigner and the native—had really been going on all these twenty-three years.

Edward the Confessor, son of Ethelred the Unready and Emma of Normandy, had spent most of his life in his mother's country, and, though England might be the land of his duty, Normandy held his affections.

Further, his natural inclination was for a monastery rather than for a throne, and the real man comes out in his devotion to religious exercises, his gifts to monasteries, and the founding of his great Abbey at Westminster. Almost from the first he exercised the right of investing Bishops-elect with ring and staff, the sign of their office, and the ecclesiastical appointments of his reign are very significant. Although these were made in full Witan, showing that the people had at least the right of saying "Yea" or "Nay," we constantly hear of the King "giving" a bishopric. He succeeded in filling the sees of Canterbury, London, and Dorchester with French prelates. Of these the most notable was Robert of Jumièges, Bishop of London, who had unbounded influence with the King, and was the chief fomentor of strife between him and his native subjects. He was, too, the first man of utterly alien speech to be appointed to an English bishopric. Later, as Archbishop of Canterbury, he was the first to receive his consecration from Rome, and with him began the practice of refusing consecration to bishops appointed by the King and Witan. "By this time" (1051), says Freeman, "a man might go from the Straits of Dover to the Humber, over Kentish, East Saxon, and Danish ground, without once in the course of his journey going out of the spiritual jurisdiction of the Norman."

For another set of ecclesiastical appointments which are of interest to us in this study, we must turn from Edward the Confessor to the other great figure on the stage of history at the time—Harold, son of Earl Godwin, and, as we have seen, friend of Wulfstan. *His* policy was to try to counteract the threatening Norman influence by bringing about the connection of England with the Germans—Teutonic races nearest to us in blood and speech. To this end he did his utmost to secure the appointment of Lothingarian bishops. (Lothingaria, roughly, embraced all the lower Netherlands.) Coming from the borderland between France and Germany, these bishops were thus men to whom French and German were equally familiar. It is easy to understand that, when the King would not accept the appointment of an Englishman, there was always at least a chance that he would compromise, by

accepting the nomination of a Lothingarian; and these men, as a rule, resisted the Norman influence. In view of the esteem, and even reverence, in which later, in the day of their triumph, Wulfstan was held by the Normans, it is essential to note that in this policy he was with his friend Harold, and, therefore, against them.

When Aldred became Archbishop of York in 1060, he had the greatest difficulty in receiving consecration at the hands of Pope Nicholas, on the ground, probably, of his holding several bishoprics at once. Tostig, Harold's brother, seems, however to have brought influence to bear upon the Pope, either by persuasion or by threats, and at last Aldred was invested with the pallium, but only on condition of his resigning his beloved see of Worcester. Then it was that in 1062 two papal legates came to England to see, among other things, that this part of the contract was carried out. Aldred received them, conducted them on their journey through a great part of England, and at last quartered them at Worcester under the care of Wulfstan. Here they were to remain during Lent, waiting for the Easter sitting of the Gemot at Winchester, when the King and his Witan were to decide on all matters that had brought them to England. Wulfstan showed his guests every hospitality, but he himself spent the time in the most rigid observances of the Church. Three times a week he tasted nothing night or day, and never broke silence. On Sundays he added to his simple fare some fish and wine, in reverence for the festival.

The legates seem to have been so struck by the virtues of the holy Wulfstan, as shown in these austerities towards himself and by his devotion to his fellow-men, that they warmly supported his appointment to the see of Worcester, when Aldred hesitated between him and the Abbot of Evesham. Both Archbishops Stigand and Aldred, as well as his personal friend Harold, spoke in Wulfstan's favour, and the wish of the Witan was unanimous. The only difficulty lay in his unwillingness to take upon himself responsibilities so great. Messengers were sent at full speed to Worcester to bring the Prior to the assembly. He obeyed, but eloquently pleaded his unfitness for the vacant office. When every

other influence had failed, he seems to have been persuaded by a hermit, who had been cut off from the outside world for forty years. This hermit, to quote Dr. Thomas, "sharply reprehended Wulfstan for his obstinacy, and assured him that in so doing he much offended God. Upon this he yielded, not without great grief of heart." He was consecrated Bishop of Worcester on September 8th, 1062, by Aldred, and received the ring and pastoral staff from King Edward the Confessor.

A note seems necessary here as to the peculiar position of Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury. He had received the pallium from an irregularly appointed pope who had possession of the papal throne only for one year. It was but natural, therefore, that the prelates acknowledged by him should be looked askance at by later ecclesiastics at Rome. Freeman suggests that Wulfstan seems to have been impressed by the importance of papal recognition and therefore would not accept consecration from the hands of Stigand. But may it not be that Wulfstan preferred to take the charge from Aldred because he was the retiring Bishop of Worcester, and was, moreover, the man who had made him Prior? This seems not only a simpler explanation, but one more in line with the general Church policy of Harold and Wulfstan, and certainly much more in keeping with the character of the saint, especially in view of his extreme reluctance to accept the bishopric at all.

When "he put on the bishop, he put not off the monk," but continued to practise towards himself the same severity as when he was Prior. Every day he sang the late high mass, which was usually taken by priests a week at a time, as the celebrant had to remain fasting till a late hour.

As Bishop, too, he continued wearing his famous coat of lambskin, allowed to the Benedictines in winter, which made him the laughing-stock of the Norman prelates. The following story I do not like, but as it probably exemplifies the simple pleasantry of the age, and also shows that the good Bishop could unbend, I tell it. When taken to task by Geoffrey of Coutances for wearing this coat, and told that, at any rate, he might

choose the skin of some better animal, such as a fox, a cat, or a beaver, he replied that foxskin might be all very well for crafty men of the world, but as for him he would keep to his common sheepskins. "Believe me," he said, "I have often heard of 'Agnus Dei,' but never of 'Cattus Dei.'"

One of his first undertakings as Bishop was to build Worcester Cathedral. In some degree he was compelled to this by the condition of the old church, but it was doubtless also in part a characteristically tactful concession to Norman feeling, for at this time vast abbeys and cathedrals were beginning to be erected all over England by the Norman prelates. Practically the only part of the Cathedral as built by St. Wulfstan that now remains is the apsidal crypt. It ranks as the second oldest in England, that of Winchester being older. The crypt at Worcester is, however, unique in the number of small pillars employed to support the vaulted roof. Together with the semicircular arches, these slender shafts give an appearance of lightness that one does not look for in Norman architecture.

He was a great church-builder, as we should expect from his practical nature and his intense desire that the poor should be reached and have the Gospel preached to them. But though necessity and policy had combined to force his hand in the case of Worcester, it is easy to understand his having little sympathy with the building of cathedrals in itself. When the Cathedral of Worcester was finished, and the old church and monastery buildings were being demolished to make room for more splendid edifices, Wulfstan stood one day and looked at the roofless church and the walls that were being torn down, and his eyes filled with tears. "Why should you weep?" said a monk standing by. "You should rather laugh, to see the meanness of the first house swept away to make room for a glorious second one." "No," said Wulfstan, "I see nothing to rejoice over in the demolition of the work of our saints. True, they knew not how to rear a stately building; but under a mean roof they offered the adorable sacrifice to God with great devotion, and set saintly examples to their flock; and we—we collect and carve the stones of the material

temple, and neglect the edification of that which is spiritual, the souls of men."

When Aldred was appointed Archbishop of York, he had persuaded Edward the Confessor into letting Worcester become part of the see of York, so as to deprive it of twelve manors belonging to it. On Aldred's death in 1070, Wulfstan, at a great council of prelates held at Winchester, demanded restitution of these. Made as if the Saxons and not the Normans still ruled the land, and as if he feared not a whit for his own position (though just before several Anglo-Saxon clergy had been deposed), the demand was a bold one, and shows, perhaps, more than any other single action of his, the "straightforward unconscious simplicity" of the man. Freeman says: "While others saw the purpose of the King, and trembled lest the stroke should fall upon them, the holy Bishop of Worcester arose and demanded this restitution. The answer of William and the Legates was very discreet—they had not heard both sides. They had heard the claim of Worcester, they had not heard the defence of York. The church of York was dumb, having no shepherd to speak for her. When the Northern bishopric should again be full, both sides should be heard, and the case decided."

In 1072, when Thomas of Bayeux had been appointed Archbishop of York, Wulfstan had to face a more formidable council and plead his cause again. Here I cannot do better than quote William of Malmesbury. (It should be understood that Wulfstan and his monks were waiting outside the great Council Chamber.) "Here the holy simplicity of the blessed Wulfstan and his ever-courageous trust in God is worthy to be praised. 'Believe me,' said he, 'we have not yet sung "horam sextam," let us sing it'; they answering that first they ought to consult and dispatch the business they were about, that there would be time enough for them to chant hereafter, that if the King and his nobles should hear they would laugh them to scorn. 'Believe me,' says he, 'first let us serve God, and after let us wage the controversy of men.' The hour being chanted, without any tergiversation or pretending to more than naked truth, he immediately went towards the Council

Hall." This being constant, in season and out of season, brought its due reward, for the pretences of the Northern bishops were shown to be groundless, the dispute was settled in favour of the claims of Wulfstan, and the twelve manors were restored to Worcester.

Later, Lanfranc tried to get Wulfstan deposed, on the ground of incapacity and ignorance, and Wulfstan had again to appear before the Council. In his book "The Church of our Fathers," Dr. Rock thus describes the scene:—"There stood the grave, long-bearded Saxon Bishop, arraigned for ignorance before the Norman king and his smooth-shaven Norman prelates. Wulfstan, the representative of the people, Lanfranc of the nobles. Wulfstan Bishop of the Conquered and Lanfranc of the Conquerors.

"When the poor Saxons had come to him at Worcester, and had complained that these Normans trampled down their corn and robbed them of their cattle, and ground them down with taxes—'They are God's scourge, these Normans, punishing us for our sins, my children,' Wulfstan had said. And now he was to be deprived of his office that a Norman might occupy it and shepherd with his crook the Saxon bondsmen.

"The Council decided, in accordance with the royal pleasure, that Wulfstan was too ignorant to deserve to retain his see, and that he must resign his pastoral staff. Upon this the old man rose, and, holding the crosier firmly in his hand, said—'Of a truth, my Lord Archbishop, of a truth, I know that I am not worthy of this dignity, nor sufficient for its duties. I knew it when the clergy elected, when the prelates compelled, when my master King Edward summoned me to the office. You now require from me the pastoral staff which you did not deliver, and take from me the office which you did not confer; and I, who am not ignorant of my own insufficiency, obeying the decree of this holy synod, resign them, not to you, but to him by whose authority I received them.' So saying, he advanced to the tomb of King Edward, and addressed himself to the dead:—'Master,' said he, 'thou knowest how unwillingly I took upon myself this office, forced to it by thee! . . . Behold, a new king, a new law, a new primate! They decree new rights, and promulgate new statutes.

Thee they accuse of error in having so commanded, me of presumption in having obeyed. Then, indeed, thou wast liable to error, being mortal; but now, being with God, thou canst not err. Not, therefore, to these who require what they did not give, and who as men may deceive and be deceived, but to thee who hast given, and who art beyond the reach of error or ignorance, I render up my staff.' With these words, he raised his hand a little and drove the crosier into the stone which covered the sacred body. 'Take this, my master,' he said, 'and deliver it to whom thou wilt,' and, descending from the altar, he laid aside his pontifical dress, and took his seat, a simple monk among the monks But the staff, to the wonder of all, remained fast imbedded in the stone. They tried to draw it out, but it was immovable. The news was carried to where the synod was sitting, and Lanfranc first sent Gundulf, Bishop of Rochester (to whom the see of Worcester was promised) to bring the staff, but he was unable to withdraw it. Then Lanfranc and the King came, and when the former, after prayer, failed to remove the staff, he burst into tears, and, embracing Wulfstan, acknowledged the mistake they had made, saying, 'We have erred, we have erred, my brother, in our judgment of thee; and God has raised up His Spirit in His king, to show to all how acceptable thy simplicity is to God Go, therefore, my brother, go to thy master—yea, to ours, for we believe that that holy hand which has refused the crosier to us, will freely resign it to thee.' Then the holy bishop tried with a gentle effort to draw out the staff; it yielded to his hand, and came forth as if it had been planted in soft clay."

It is interesting to note, in passing, this variant of the common idea of the possession of power to withdraw a sword from stone being proof of rightful ownership. You will remember we are told in "Malory" how Sir Ector and Sir Kay were unable to withdraw the sword, which yielded at once to Arthur; and, later, how Sir Galahad withdrew the jewelled sword from the block of red marble which floated on the river, when Sir Launcelot, Sir Gawaine, and Sir Percivale had tried and failed.

But to return. This account of how the deposition of Wulfstan was prevented, and of the reconciliation

between him and Lanfranc, was written first by Aildred, Abbot of Rievaulx, who died within a century after the Conquest, and, later, by Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris. This reconciliation was the beginning of another of those marked friendships of the saint; for Lanfranc, the polished courtier and gifted scholar, the man, as Freeman says, "whose crosier had completed what the sword had begun," whose insight was deeper, and whose task far heavier, henceforth loved and valued the assistance of the homely Saxon Bishop. And from this point onwards, as we should naturally expect, Wulfstan's influence at Court steadily increased.

Among the stray fragments of those days, there has come down to us the copy of a religious bond entered into between Wulfstan and his monks and the monks of six other monasteries. It throws an interesting light on the relationships between English and Norman Churchmen just at this time. What follows is taken, much abridged, from Freeman:—

"Of the seven abbots named, two are foreigners, and the others all kept their abbey for life. They bind themselves to be obedient to God, Saint Mary, and Saint Benedict, and to their own Bishop, and to be loyal to their world-lord, King William, and Matilda the Lady. Among themselves, the seven monasteries are to be as one, their inmates to have one heart and one soul. They promise to be true to Wulfstan 'for God and for the world,' and they make promises of mutual intercession and various acts of charity to the poor, such as washing and feeding one hundred poor men, and providing shoes for them—acts we shall find St. Wulfstan performing very shortly before his death."

The whole document breathes that spirit of simple piety, of earnest love towards God and man, which pervades so many of the ancient records of the native English Church. Of the practical results of this bond we have, I believe, a unique example in St. Wulfstan's Hospital (now called "the Comanderie") at Worcester. It seems to have been founded by Wulfstan in 1085, about ten years after the signing of the bond. Its object was to supply to the stranger and wayfarer who came to the city after the closing of the gates such shelter and hospitality as he might need, and attached

to it were a master, two chaplains, and five poor brethren, who were put under the rule of St. Augustine. Ecclesiastical as well as charitable in character, it provided food for the soul as well as for the body. Unfortunately no part of this interesting building as it now exists dates from before Henry VII.'s time.

Of Wulfstan's influence with the Norman King we could not have a better example than the way in which Lanfranc used him to bring about the suppression of the Slave Trade at Bristol which, in spite of repeated legislation of Ethelred and Cnut, was still carried on, chiefly with Ireland. The trade was profitable for dealers and King William's revenues, but Lanfranc and Wulfstan determined to oppose it. The King's avarice yielded to their arguments, and one of the few genuine pieces of legislation of William's reign strictly forbids the wicked traffic. But the evil was too deeply rooted for the King's power; and the Saint of Worcester went among the traders, often staying two or three months at a time, and every Sunday preaching to them in English. He completely won the love and reverence of these wild people, and the trade, at any rate for a season, was abolished. So far, indeed, did their new-born zeal carry them that William of Malmesbury relates how one stiff-necked sinner escaped from the city only with the loss of his eyes.

More than once we find Wulfstan heading soldiers to keep the peace of the country, an occupation which seems strangely out of keeping with the plain old Saxon monk. The most notable instance was during the revolt of the Lords of Hereford and Norfolk in 1074, when Wulfstan's followers, under Urse, the rapacious Sheriff of Worcester, prevented the Earl of Hereford from crossing the Severn, and eventually took him prisoner.

One other small record is of interest, as showing the influence of Wulfstan with William the Conqueror. A village was actually presented to him by the King for the use of the monks of Worcester, on condition that they should pray for the health of his soul and the health of all those who had assisted him in getting possession of this Kingdom.

Wulfstan outlived William and Lanfranc. He assisted at the coronation of William Rufus, and was

one of the consecrators of St. Anselm. But he was getting an old man, and during Lent in 1095 he seems to have had a presentiment that it was the last time he would keep the sacred season. "The plough has come at last to my furrow," he said on hearing of the death of a sister, and he at once began preparing for his own departure. He sent to all his bailiffs that against Maundy Thursday they should send him, out of every village, cloaks for one man, shoes for ten, and food for 100. When the day came, with his own hands he ministered to the crowds of people gathered. Twice the Bishop's hall was filled and the old man continued his lowly task of washing the feet of the poor, though begged by his attendants to desist. By the time a third company filled the hall the supply of food was exhausted, and the monks asked, "Why wash them? there is no more food," to which Wulfstan made answer, "What boots it, let God's commands be done, His bounty will not be wanting." And while he yet laboured, messengers arrived with fresh supplies of food and clothes and shoes.

At Easter, Wulfstan gave orders for a great banquet to be prepared, as he would dine with many "good men." This ambiguous phrase was misunderstood by the monks, and great was their disappointment when, instead of the gay company they had expected, the hall was filled by the poor and the friendless.

Some months later, Wulfstan sent for his great friend Robert, Bishop of Hereford, confessed to him, and received the discipline from him. He lingered till January of the following year, and on the 19th at midnight he died. As, near the end, his monks stood round his couch weeping, he spoke to them for the last time in words which breathe the warmest trust, "Cease your groans, wipe up your tears, for I shall not lose my life, but change it. Nor shall I ever be wanting to you, but as I shall be nearer to God when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, so shall I be more ready to help you. Upon my entreaty, prosperity shall come unto you; me defending you, adversity shall depart from you." It is said that on the night of his death he appeared to Robert, Bishop of Hereford, and announced his departure, bidding his friend come and bury him, when

at the same time Robert would receive from one of the monks a present, which should prove to him the reality of the vision. Robert obeyed the vision, and when his sad mission was completed and he was mounting to ride away, the Prior of Worcester, on bended knee, begged his acceptance of the lambskin coat which Wulfstan had worn on his long journeys.

I have purposely not related any of the many miracles said to have been performed by St. Wulfstan; but the remark made in the account of him in the "Oxford Lives of the Saints" exactly expresses my feeling about them—that so he had lived and so he had died that men found it not hard to believe any of the stories of miraculous help and healing that gathered round his name.

As I bring this account of St. Wulfstan's life to a close, Keble's words haunt me as a perfect description of this simple servant of God:—

"There are, in this loud, stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime,
Who carry music in their heart,
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

It only remains now to speak of the ways in which St. Wulfstan was connected with the Abbey here. Though slight, they are very interesting. When William the Conqueror had fought and won the battle of Hastings, he thought it advisable not to proceed to London until he received the submission of the neighbouring counties. He crossed the Thames, and came as far north as Berkhamstead, where Aldred, Archbishop of York, Edgar Atheling, Walter, Bishop of Hereford, and Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, swore fealty to him. The gathering is thus described in "Speed's History of Great Britain" (his authority is John Stow):—
"William, intended for London, being on his way, found the passage stopped up with a multitude of great trees, which, by the policy of Frederic, Abbot of St. Albans, to secure his monastery from destruction by the Normans, were so cut down. Whereat the Duke, both wond'ring and fretting, sent for the Abbot, under his

assurance of safe return, and demanded cause why the woods were so cut. Frederic answered very stoutly, "I have done the duty both of my birth and profession, and if others of my rank had performed the like, as they well might and ought, it had not been in thy power to have pierced the land thus far." William was anxious to get his coronation accomplished, and Lanfranc urged him to compromise with this stormy abbot. Wulfstan also brought his influence to bear, and upon the relics of St. Alban William swore to keep the ancient laws of the realm.

As far as I know, that is the only connection of the Saint with St. Albans during his lifetime. In 1217, Sylvester, Bishop of Worcester, invited William of Trumpington, Abbot of St. Albans, to be present at the translation of the bones of St. Wulfstan into a new and costly shrine. Dr. Thomas relates that Bishop Sylvester, "with his own hand, sawed in two some of the bones of the Saint, and divided them in several places, in which, it seems, he gloried, but he died the next month, which some say was a judgment upon him." And Matthew Paris, speaking of William of Trumpington, says, "It must be said in praise of this abbot that he acquired for us one of the ribs of St. Wulfstan, which he afterwards enclosed in goldsmith's work." On the whole, the inference is, I think, that the relic was bought, and not, as is sometimes said, stolen. William of Trumpington raised an altar to St. Wulfstan in the Saints' Chapel in the most southerly arch at the east end. Matthew Paris also records that the old tomb of St. Alban was discovered in 1257 between the altars of St. Oswyn and St. Wulfstan. And Mr. Page states as probable that the two remaining figures on the shrine as it exists to-day, apart from those of St. Alban and King Offa, are St. Oswyn and St. Wulfstan. The latter is on the north side of the shrine, and it is of interest to note that the figure is bearded, which of course was correct for an Anglo-Saxon Bishop.

One other figure of St. Wulfstan exists. It is on the slab of King John's tomb in Worcester Cathedral, for John fulfilled Merlin's prophecy that "he should be placed between the saints," by decreeing that the figures of St. Oswald and St. Wulfstan should be carved on his

tomb, one on each side of his head. But though the slab of the tomb is nearly a century earlier than the present shrine of St. Alban, St. Wulfstan is depicted as clean shaven, and, as far as one can make out from an old engraving, in the dress of a Norman prelate. There is now no tomb of St. Wulfstan in Worcester Cathedral.

On the beautiful High Altar screen in the Abbey, as restored by Lord Aldenham, is a small figure of St. Wulfstan. He wears his short lamb-skin coat, bears in one hand a crosier, in the other a church of Saxon architecture. It is an apt presentment, and surely among that glorious company, chosen as they are to represent "the Passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and the testimony to the faith in that Passion, given in the lives and deeds of men," none has more worthily won his place than Wulfstan, last Bishop and last Saint of our Early English Church.