


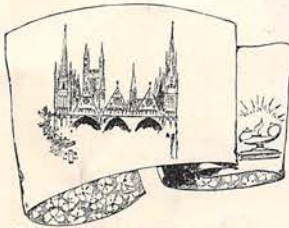
THE CENTURY MAGAZINE.

VOL. XXXIV.

JUNE, 1887.

No. 2.

PETERBORO

The coat of arms of Peterborough is a circular emblem. It features a shield with a black background and four white crosses. The shield is surrounded by a decorative border containing the Latin text "SIGILLUM PETRIBOROUGHENSIS ECCLESIE" and "DE CANONICIS".

IN the eastern part of England the Normans built three great sister churches, similar in dimensions and design. All three are now cathedral churches,—Norwich near the coast, Ely in the center of the fenlands, and Peterborough on their western skirts. It has been hard to choose two of them for comment and pass by the third; and it may seem strange to pass by the one which more entirely than the others—indeed, more entirely than any cathedral in the country—keeps its pristine form.

Norwich keeps unaltered that Norman ground-plan which everywhere else has been conspicuously changed; keeps all the lower parts of its interior as originally built, and keeps its splendid central tower. But this very freedom from mutations has made it in one way less interesting than its rivals, and in one way less characteristic too. The variety which comes from the touch of successive generations, from the contrasting beauty of successive styles, seems more interesting than unity to all eyes save the serious student's. And it was so often wrought in the cathedrals of England that it is one of the chief characteristics which oppose them to their fellows elsewhere. Peterborough and Ely have diverser charms, a richer historic voice, and a more

typical interest than Norwich, because their features are much more variously dated.

And then, while almost every important part of Norwich will be found in prototype along our path, Peterborough has, and Ely has, a splendid feature which is all its own. Did we not see the octagon at Ely, or did we not see Peterborough's western front, we should miss one of the loveliest, most daring, most original creations of the English builder, and one which he never even tried to match elsewhere.

I.

HISTORICAL claims imposed Canterbury upon us as our first cathedral; and were they consistently respected we should go next to York, or Winchester perhaps, or Durham. But the guiding-threads of interest are many and at times conflicting; and now the architectural strand may well be followed for a while.

Peterborough's history is devoid of wide significance. It was not a cathedral till long after its many-dated fabric was finished as we see it to-day; it stood apart from the main currents of national life; its influence, albeit great, was almost wholly local; and its annals are marked by few famous names or conspicuous happenings. But its fabric, though built as a mere abbey-church—a mere private place of worship for Benedictine monks—bears comparison with the very greatest. Its scheme gives proof of the enormous extent of monastic wealth and pride and power; and the very many dates which mark its execution prove

how long such influences were potently at work.

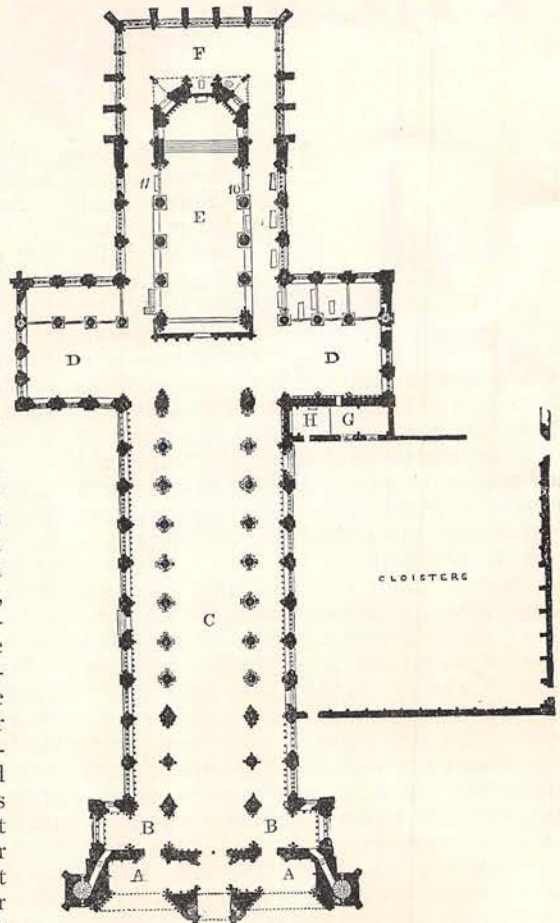
The Abbey, at first called Medeshamstede, was founded by Peada, the first Christian king of Mercia, less than sixty years after the landing of St. Augustine. Its church was finished by his successor and dedicated to St. Peter. The pope granted the brotherhood extraordinary privileges; the king endowed it with some four hundred square miles of land; and for two hundred and fifty years it lived and prospered greatly. But then its buildings were utterly swept away by Danish rovers, and their eighty-four indwellers were slaughtered to a man.

A full century passed ere, in 972, the monastery was refounded, reëndowed, and rechristened Peter's-borough. Edgar was then king, and Dunstan primate; and the Benedictines, whom they so greatly favored, were naturally placed in the new establishment.

This, the second church, was also troubled and laid under tribute by the Danes, though not destroyed. But the most interesting chapter in its history connects it with those later days when Danes and Englishmen joined in a last resistance to the Norman interloper and when Hereward ruled the "Camp of Refuge" in the neighboring Isle of Ely. Hereward's story, made so familiar by the touch of modern romance-writers, rests but upon long subsequent and dubious traditions. Yet their very survival and their richness of detail prove at least that he must have been a valiant leader and one whom the popular imagination held very dear. And our own mood grows so sympathetic when we read that we hardly care to ask for history's exact decisions. We like to believe in his midnight vigil at Peterborough's altar; and we are probably right in believing that a little later he came with his band of outlaws — monks, peasants, and soldiers, Englishmen and Danes — and despoiled that altar and the whole church of St. Peter, carrying off its treasures to prevent their falling into the grasp of the advancing Norman. Their guardians were inclined to favor Englishmen, not Normans; yet so high-handed an act could not fail to seem sacrilegious in their eyes, and they resisted it as best they might. Hereward burned their homes and drove them forth, but, it seems, without needless cruelty; for when William's fighting abbot came in his turn, he found the hospital still standing over the head of a single invalid old brother.

This Norman abbot, Thorold, chastised Peterborough as vigorously as William had expected. He ruled for twenty-eight years, "a master of the goods of the abbey and a scandal to the church." And, "being a soldier by choice and a monk for convenience and emolument," and knowing himself well hated within his own walls, he brought thither a troop of men-at-arms and built them a castle close by the church's side. When this castle was destroyed is not exactly known; but its site is traced in a mound called the Tout-hill, which rises, overshadowed by great trees, to the south of the cathedral and to the eastward of the bishop's — once the abbot's — palace.

In 1107 Ernulph, the prior of Canterbury, was promoted to be abbot at Peterborough. Later he was made bishop of Rochester, and in all times and places was a mighty and persistent builder. We have already seen the remnants of his work at Canterbury, and at



PLAN OF PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL. (SCALE 100 FEET TO 1 INCH.)
 A. Portico. B. Western transept. C. Nave. D. D. Transept. E. Choir. F. Retro-choir or "New Building." 10. Place of Mary Stuart's tomb. 11. Tomb of Catherine of Aragon.

Rochester such still stand to-day. But here he speaks only through tradition; the dormitory, the refectory, and the chapter-house he built have utterly disappeared.

II.

THE second church stood unchanged by any Norman hand until 1116, when, like its predecessor, it was wholly swept away by fire. In 1117 the present structure

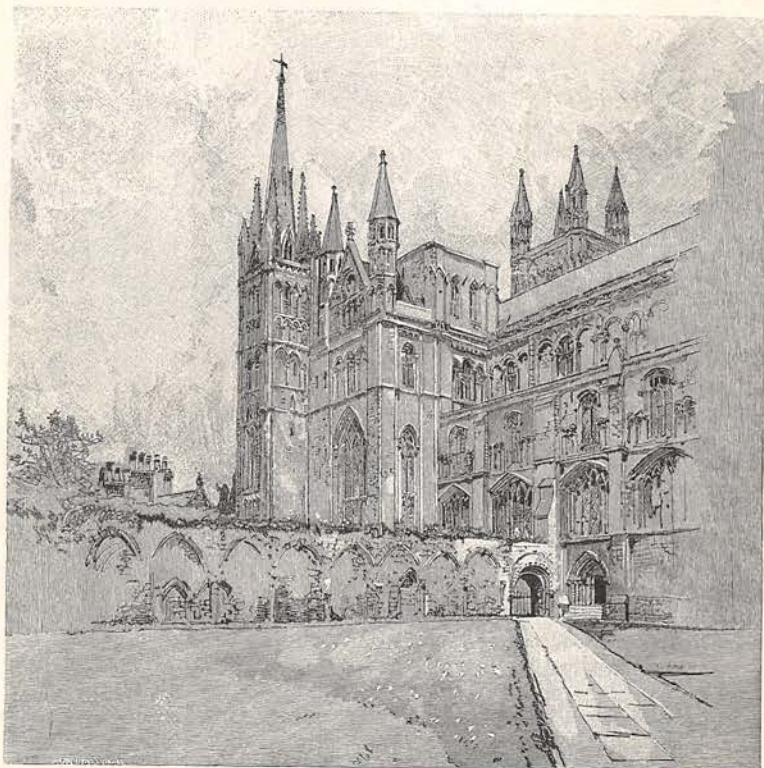
was begun. John of Sais was abbot, but whom he had for architect we know not; nor are the later chronicles of Peterborough anywhere illumined by those citations of an artist's name which give Canterbury's such a vivid charm.

Under John of Sais the choir was built in part, and it seems to have been finished under Martin of Bec; for he brought his monks into the new structure "with much pomp" in 1140, and a consecration implies at least the choir's completeness. The central tower was erected soon after 1155; and this in its turn implies that the transepts and a portion

of the nave must have been standing to support it. And thereafter the work seems to have gone on slowly westward. Slight differences in construction and design mark its successive stages; but the same general scheme persists till we come almost to the western wall.

It is easy to see that more than once the original plan was altered for the increase of size and splendor. The nave had already been given two bays more than were at first intended before a second change of scheme added still another space, which, as it has a lateral projection beyond the main line of the aisle-walls, is called a western transept. In this the pure simple Norman style is no longer used, but a later, lighter, richer version of round-arched design,—that "transitional" style which served to prepare the way for

"pointed" fashions. And when we cross the threshold and look at the outside of the western wall, we see still another step in development. I do not mean when we look at that huge arched portico which our illustration shows, but at the veritable wall of the church behind it as seen on page 168. This shows only pointed arches, though its inner face is built with round. Evidently the great change of style had come about while it was being



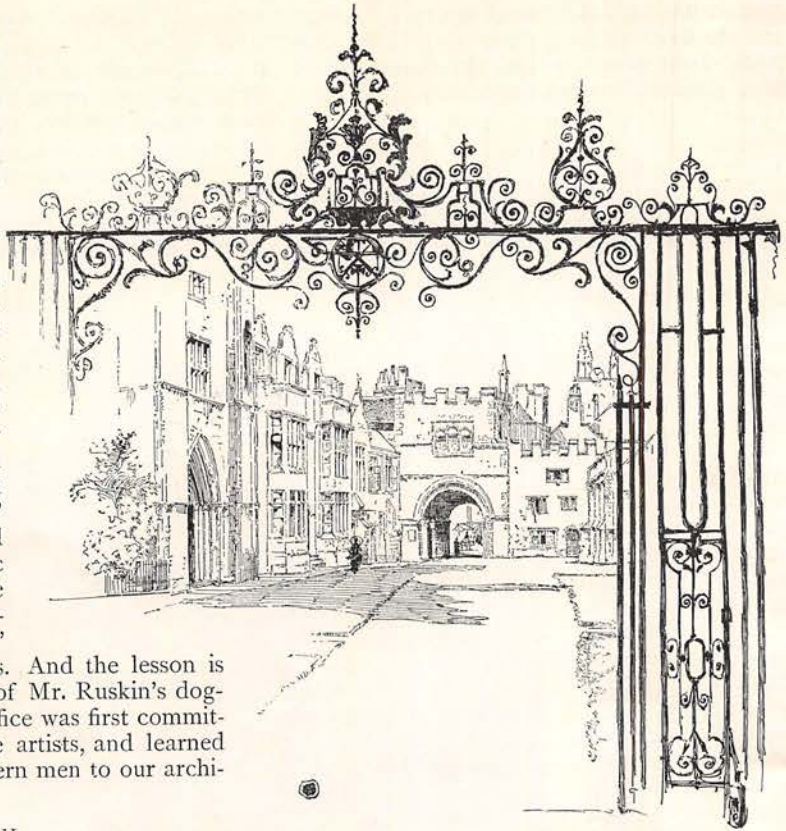
WESTERN TOWERS OF THE CATHEDRAL FROM THE CLOISTERS.

raised; and its constructors, true to the spirit of their age, had abandoned the old manner as quickly as they could. For the "unity" of their work as a whole they did not care,—only for the harmony of such portions as a single glance might cover.

Their idea was evidently to build some such façade as we shall see at Wells and Salisbury, with tall towers on either hand and projecting buttresses in front. But ere the task was accomplished a new hand took control. Again the design was changed, and again for the sake of greater grandeur. One of the planned-for towers was finished no further than necessity compelled for the safety of the front; and the other, though now conspicuous with four corner pinnacles, is still much lower than it should have been. And the buttresses re-

mained unbuilt while another entire façade was thrown out, with the three majestic arches, the small flanking towers, and the windowed gables that we see to-day.

Many sins did its builder perpetrate in the working of his purpose. On the ground they can be very clearly understood, and here I may at least refer to them. For they show that the mediæval architect, even in the "best of periods," was sometimes led by purely æsthetic aims to sacrifice the stability, the rationality, and the "truth" of his constructions. And the lesson is interesting in view of Mr. Ruskin's dogma, that such sacrifice was first committed by Renaissance artists, and learned from them by modern men to our architectural undoing.



III.

VIEW EASTWARD THROUGH THE GATE FROM THE MAIN DOOR OF THE CATHEDRAL.

To begin with, this "majestick front of columel work" does not sustain the outward thrust of the nave arcade as buttresses would have done, and as to the eye it purports to do. Its vaulted roof impinges upon the west wall, of course; but its tall clustered piers stand free, and unassisted could not even bear their own weight and the weight of their arches. Vast arches such as these may seem well able to support themselves, even though they rise eighty-one feet above the ground; may look like mammoth branching trees and seem to stand as a tree stands, by natural elasticity. But in truth their stones bear downward with as great a weight as though differently arranged,—or, more exactly, bear *outward* with enormous lateral pressure. Even assisted as they are by the towers on either hand, they have not really stood, in the true meaning of the word. Only a hundred and fifty years after they were built the western wall seems to have thrown too much weight upon them, its own towers suffering from the lack of buttresses. To counteract this danger there was raised within the central arch, up to half its height, that closed porch or parvise which, though charming in itself and very scientifically used, mars the harmony of the façade and spoils its grand

simplicity. And to-day all the arches are conspicuously out of the perpendicular, though the whole fabric has been braced and tied together in ingenious ways; and some say that there is even a need that the entire work should be taken down for reconstruction.

And had it been solidity itself, it would still not have been a rational piece of work. It not only lacks structural affinity with the church, but deliberately misrepresents it to the eye. Professing with its three arches to express the three longitudinal divisions of the nave, it leads us to believe that the aisles lie some 65 feet apart, while in fact they are separated by a space of but 46. Nor, again, are the arches, like those of Rheims or Amiens, a true development and glorification of the doors that lie within them. They are independent in station as in structure, and have absorbed all the dignity they should have shared with the portals proper. It is a screen, this front, and not a true front or even a true portico; and a screen which bears false witness to the work behind it. Moreover, its general design, considered simply for itself, has been sacrificed to the preëminence of the arches. The gables

are too small and delicate to match with them, and the flanking towers too insignificant. In truth, no doors, no gables, and no towers could have been built to keep them fitting company. Given arches of this size, the rest of the composition could not but be made to suffer. Yet even thus, as writes our excellent local guide,* "it raises ideas which no building even of extraordinary size could adequately satisfy." Any possible interior would seem too small and low for its magnificent predictions. And do not these facts prove that it is not *rational*, as every architectural work should be, according to those theories and principles which it is always well to bear in mind? But he must be a pedant thrice over, who, when he stands face to face with Peterborough, *can* bear them in mind for its condemning. Gothic art would have been a thing far inferior to the thing it was had this been the normal way in which its great church-fronts were built, did this architect's practice translate its fundamental rules of composition and canons of construction. We are quite content that there should have been but one such architect, and that he should have built but one such façade — yet how glad that he did build this, abnormal, eccentric, even irrational though its beauty be! There is absolutely nothing like it elsewhere; and there are few things in any place, however superior in all that goes to make architecture *good* as well as entrancing and imposing, which can dare to rival it for majestic grace and almost supernatural effectiveness.

Strangely enough, not only the name of its constructor but even the name of the abbot who employed him is unknown. Nothing identifies or dates the fabric save the voice of its own Early-English style which points to the first half of the thirteenth century. Some believe that French genius must have been at work upon it; and it certainly bears more likeness to current French than to current English products. But I cannot quite think that any Frenchman, even away from home, would ever have designed in so unscholastic, so overfree a fashion. And the sculptured details are hardly rich enough to have been born of Gallic inspiration. It seems to me rather the work of some exceptionally brilliant Englishman, who had seen the great portals of France and had wished to surpass them, but who ended by producing something wholly new, — something superior to his models in audacity, in freshness of impulse, and in pictorial charm, but far inferior in good sense, in true architectural balance and harmony of design, and in decorative finish. A very great artist he must have been; but there were better architects alive in France. Had

* Thomas Craddock: "A General, Architectural, and Monastic History of Peterborough Cathedral."

Michael Angelo done his architectural work in the thirteenth century he might well have built some such a portico as this; and yet we do not even know the name or nationality of the ambitious, unfettered, reckless, but divinely gifted man who seems to have expressed himself once and for all at Peterborough.

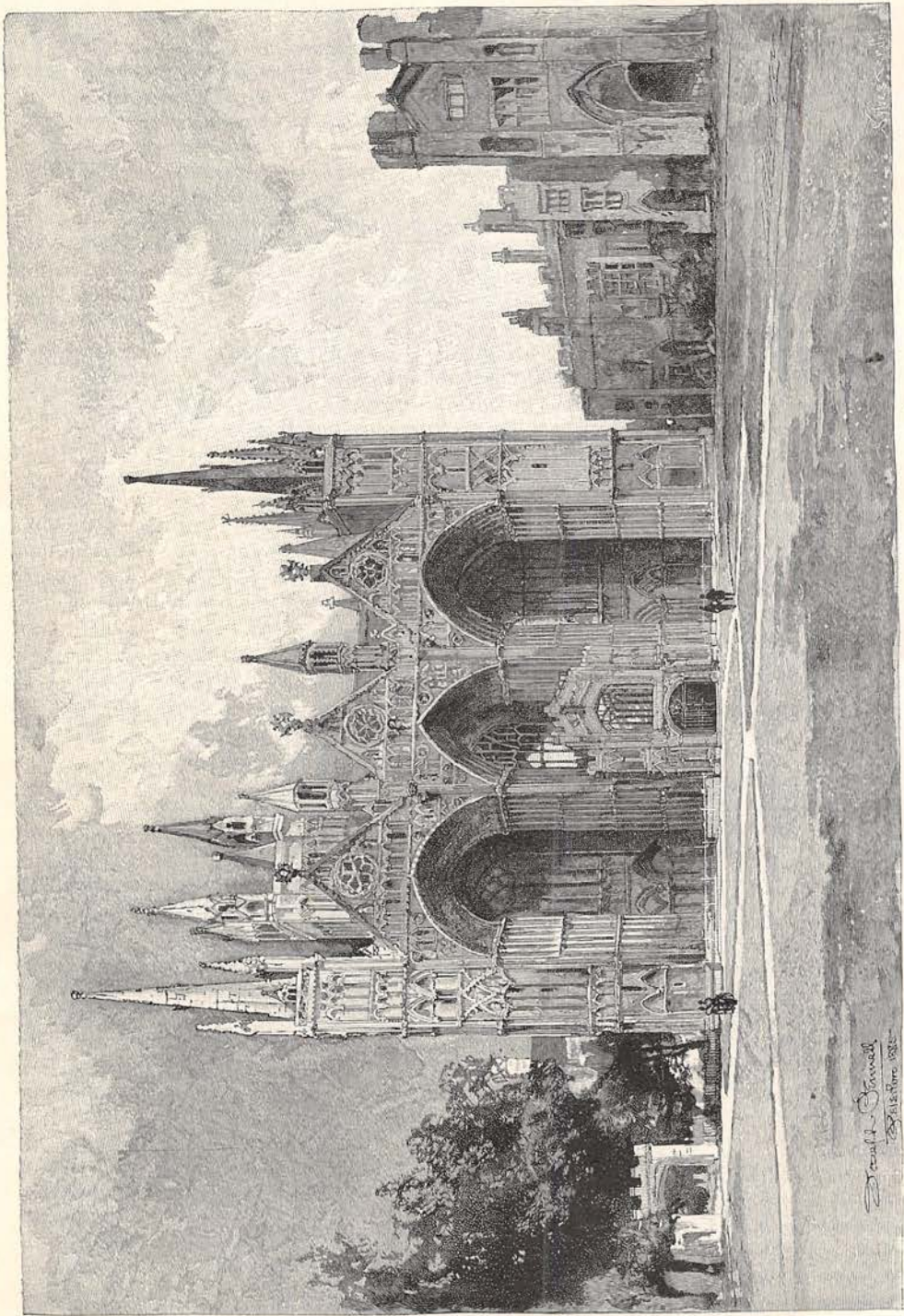
IV.

STRANGE indeed is the contrast when we pass into the old Norman nave beneath this portico and through the "transitional" transept, with its slender pillars, its rich capitals, its arches — round, indeed, but light and graceful — its high vaulted roof, and its wealth of zigzag decoration. Strange, indeed, and well able to convince us that what we vaguely call "mediæval art" was not one art but many arts, of the most widely divergent details, features, and proportions, aiming at the most widely different ideals, and potent to suggest the most alien emotions.

Here is again beauty, truly, but neither the grace, the lightness, nor the aspiring lines which so splendidly show themselves outside; no elaboration of minor parts, as in the "transitional" work, and very little decoration. The plainly fluted capitals and the sparse zigzags of the arch-moldings give scarce a first faint prediction of that "cut work and crinkle-cranckle" which to old John Evelyn summed up the qualities of mediæval work.

This work is strong to massiveness, plain almost to baldness, — Titans' work, immense, austere, and awful. To the men of Evelyn's day, and also to the men of late mediæval days, it doubtless seemed barbaric. But it is not this, and it is not even primitive, archaic, though so tremendous, stern, and simple. It is too grand in its air for barbaric work which is never more than grandiose; too dignified; and too refined despite its lack of delicate detail. And it has the distinctly non-archaic quality of perfect self-possession, — that air of repose which always marks a complete and never a tentative stage of architectural development. It shows no trace that its builders were uncertain of just what they wished to do, or, if certain, were unable to achieve it. Primitive though it may look by contrast with richer, lighter structures, it is in truth the final perfected effort of a style which had known a growth of centuries' duration. It exactly and completely expresses the aims and ideals of its own race of builders.

It is true that we may think the nave far too narrow for its length. But this is a question for mere taste to settle. If the proportions of the ground-plan are out of keeping with our ideas of perfect beauty, the fact implies no



PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL — THE WEST FRONT.

J. Wallis del.
W. & A. G. Sculp.

such lack of skill in the management of the chosen forms and features as would a want of harmony and proportion in the construction proper. And though this construction might have been ornamented into richer charm, its *design*, I say, could not have been improved upon unless the designer's ideal had been altered too. Nor should we forget that the want of sculptured detail was once supplied by ornament in color, covering every part of the vast interior.

Mere theoretic judgment tells us this, and we see it clearly proved in the western transept. Here the fundamental forms are the same, but their proportions are all changed. Doubtless the result seems much more charming to most modern eyes; but it should be recognized as the result of *different aims*, and, moreover, of their incomplete attainment. Here lightness, grace, delicacy, and the expression of altitude were desired, and these were things which could not be perfectly attained until the pointed arch should come and bring the chance for dominant vertical lines. So *this* work may in one sense be considered primitive, archaic,—for it is tentative, not final. It is, in a word, anticipatory Gothic; but the earlier work is complete and perfect Norman.

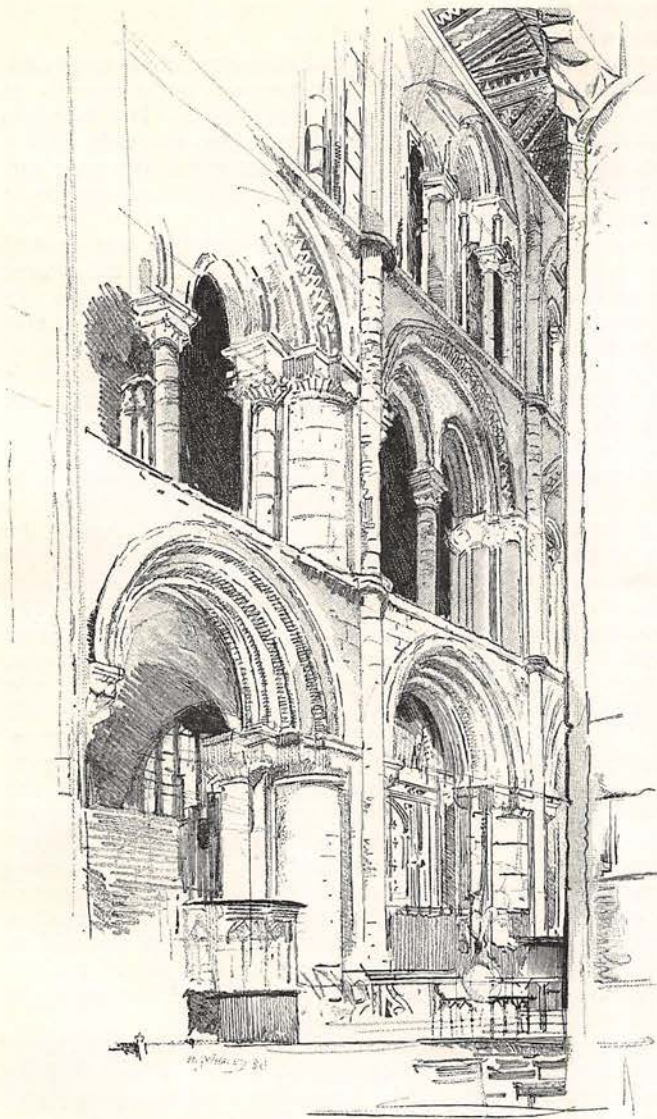
Excepting only as regards the roof of the central alley. The aisles alone are vaulted; the broad middle space is covered with boards that now are slightly canted on either side, but once were flatly laid. Whether such a ceiling came by choice or by necessity, there can hardly be a modern eye to like it save for its historic interest. It still preserves its painted decoration from a very early though uncertain day,—small figure-designs enframed in lozenge-like patterns of black. When the walls were painted too, it wore, of course, a less painfully alien look than it does to-day, contrasted with the stony whiteness of everything below. But even then its woodenness must have been apparent, and must have seemed but a pauper finish to such gigantic strength of pier and arch and wall. And its flatness, giving too strong an emphasis to lateral dimensions, was out of harmony with all the rest. Only a huge and massive semicircular vault could have carried out the ideal the walls so perfectly express. Yet we cannot but believe that its own builders really found it satisfactory; for there is none of that preparation for a possible later vault which we almost invariably find when a great nave on the continent chances to be ceiled flat with wood. The great half-columns which rise between the arches are not vaulting-shafts, but run straight up to the ceiling without true capitals, and were evidently built to bear its rafters only.

v.

THE choir and transepts, as has been said, are earlier than the nave but essentially at one with it in their design. The transepts have a single aisle to the eastward and a painted wooden ceiling apparently even earlier than the nave's and still undisturbed in its first flatness.

The central alley of the choir was finished with a semicircular apse, but the aisles were stopped flat at the beginning of its curve. In Early-English days an independent chapel seems to have been thrown out at the end of each aisle; and in Perpendicular days the whole end was transformed, as our plan will show. Very boldly, yet beautifully, some nameless architect at the end of the fifteenth century met the need for more altar-accommodation at the east end of the church without destroying his Norman predecessor's work. Across the whole width of the church he built a single great undivided one-storied apartment, rising as high as the roof of the choir-aisles. The ends of these aisles were pulled down, giving free access and an open view from either side. But the central apse was left projecting into what, after a lapse of four centuries, is still called the "new building." It was partly remodeled in detail and overlaid with Perpendicular ornament; but the architect had too much confidence in the fundamental success of his scheme to care to obliterate all signs of his borrowings and piecings. A Norman string-course still remains amid the late details, and also many traces which the weather had made upon the wall while it was still an external wall, and even one or two of the iron fastenings which had held the shutters in the lower range of openings.

Seen from the interior of the choir, this lower range of openings is found to have had its arch-heads changed into pointed shapes and filled with a rich fringe of tracery, through which the eye passes to the elaborate "new building." But the two upper ranges rising above the roof of this still keep their round arches, though filled with tracery for the reception of glass. This remodeling is in the Decorated style, and was done some hundred years before the "new building" was itself constructed. And, indeed, there is no part of the church which does not show the trace of constant, persistent alterations of a similar kind. Art grew too vitally and vigorously in those ages for any generation to be quite content with what its forefathers had bequeathed. If nothing important remained to be built, there was always something which might be re-touched into harmony with current tastes. The development of glass was perhaps the most potent factor in



TWO BAYS OF THE NAVE.

the work of never-ceasing change; but the mere desire for what was thought a better beauty played, too, a considerable rôle.

The "new building" is an extremely beautiful example of Perpendicular art in its construction and in its details as well as in the boldness, yet good sense, of its arrangement; and its lovely, daring fan-vault shows in most interesting contrast with the work of those early builders who scarce ventured upon vaults at all. But we are not yet on the true birth-ground of the Perpendicular style, and once more may pass it briefly over.

The ceiling of the choir is a rich fifteenth-century vault; but, nevertheless, it is not built

of stone. And often again we shall find similar evidence of how the English love of wood persisted even in those days when vaults had most clearly proved their greater charm and fitness.

VI.

THE exterior of the east end is wonderfully picturesque, with its light, low, square Perpendicular building crowned with a rich parapet and statues, and its old Norman apse raising two ponderous round-arched tiers above. And as thence we pass along the north side through the beautifully planted church-yard, we find a succession of pictures which will hardly be surpassed elsewhere. The west front, too, rises in superb isolation above the broad green close before it; and, if we stand farther off, in the market-place of the town, above a beautiful gateway built by the Normans but largely changed by later hands.

But it is only such near views as these which are really fine at Peterborough. The town lies flat, and gives but a flat site to the church; and the church is itself so low, and crowned with so stunted a central tower and so insignificant a group of western turrets, that from a distance it makes no very effective picture.

Two years ago, when our illustrations were drawn, it had no central tower whatever. The great man who made the portico was not the only Peterborough architect who thought more, or knew more, of effectiveness than of stability in building. The Norman tower was raised on such inadequate supports that, at least as early as the year 1300, it cried aloud for reconstruction. So it was taken down, and the substructure strengthened. The great arches which opened from the nave and the choir into the crossing were rebuilt in pointed shapes; and though their mates on either side above the transepts were left intact, pointed "bearing arches" were built solid into the superincumbent walls. Then a low tower was placed above them, with a wooden lantern, which was removed in the last century.

But during many recent years it had been known that the tower was again insecure. Its pillars were bent and bulging, and the arches of transepts and choir were visibly strained. To prevent such a catastrophe as befell the tower of Chichester cathedral not long ago, the whole work was again pulled down, and more completely than before. When I saw it in 1885 the great angle-piers with their four arches were again in place, having been rebuilt from the very rock beneath the church; the old stones, carefully kept and numbered, having been replaced with as much fidelity as entire firmness could permit.

Doubtless a shrinkage of the soil, consequent upon the draining of the adjacent fens, has contributed somewhat to that dislocation of the fabric which, even in the very ends of choir and transepts, is apparent to the most careless eye. But a great deal, too, must be laid to the account of their builders' want of thought or lack of knowledge. It was singular to hear how superficial had been the foundations of so vast a work; and singular to see how poor the actual substance of its apparently Titanic piers. Portions of the casing of the choir-piers had been removed for needful patching; and could one call these great architects "good builders" when a pier eleven feet in diameter, and bearing such tremendous weight, was seen to have but a nine-inch-thick skin of cut and cemented stone and a loose core of what hardly deserved a better name than rubbish? One could well credit one of the architects in charge of the repairs when

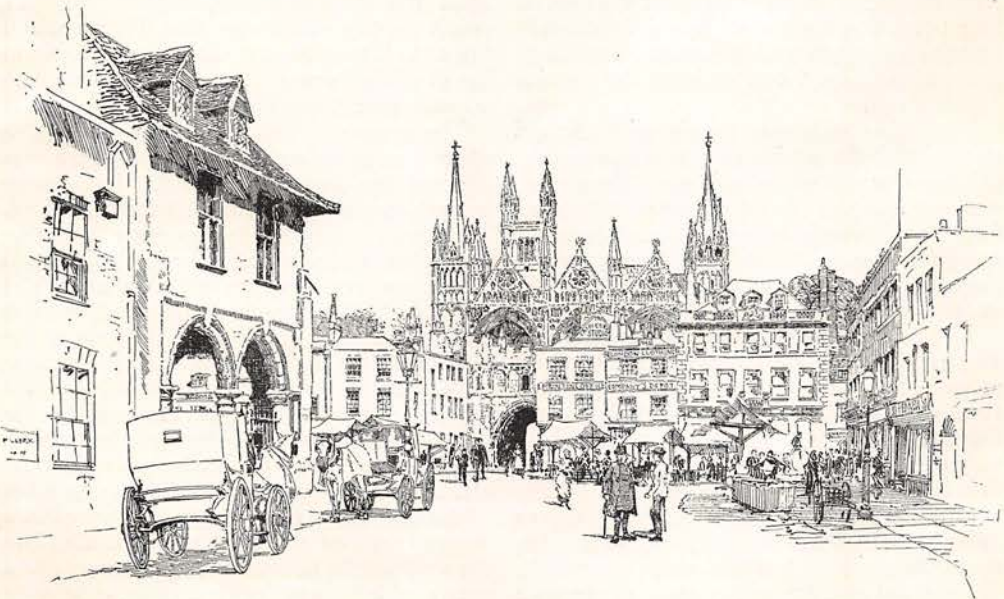
he said that, but for the extraordinary toughness of the white Barnack stone, the whole fabric must long ago have twisted, torn, and wrenched itself asunder.

And not only poor, but overdaring methods of construction had contributed to the insecurity of the tower. At Norwich the great angle-piers are 10 feet in diameter and 45 feet in height, and the arches between them have a span of 23; but at Peterborough this span is 35 feet, while the piers are 52 feet high, and only 7 in diameter.

VII.

It would be hard to exaggerate the wealth or the renown of this monastery during all those ages when it was popularly called the "Golden Borough." The pope had decreed that any "islander" who might be prevented from visiting St. Peter's at Rome could gain the same indulgence by visiting St. Peter's here; and so great in consequence grew the sanctity of the spot that all pilgrims, even though of royal blood, put off their shoes beneath the western gateway of the close. Many precious relics, too, the monastery owned,—chief among them the famous "incorruptible" arm of St. Oswald, the Northumbrian king.

But the castigation of Reforming years was as signal as had been the reverence of Catholic generations. Henry left the church intact, divided up its revenues with the new cathedral chapter he established, and made its time-serving abbot the first bishop of the see. But the Cromwellites all but obliterated



THE CATHEDRAL FROM THE MARKET-PLACE.



THE CATHEDRAL IN 1885. (FROM THE SOUTH.)

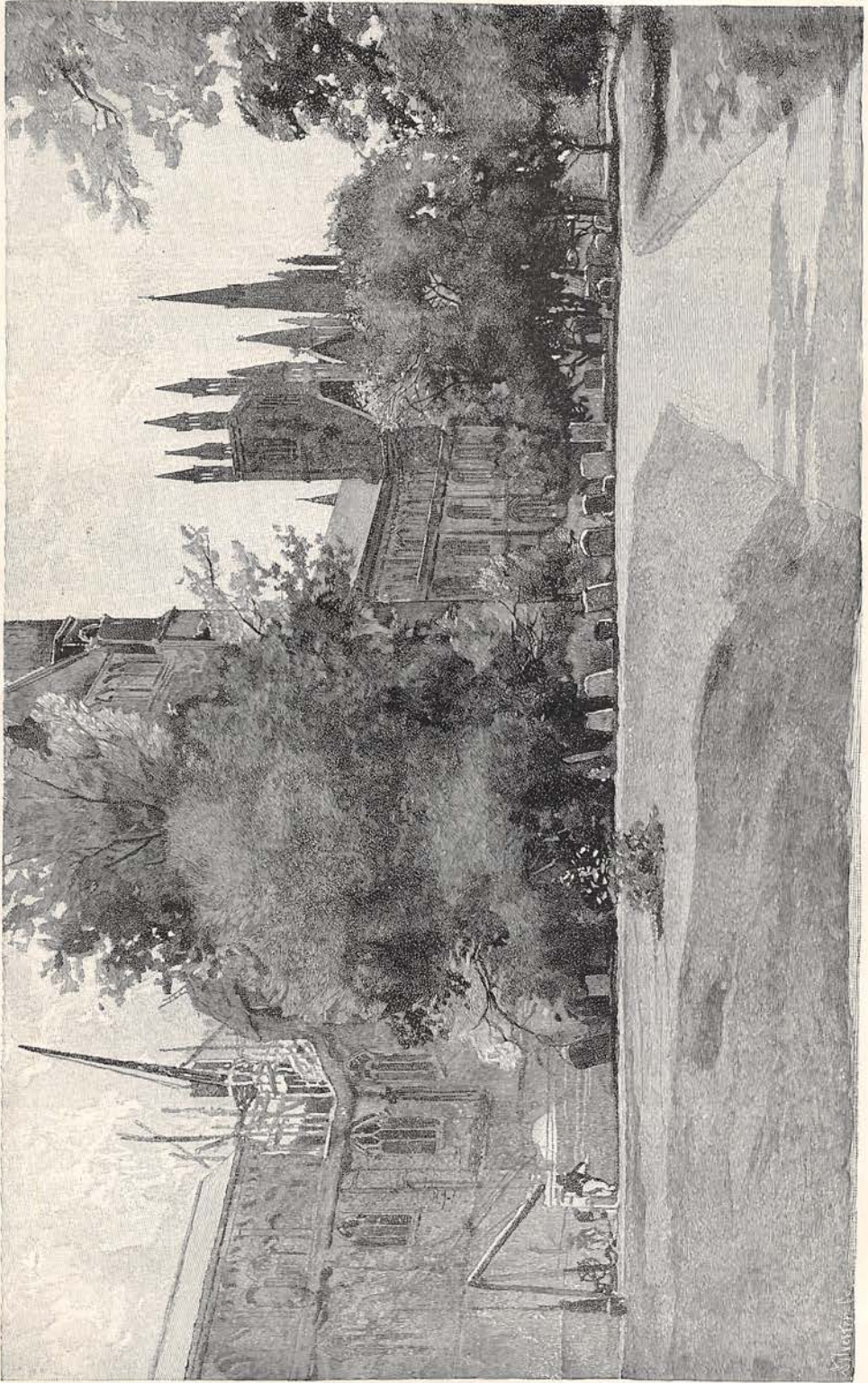
the monastic buildings and all but ruined the church itself. Its splendid glass was entirely shattered, its great silver-mounted reredos was broken into fragments, and its monuments and carvings were mutilated or destroyed. The vast picture of Christ and the Apostles on the ceiling of the choir was used for target-practice, and the soldiers did their daily exercising in the nave. Even the actual fabric was attacked, and one arch of the portico pulled down.

Later this arch was rebuilt with the old stones, and the whole church was repaired. But repair meant partial ruin too. The church was patched and pieced with materials taken from the domestic structures; and even the beautiful Early-English lady-chapel which projected from the northern transept was destroyed to the same end.

Little remains within the church to give it an interest apart from its architectural interest proper. Yet one can still find two tombs that vividly bring back the past. Singularly enough they are the tombs of two famous women, both uncrowned queens—alike in their misfortunes, though most unlike in all besides. Mary Stuart was beheaded at Fotheringay, eleven miles west of Peterborough, and buried beneath the pavement of the south choir-aisle. As we stand over her empty grave she seems a more real figure than in the crowded mau-

soleum at Westminster whither her son removed her disparted bones. The other tomb, beneath the flagging of the north choir-aisle, still holds its tenant,—Catherine of Aragon. Thanks to the Puritan, nothing does her honor save the simplest name and date upon the stone—unless, indeed, we may credit the tale which says that Henry raised the church to cathedral dignity in answer to her death-bed prayer that she might be given a monument fitting for a queen.

The monastic buildings once covered a space four times as great as that which was covered by the church itself. But scanty enough are the fragments which report of them. A splendid Early-English gateway gives access to the bishop's palace on the right hand of the western close as we approach. The dwelling itself is largely modernized, yet it is picturesque and keeps some portions of the old abbots' home. Opposite, across the close, built into the modern grammar-school, is a charming apse—all that remains of the Norman chapel of St. Thomas of Canterbury. South of the church the cloisters are but fragmentary, many-dated ruins. The vast arches of the old infirmary stretch uselessly across a narrow path or are built, very usefully, into the walls of the canons' modern houses. And over a wide distance other fragments may be traced, with much interest when one is on the



PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL — NORTH SIDE IN 1885.

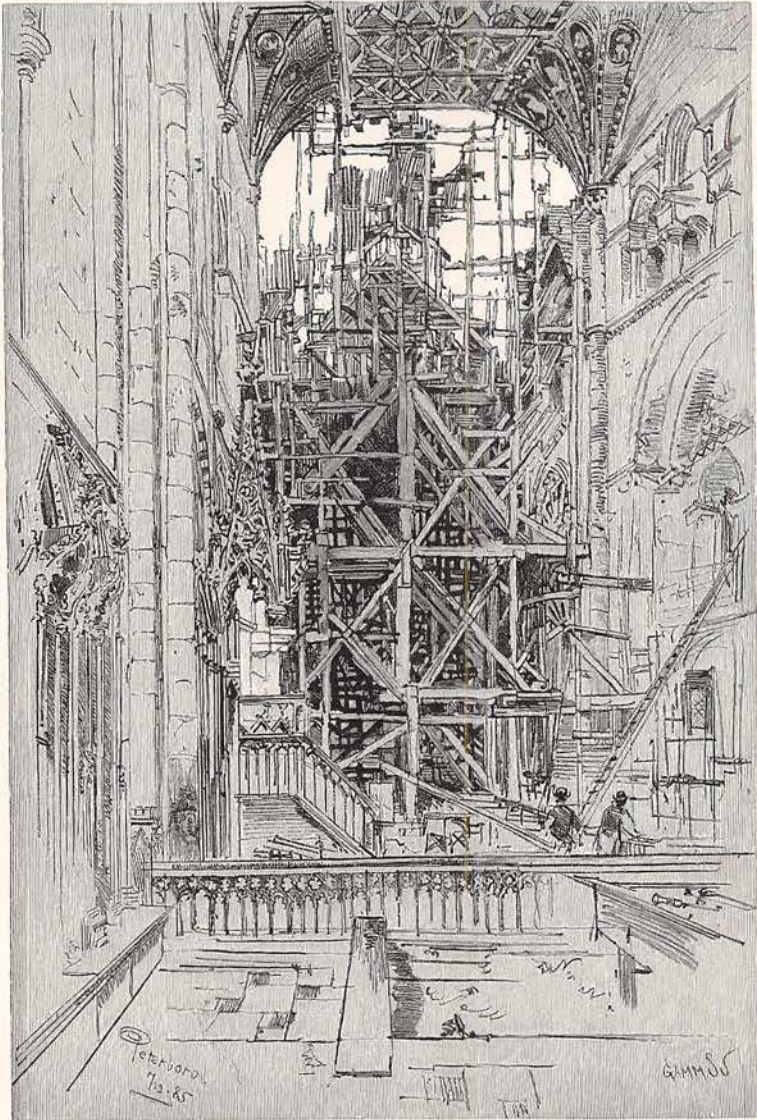
spot, though not with much significance in print. The ruin has been far completer than at Canterbury; and, though charming in its way, Peterborough's picture of united old and new is far less lovely than the mother-church's.

VIII.

THE town of Peterborough, offspring and creature of the monastery, has no independent civic history to tell. Nor has it any great interest for the eye, being but a commonplace little provincial center of some ten thousand inhabitants. On market-days, however, its streets are agreeably full of life and bustle;

and the market-place, opposite the close and the cathedral's western front, is prettily carpeted by a hundred white and blue umbrellas. To the eastward lies the fen-country, flat and treeless still, though reclaimed into fertility from its quondam estate of bog and mist and bisecting muddy stream. Near at hand its details are unlovely; but from the top of the cathedral, the vast level space has something of the sea's serene nobility. To the westward of the town lies a charming, rolling, wooded country, watered by a dainty river and set thick with great estates and tiny villages and very ancient rural churches.

The most interesting village is Castor,



RECONSTRUCTING THE TOWER. (FROM THE CHOIR.)



THE CATHEDRAL FROM THE BISHOP'S GARDEN.

which tells its Roman origin by its mere name as well as by the relics of its camp. It is not pretty and tree-grown like most of its neighbors; but on the top of its low, bleak, bare hill stands one of the finest small Norman churches in all England, cruciform in plan and still keeping its central tower. This seemed

to me more beautiful in design than the greater tower at Norwich; and it is of much historic value, if we are right in believing that it was built by the same hands which constructed Peterborough, and that it shows what may well have been the pattern of Peterborough's own tower in its earliest days.

M. G. van Rensselaer.

WHEN SHE COMES HOME.

WHEN she comes home again! A thousand ways
 I fashion, to myself, the tenderness
 Of my glad welcome: I shall tremble—yes;
 And touch her, as when first in the old days
 I touched her girlish hand, nor dared upraise
 Mine eyes, such was my faint heart's sweet distress.
 Then silence: And the perfume of her dress:
 The room will sway a little, and a haze
 Cloy eyesight—soulsight, even—for a space:
 And tears—yes; and the ache here in the throat,
 To know that I so ill deserve the place
 Her arms make for me; and the sobbing note
 I stay with kisses, ere the tearful face
 Again is hidden in the old embrace.

James Whitcomb Riley.