

Second only to the King, giver of justice and protector of the realm. They dug him up and reinterred his body beneath mine so no harm from evil could befall him.

From dissolution and desecration I have stood my ground whilst his great edifice and deeds have been torn apart or forgotten, crumbling and scattered like the leaves of lesser species. I am the Noble Laurel, symbol of immortality and resurrection. Cut down and poisoned they accuse me of damaging my Lords creation, of pushing against these monumental walls. I have grown back each time. A strength rooted in the body of my ward. For three hundred and fifty years they lit candles and prayed so that his soul could enter another Kingdom. Four hundred years! I have watched over his physical remains and marked his status with my crown.

I watched as sty's were built in the church when humans were fined for trespass. Stood firm when the farm was abandoned and the land thrown open for all to wander. I was old when they planted the mulberry, fenced and revered yet prostrate and wizened. Upright, taller than the walls that hem me in I rise and look across the marsh. Where once the sun silvered the Thames and ships sailed above the finest golden corn.

I have witnessed natures fury, seen wealth and life drained from the land, tasted salt from the sea. Yet here I am and shall remain, protector of the protector of the realm.