

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL.



SEAL OF THE SEE.

FROM the Norman cathedrals of the eastern counties it was a natural step to the cathedral of Salisbury, which explains the earliest Gothic style. From Salisbury it is as natural a step to Lichfield, where the next succeeding style, the Decorated Gothic, rules. But even if there were no such close historic sequence, memory would take us the same road. To think of the unequalled single spire at Salisbury is to think perforce of the unrivaled group of three at Lichfield; and to remember the majestic power, the great virility, which marks most of England's greatest churches means instinctively to recall in contrast the lovelier, more feminine grandeur of these two.

I.

LICHFIELD is neither a large, nor a busy, nor an attractive town. Its site shows no striking natural features, and the country through which we approach it pleases by placid greenness only. Nor is its history much more interesting than its aspect. The guide-book tells us, indeed, that it is "rich in associations with Samuel Johnson"; but this means little more than that he was born here, that we may see the house where the event took place, and find a monument to him in the market-square which for pure ugliness and artistic imbecility is the most extraordinary work in England. Those who really care about their Johnson can walk more closely with his spirit in London than in Lichfield; the same may be said of Garrick, who also chanced to be born here, and of Addison, who studied at the grammar-school; and the attractions of a dismal hostelry are not vividly enhanced by the information that it was the scene of Farquhar's play, "The Beau's Stratagem." In short, the literary associations of Lichfield are of a third-rate, musty sort; it never made dramatic appearance before the world except in the sieges of Cromwellian times; and these sieges concern the history of the cathedral, not of the town itself. The cathedral, and the cathedral only, makes Lichfield worth visiting or remembering. And the fact is curiously typified by the station of the

church, which does not stand in the middle of the city but beside it, a broad stretch of water called the Cathedral Pool dividing its precincts from the torpid streets.

II.

LICHFIELD lay of old in the center of Mercia — the Middle Kingdom — and thus lies to-day in the very center of united England. As we find so frequently, a church first marked the site and then a town grew up around it. Tradition says that the name is derived from the Old-English *lic* (a dead body) and perpetuates the martyrdom of a thousand Roman or British Christians who suffered under Diocletian on the spot where the cathedral stands. But it is a far cry from Diocletian's time to the time when the light of actual history first falls on Lichfield and shows Christianity existing. The Middle Kingdom was slow to be converted after the heathen conquest; it was not until half a century later than the landing of St. Augustine that it had a baptized prince and a consecrated bishop. In 669 Ceadda, or St. Chad, a holy man of extensive fame, succeeded as fourth bishop to the still unlocated chair. He fixed his seat at Lichfield, and the cathedral church still bears his name conjointly with the Blessed Virgin's. In the eighth century the bishop of Lichfield was given archiepiscopal rank with jurisdiction over six sees, all but four being taken away from Canterbury. But another pope soon undid the act of his predecessor; and in the eleventh century fate took its reprisals, and Lichfield was left without even the episcopal name. The unprotected little town in the middle of its wide flat country seemed to William the Conqueror no proper center of a diocese. The first Norman bishop migrated to Chester, and the second moved again to Coventry — being attracted, it is said, by the riches of the monastery which had been founded by Godiva and her repentant earl. Lichfield, however, still preserved its prominence; its church seems to have been again considered the cathedral church in the earlier years of the twelfth century; and — apparently without special decree, by mere force of its central position — it gradually overshadowed Coventry until the latter's rôle in the diocese became nominal only. At the time of the Reformation the

bishops of the see still styled themselves "of Lichfield and Coventry," but for generations no one had questioned where their chair should stand.

Coventry's house was monastic, Lichfield's was collegiate, and there were hot jealousies between them. Just before the year 1200 Bishop Hugh determined to drive out the monks from Coventry and succeeded by force of arms, being wounded himself as he stood by the high-altar. A few years later they came back again, and jealousies grew to bitter quarrels, especially when a bishop's election befell. But the story of such wranglings grows duller in proportion to the growth of civilized manners; and dull, too, it must be confessed, is the story of most of the prelates who filled this chair. Walter Langton (1296-1321) led a stormily picturesque life as an outspoken enemy of Edward II.; Robert Stretton, a *protégé* of the Black Prince, had a certain queer prominence in his day as a bishop who could not read or write; and Rowland Lee is even yet remembered, because he assisted Cranmer at the marriage of Anne Boleyn, and as President of Wales secured the franchise for its inhabitants. But most of their fellows were inconspicuous at Lichfield, and only after the Reformation were many of them translated to more prominent chairs.

III.

THE little church of St. Chad stood on the other side of the Pool, at some distance from the site of the present cathedral. When this site was first built upon we do not know, but a Norman church preceded the one we see to-day. No great catastrophe seems to have overtaken it; it was simply pulled down piece by piece until not a visible stone of its fabric remained. Eastward it ended in a semicircular apse. Beyond this apse a large chapel was erected in the Transitional period, and soon afterwards the Norman choir and apse were removed, and the whole east limb was brought into architectural concord. In the first half of the thirteenth century the transepts were reconstructed in the Lancet-Pointed style, and in the second half the nave and west-front in the Decorated. Then about 1300 another chapel was thrown out to the eastward; and finally the Transitional chapel, and for the second time the choir, were demolished and rebuilt. These last alterations also befell in the Decorated period, so that the whole longer arm of the cross illustrates this style—westward in its earlier, eastward in its later phases—while the shorter arm is still Early English. In the latest days of Gothic art Perpendicular windows were freely inserted in

the choir and transepts, and the central tower was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren, after the restoration of the monarchy.

IV.

DEPLORABLE indeed must have been the condition of the church when the second Charles came back to his own. The wildest havoc wrought elsewhere by the civil war was little to the ruin wrought at Lichfield. Bishop Langton—he who was so long at feud with King Edward II.—had seen fit to embattle the Close, around which the town lay flat and defenseless. But as a knight of old was sometimes slain by the weight of his protecting armor, so the walls of Lichfield worked its undoing. When Lord Brooke, with his Puritans, was coming from Warwick in 1643, the royalists threw themselves into the Close, manned the causeways across the Pool, pierced the ecclesiastical houses for cannon and musket-barrels, and made the church itself their chief redoubt. Brooke prayed fervently in front of his troops that God would assist him to destroy the House of God which man had now made a stronghold of tyranny as well as a haunt of superstition. His prayers were answered by a shot from the spire which ended his own life; but the next day the spire and tower fell into the church, and the next the Close was surrendered. Then for a month there was riot and ravage. Everything breakable was broken, everything valuable was purloined. The organ was shattered like the windows, the seats, the monuments, and even the floor, which had been curiously paved with lozenge-shaped blocks of cannel-coal and alabaster. In the tomb of a bishop some lucky thief found a silver cup and a crozier; and this meant, of course, that no other tomb remained unpillaged, no saint's ashes undisturbed. But in the midst of the sacrilegious revelry word came that Prince Rupert was near. Again there was a siege, this time lasting for ten days; again a surrender and an occupation by the royalist troops when King Charles tarried with them for a moment after his defeat at Naseby; and then a third and still longer siege and final possession by the Parliament army.

John Hacket was the first bishop after the Restoration. He found the roof of his cathedral almost altogether gone, its exterior scarred by iconoclastic axes and pock-marked by cannon-ball and musket-shot, and its interior a mass of rain-washed rubbish—piled with the fragments of the furniture and the great stones of the spire. Its piteous appeal for immediate action fell upon a sympathetic ear. The very next morning after his arrival Hacket set to

work, and the very first work was done by his episcopal fingers. From year to year he contributed generously in money too — some ten thousand pounds in all — while the canons gave up half their income, and King Charles sent timber from his forests. In eight years the whole work was done, including Sir Christo-

qualities which mark it and in the quantity of the work which it has left us.

The lines of architectural effort ran pretty close together in all the north of Europe during the Norman period. Then for a while they diverged, Germany still clinging to her Romanesque and England developing her



LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL FROM THE EAST.

pher's spire, and just before his death, in 1675, the mighty bishop joyfully reconsecrated his cathedral. The days of Romish consecrations were of course long since past; but even a Catholic may have rejoiced to see the havoc of the Puritan thus partly made good.

V.

THE essays of the great Renaissance architect with what we may call posthumous Gothic were not always successful; but his Lichfield spire is singularly good, and the church as he left it goes far to satisfy one's wish for an illustration of what the Decorated style could achieve in English hands.

It is not a style which interests us so much in England as those which came before and after — the Lancet-Pointed and the Perpendicular. It is not less beautiful; indeed, it is the most beautiful of all Gothic styles, the true, complete, and perfect Gothic; but it is less characteristically English, alike in the

Lancet-Pointed manner, while France began at once to master the difficulties of full-blown traceried Gothic. Then they converged again, through the nearer approach of Germany and England to the ideas of France; and finally once more parted, England creating the Perpendicular and France the Flamboyant Gothic. The height of the Decorated style thus means in England the least individual manifestation of national taste. Lancet-Pointed and Perpendicular work we can study nowhere but here; pure full-blown Gothic we can study elsewhere, and, it must be confessed, to better advantage. France not only practiced it much longer, but in many ways more ambitiously and more beautifully. Her great superiority in figure-sculpture might alone almost suffice to give her the foremost place, and she had other superiorities to add to this.

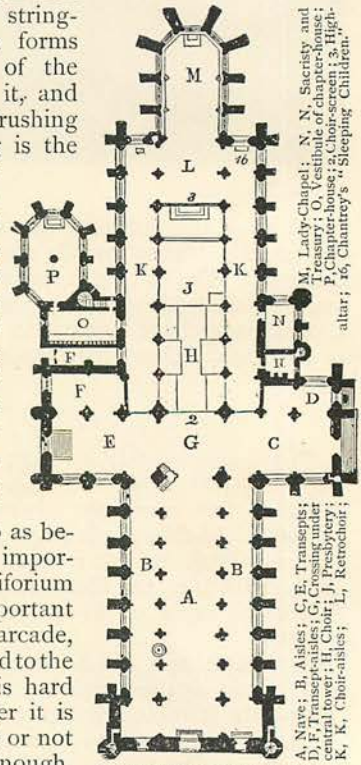
Then, as has been said, the Decorated work of England seems somewhat deficient in quantity, even when we compare it, not with the same kind of work in France, but with work of other kinds at home. The era during

which it reigned — 1300 may stand as the central date — was not a great church-building era. Such an one had opened with the coming of the Norman and had lasted until the middle of the thirteenth century. By this time almost a sufficiency of great churches had been built — at least what seemed almost a sufficiency to a generation whose minds and purse-strings the Church no longer undisputedly controlled. It was the time of the first vague stirrings of Protestant sap, the time of the first strong consciousness of national unity and of its correlative — national independence. It was the time of the first Edward — the first truly English king since Harold — and of his two namesakes, marked by splendid wars, legislative innovations, and a half-revolt against the dictatorship of Rome. The military and the domestic spirit now began to play a greater part in determining architectural effort. Not since the reign of the Norman Williams had there been so great a castle-building reign as that of Edward I.; but it saw the founding of no cathedral churches, and the most prolific time of church alteration did not begin till later. A few cathedrals show more or less conspicuous portions in the Decorated style; but none comes so near to being wholly in this style as Lichfield, nor is there any Decorated non-cathedral church which rivals it save Beverley Minster in Yorkshire. This is quite as large as Lichfield Cathedral and, except for its lack of spires and its prosaic situation, — two very large exceptions, — it is perhaps more beautiful. Certainly its interior has a vaster, grander air, an air more in accord with the sound of the word cathedral.

VI.

LICHFIELD is the smallest of the English cathedrals — 115 feet shorter than Salisbury, for example, and some 50 feet less in the spread of its transepts. Outside it looks larger than it is, but inside still smaller. Even a length of 336 feet will still be enough, we imagine, to give great spaciousness and majesty. But on entering the west portal it is charm, not size, that strikes us. We see a beautiful, noble, dignified church, but the words immensity, power, magnificence, do not occur to us, and hardly the word cathedral in the sense which other sees have taught us to read into it. It takes us some time to realize how long a reach of choir lies beyond the crossing and the screen — a longer reach than that of the nave itself; and when we realize it, the structure still lacks majesty, for its breadth is only 66 feet and its height is barely 60. Then this height means, of course, merely the apex of a vault which thence curves steeply downward; and

upon examination we find it is decreased to the eye by the character of the wall-design. The three stories of the nave of Lichfield are very beautiful stories, individually considered. On each side between the nave and aisles stretch eight somewhat sharply pointed arches, deeply cut, and encircled by many moldings borne on lovely clusters of slender shafts. Above each of these arches stand two in the triforium-gallery, still more richly molded, and subdivided into smaller lights by delicate columns bearing open traceries; and above each triforium-group is a triangular clere-story window, entirely filling the three-cornered space made by the curves of the vaulting and filled itself by traceries which form three circular lights, each cusped inside into a trefoil shape. Yet considered altogether, as a composition, these beautiful stories fail to satisfy the eye, especially if it has been trained upon French work with its wonderful feeling for proportion and for the organic interdependence of adjacent parts. The slender shafts which rise between the main arches from floor to cornice and support the chief ribs of the vaulting hardly suffice to bring the three superimposed ranges of openings into vital unity. Then there is not an inch of plain wall between these ranges; the apex of each arch touches the string-course which forms the support of the range above it, and an air of crushing and crowding is the result — an air as of an attempt to fit in features which are too large for their places. And finally there is no clear subordination of one story to another — no strong accentuation of one or of two as being of prime importance. The triforium seems too important for the main arcade, and with regard to the clere-story it is hard to say whether it is too important or not important enough. Given so low a main arcade, it might well



PLAN OF LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL. (FROM MURRAY'S "HAND-BOOK TO THE CATHEDRALS OF ENGLAND.")

M, Lady-Chapel; N, N. Sacristy and Treasury; O, Vestibule of chapter-house; P, Chapter-house; 2, Choir-screen; 3, High-altar; 16, Chantry's "Sleeping Children."

A, Nave; B, Aisles; C, E, Transepts; D, F, Transept-aisles; G, Crossing under central tower; H, Choir; J, Presbytery; K, K, Choir-aisles; L, Retrochoir;



THE CATHEDRAL BY MOONLIGHT.

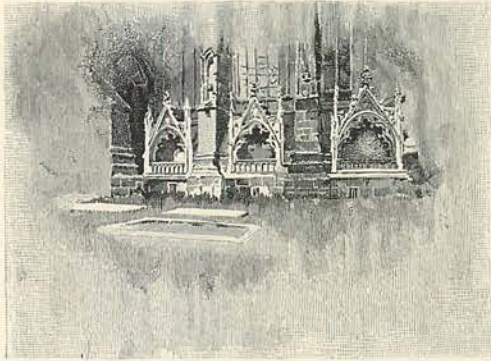
be more modest in expression; but given so noble a triforium, it ought to be much higher. In short, while no one could better have known what a beautiful feature should mean than the man who built this nave, we can hardly call him a great architect; for this name implies a stronger feeling for the architectural whole than for its parts, a keen appreciation of the virtues of accentuation and subordination, a frank acceptance of the chosen dimensions, and a knowledge of how to make the very most of them. Low as Lichfield is, it would not have seemed so low had a great master built its walls. As it stands we are glad to turn from a study of its proportions to a close examination of its lovely triforium-gallery, the richness of which is in interesting contrast to the severity of Salisbury's features. Here, instead of simply molded capitals we have round clusters of graceful, overhanging foliage, while along the arch-lines run repeated rows of that "dog-tooth" molding which was the happiest decorative motive that had been invented since the days of Hellenic art—rows of delicate little cone-shaped forms set zigzag, and shining as bright gleams of light against the dark hollows behind them. The traceried heads of these triforium openings, and of the aisle windows which we see through the main arcade as we stand in the nave, well explain the character of Decorated as distinct from the earlier forms of medieval art.

To follow the development of the true Gothic traceried window from the simple window of the Normans is the prettiest of all architectural problems—the points of starting and arriving lie so far asunder, yet the steps between are so clear and in retrospect seem to have been so inevitable.

Fancy first a plain tall window with a round-arched head; then the round exchanged for a pointed head; then two, or three, or five perhaps, of these pointed windows set close together; and then a projecting molding in the shape of an arch drawn around them, including them all and thus including, of necessity, a plain piece of wall above their heads. Then fancy this piece of wall pierced with a few small openings, and we have a group of connected lights in which, as a plant in its embryo, lies the promise of all after-developments. But we have not yet a true compound window—a single great window of many parts all vitally fused together. A process of gradual accretion has brought its elements together; a process of gradual change in the treatment of these elements now does the rest of the work.

The small lights in the upper field enlarge and multiply until they form a connected pattern which fills its whole area, and the jambs of the main lights diminish into narrow strips or very slender columns. The great arch, which in the first place did but encircle the

windows, thus becomes itself the window — the “plate-traceried”* window which was richly developed in early French Gothic but less richly in English, owing to the persistent local love for mere groups of lancets. Then all the stone-work shrinks still farther — the columnar character of the uprights is lost, and the flat surfaces between the upper openings change into moldings of complex section. Thus the original tall lights and upper pierc-



A CORNER IN THE CATHEDRAL.

ings surrender their last claim to independence; the uprights are no longer jambs or bits of wall but mullions, the arch-head is filled with genuine traceries, and all the elements of the design are vitally fused together within the sweep of the great window to form its multiple yet organic beauty.

At first simple geometrical patterns were adhered to in the traceries; such combinations of trefoiled circles, for example, as we find in the aisle windows at Lichfield and on a larger scale in the clere-story windows; and the integrity of the moldings which form each of the openings was strictly respected. But as time went on “geometrical” developed into “flowing” tracery. The lights were multiplied and their shapes more widely varied; and the moldings were given freer play — were treated as plastic strips which might be bent in any direction, and were carried over and under each other, so that we may choose a line at the window-sill, follow it thence to the arch-head and find it forming part of the boundary of several successive lights. This was the noblest, most imaginative, most beautiful period of window-design, and by gradual steps it passed into the latest — the Perpendicular period.

When we thus trace in words the genesis

* This term is unfortunately compounded. “Plate” clearly expresses the character of the upper part of the window — a flat surface pierced with openings; but there are no true “traceries” while it remains appropriate.

of Gothic windows it seems as though the most important step was taken when the including arch and the pierced tympanum were imagined. But when we study all the successive steps in the stone itself we find that the step from plate to geometrical tracery meant the most radical change; for it meant a complete reversal of the conception of a window’s character considered as a piece of design, considered not for its utility but for its effect upon the eye. Originally, I may say, it was the lights as such which made the window; later on it was the stone-work that framed the lights. Look from the inside at any early window (whether it has the simple Norman shape or well-developed plate-traceries) and the form of the openings will attract your eye; you will not notice the forms of the stone-work around them. But look thus at a Decorated or a Perpendicular window, and your eye will dwell upon the stone-work itself — upon the delicate lines of the upright mullions and of the circling moldings in the head, joining and parting and projecting into slender points to define the pattern — and will take small account of the shape of the openings themselves. That is, in the first case you will see the window as a group of bright spots upon the shadowed wall, as a pattern cut out in light upon a darker surface; in the second case you will see it as a tracery of dark lines upon a wide bright field, as a pattern done in black upon a lighter background. The difference is immense, radical even, for it is a difference not in the degree but in the kind of beauty which has been sought. To study its genesis, therefore, teaches us an architectural truth of broad and deep significance. It teaches us that a process of slow gradual experiment may mean a change from one artistic idea to another of an opposite sort — may mean a revolution while appearing to be no more than a process of mere development.

VII.

In the transepts of Lichfield we find beautiful Lancet-Pointed work, but so altered by the insertion of great Perpendicular windows that the general effect is hardly more the effect of the earliest than of the latest Gothic style. The lower portions of the three choir-bays next the tower are the oldest fragments of the cathedral — remaining not from the original Norman choir, but from that later Transitional one which was likewise swept away. Even a few bits of decoration of this period still exist — as in the arch which leads from the aisle of the north transept into the adjoining choir-aisle. On the face of the arch towards the choir-aisle there is a large zigzag

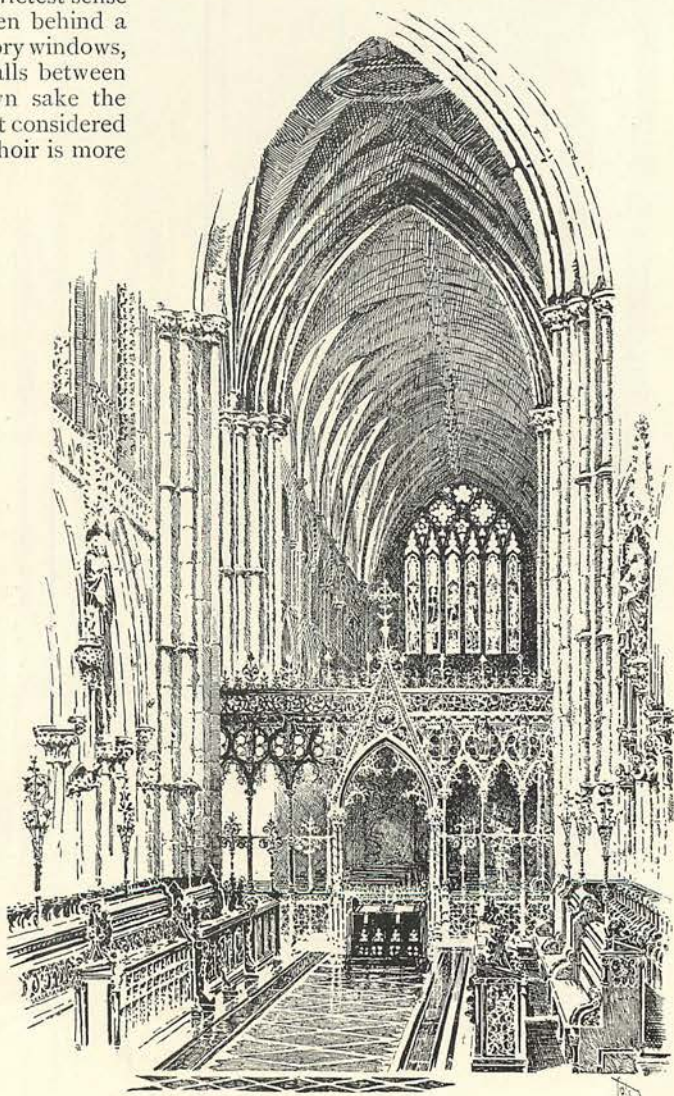
molding of the real Norman sort; the capitals of the piers towards the transept are of the Norman scallop-shape (more elaborately treated), and the square Norman abacus alternates very curiously with the round Early English form.

The design of the late-Decorated choir is wholly different from that of the early-Decorated nave. Instead of three stories each of great importance, we find two of even greater importance, while the third has shrunk to a mere semblance of itself. The whole height is divided into two almost equal portions, which are given up to the main arcade and to a range of vast clere-story windows, the triforium-gallery being in the strictest sense a gallery and nothing more — open behind a rich parapet in front of the clere-story windows, and running through the thick walls between them. We may regret for its own sake the beautiful triforium of the nave, but considered in its entirety the design of the choir is more beautiful and is much more appropriate under so low a roof. The main arcade, moreover, is far finer than in the nave, the clusters of shafts and the arch-moldings being still more numerous and graceful, and the piers being broad enough to give room between arch and arch for a splendid corbel of richly ornamented colonettes which bears a great statue surmounted by a canopy — features that we find more frequently in continental than in English churches. The huge clere-story windows have very deep slanting jambs covered with a lace-like pattern of quatrefoils, and the original "flowing" tracery which remains in two of them is very charmingly designed. The others are filled with Perpendicular traceries which appear to have been inserted long after the true Perpendicular period, when Bishop Hacket took his shattered church in hand. At this time also the ceiling of the nave had to be in greater part rebuilt. Just how the work was done I can nowhere find recorded; the present sham vaults of wood and plaster were the work of our old friend Wyatt in the later years of the eighteenth century.

VIII.

BUT all the while we are examining the nave and choir of

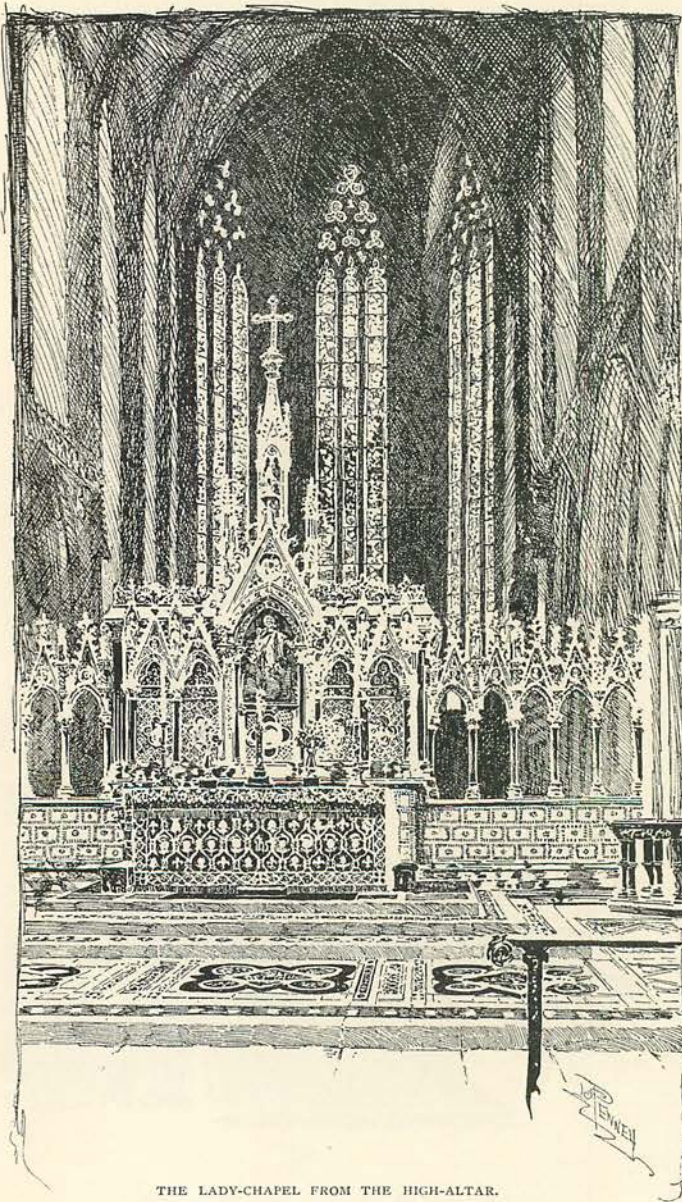
Lichfield, the eye is irresistibly drawn eastward, where the Lady-Chapel shines as a splendid jewel — as a splendid great crown of jewels — at the end of the long dusk perspective. No east-end we have seen elsewhere has had a similar effect — not more as regards form than color. A glance at the plan will show why. At Peterborough there was a semicircular Norman apse with a later construction dimly discernible beyond it, at Ely a flat east-end, and at Salisbury a straight line of great arches bearing a flat wall above and showing beneath their curves an outlying chapel, also rectangular in shape; but here at Lichfield there is a polygonal termina-



THE NAVE AND THE WEST-END FROM WITHIN THE CHOIR.

tion, a true Gothic apse — in name a Lady-Chapel merely, but of equal height with the choir itself and forming to the eye its actual end. This is the only cathedral in England where we find a Gothic apse, and the only ancient church in England where we find it in just this shape. At Westminster and in one or two smaller churches we have the French apse-form with the choir-aisles carried around the polygon to make encircling chapels. At Lichfield the German type is followed — there are no aisles, and a single range of lofty windows absorbs the whole height, rising into the curves

of the vaulting, and filled with geometrical traceries. This is enough to surprise us and — since there is nothing which the tourist likes so well as novelty — to delight us also. But we marvel indeed when we see the beautiful glass with which this beautiful apse is lined, and remember again how Hacket found his church. In truth, these magnificent harmonies of purple and crimson and blue — of blue, it may better be said, spangled with purple and crimson — never threw their light on English Catholic, on Anglican or Puritan plunderer, or on Sir Christopher's workmen. While these were building and shattering and building again, the glass upon which Lichfield now prides itself almost as much as upon its three stately spires was glorifying a quiet abbey of Cistercian nuns in Belgium. Only in 1802, at the dissolution of the abbey, was it purchased by Sir Brooks Boothby (surely one should not forget his name) and set up at Lichfield. It is late in date — not earlier than 1530 — but unusually good for its time in both design and color; and nowhere in the world could it serve beauty better than in just this English church. The rich delicacy, the feminine loveliness, of Lichfield's interior needs such a final jewel more than does the severer charm of most English cathedrals. And the qualities which need its help, help in return its own effect; the apse reveals it better than a flat wall could, and the color of the whole interior — from which all traces of the ancient paint have been removed — is, fortunately, not the pale yellow or the shining white we most often see, but a dull soft red of very delightful tone. Thanks largely to this color, as well as to the apse and its glass, we find that after all we do not much regret at Lichfield the grandeur of which we dreamed but which failed to greet us. When a church is so beautiful, what matter whether it looks like a cathedral church or not? If it were only a little broader



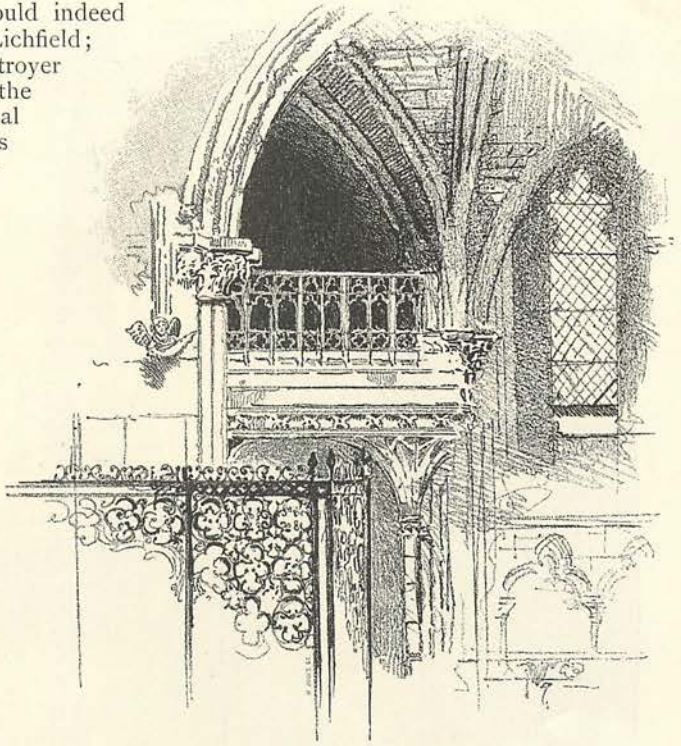
THE LADY-CHAPEL FROM THE HIGH-ALTAR.

and a good bit loftier, we should indeed be content with the interior of Lichfield; and, it must be added, if the destroyer had done his work less well, and the restorer had done his a great deal better—for much of that richness which looks like beauty at a distance proves very poor stuff on near inspection, judged even by restorers' standards. This is notably the case with the vaulting, of course, and with the statues in the choir. Nor are most of the monuments introduced during the last century and a half to be considered works of art. There is one exception, however—Chantrey's famous group of two sleeping children. Certain works of art, and this is one of them, are so famous—are famous, rather, in so popular a way—that it is hard to credit them with genuine excellence. Knowing the average level of English sculpture in the first years of this century—knowing, indeed, the average level of Chantrey's own productions—and reading the sentimental delight of every tourist in this sentimental-sounding piece of work, how should we believe beforehand that it is so genuinely good—so graceful in design, so pleasing if not strong in execution, and so full of true and simple feeling; so full of sentiment yet so free from the feeble sentimentality of the time?

The chapter-house at Lichfield is another beautiful piece of early-Decorated work sadly marred by ruin and renewal—an elongated octagon with a central column to support its vaulting, and connected with the choir by a well-designed vestibule. Above it is the library, wholly stripped of its contents in the civil war, but now filled again with a goodly assortment of treasures. Chief among them is the so-called Gospel of St. Chad, a superb manuscript of Hibernian workmanship which may possibly be as old as the saint's own day.

IX.

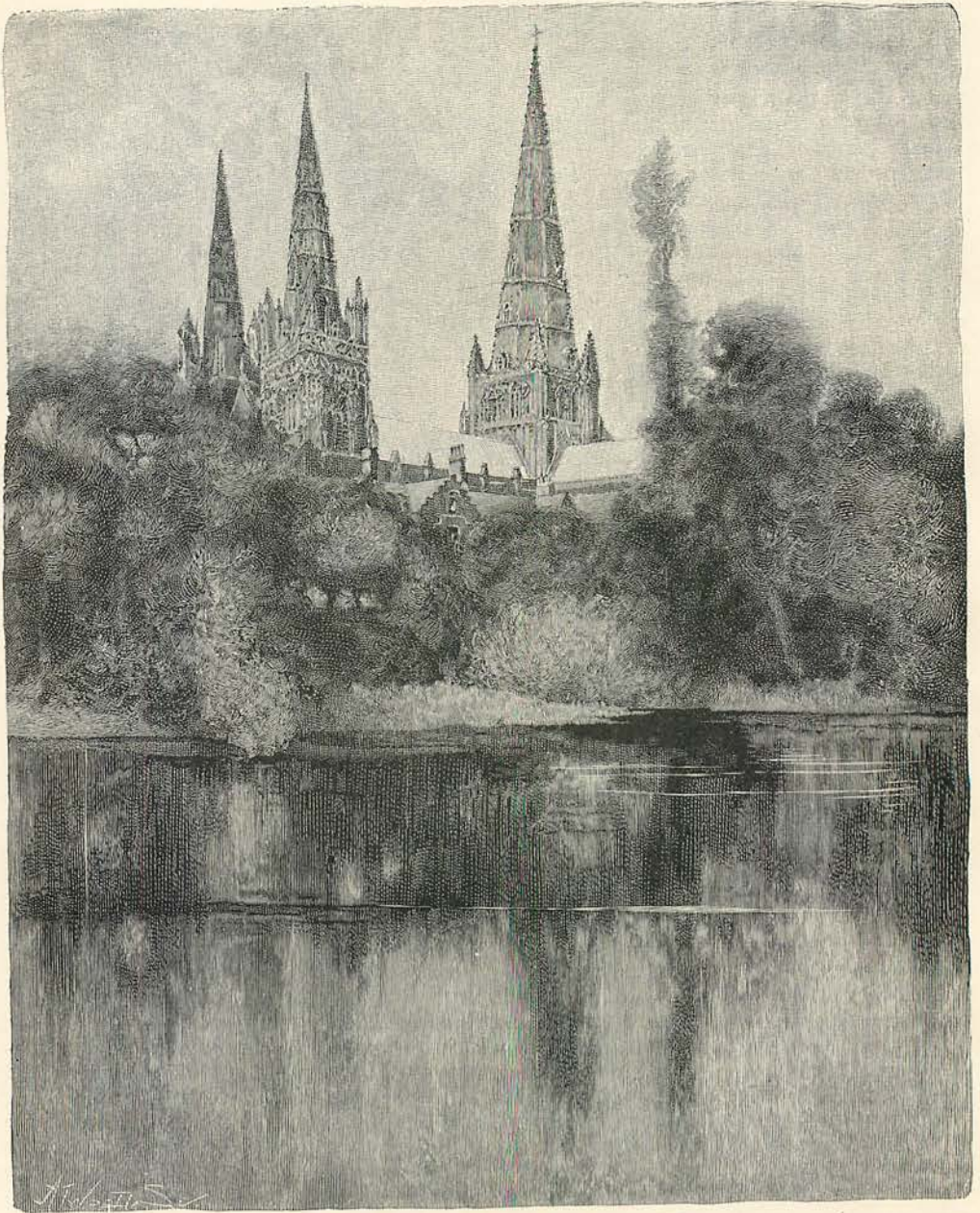
MR. PENNELL, in his pictures, will show more clearly than I can in words the exterior look of Lichfield. It stands on somewhat higher ground than the town, the very dullness and insignificance of which throws its beauty into bright relief. Whether we approach it from one street or another we see it suddenly across the silver stretches of its Pool, and it is hard to



"WATCHING GALLERY" OVER THE SACRISTY DOOR.

determine whether the shining water at Lichfield or the green lake of turf at Salisbury makes the lovelier foreground. Standing on the causeway which leads towards the western entrance of the Close, it is not merely a fine view that we have before us—it is a picture so complete and perfect that the keenest artist need not ask to change one detail. Perhaps accident has had more to do than design with the planting of the greenery which borders the lake and above which spring the daring spires. But it is planting that a landscape-gardener might study to his profit, and if there is one wish we make when we see or think of Lichfield from this point of view, it is that the tall poplar may be as long-lived as the tree Ygdrasil—so pretty a measure does it give of the tallness of the spires, so exquisite is the completing accent which it brings into the scene.

If it is from the south-east that we approach the church, we cross another causeway on either hand of which the lake spreads out widely, and see not only the spires but the apse and the long stretch of the southern side. Enormously long it looks; longer, almost, than those cathedrals which are actually greater, owing to its peculiar lowness; too long, almost, for true beauty, especially as so much of its extent falls to the share of the choir.



THE SPIRES OF LICHFIELD FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.

To the north of the church the ground rises quickly into a broad, terrace-like walk flanked by rows of vast and ancient yet graceful lindens; and beyond the trees, behind low walls and verdurous gardens, lies a range of canons' homes. The place is not very picturesque to one who has come from Canterbury's precincts or from Peterborough's; but it is very charming, with a homely, sober, shadowy charm that makes a New Englander feel sud-

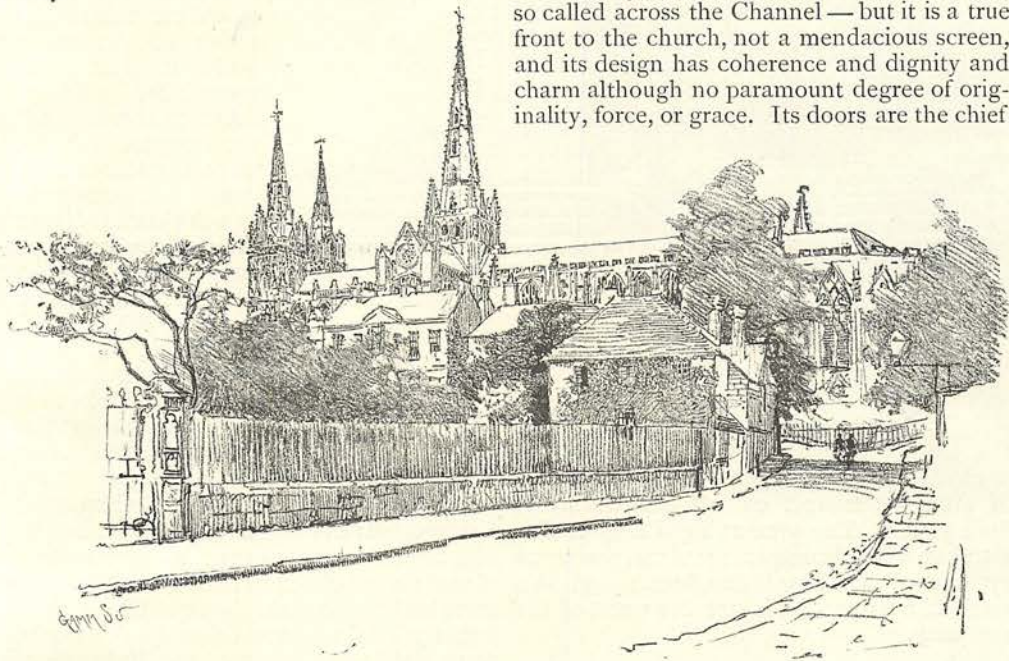
denly much at home. He may almost fancy himself at home, in fact, if he turns his back on the cathedral and sees only the trees and the houses — and if he knows so little of trees as to be able to take limes for elms or maples; for the row of sedate square dwellings, and even the Deanery in the middle, are similar in size and form to many in his own older towns, and are not more dignified in aspect. Indeed, there are certain streets in Salem, to name no

others, which show a much statelier succession of homes than this — than this, which we like all the better because it tempts us into drawing such comparisons and yet allows us to draw them to our own exalting.

There are no ruined buildings in the neighborhood of this cathedral. As a collegiate establishment it had no cloisters or important accessory structures to tempt King Henry's or Cromwell's wreckers, or to fall into gradual decay.

but that much has perished to be replaced by imitations of a particularly futile and distressing sort. The Early-English door into the north transept still remains nearly intact, and is one of the most singular and lovely bits of work in England, but its southern counterpart has been much injured; and though in design the west-front is one of the best in the country, its present adornments are without rivalry the worst.

It is only a small west-front — or would be so called across the Channel — but it is a true front to the church, not a mendacious screen, and its design has coherence and dignity and charm although no paramount degree of originality, force, or grace. Its doors are the chief



THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE CATHEDRAL.

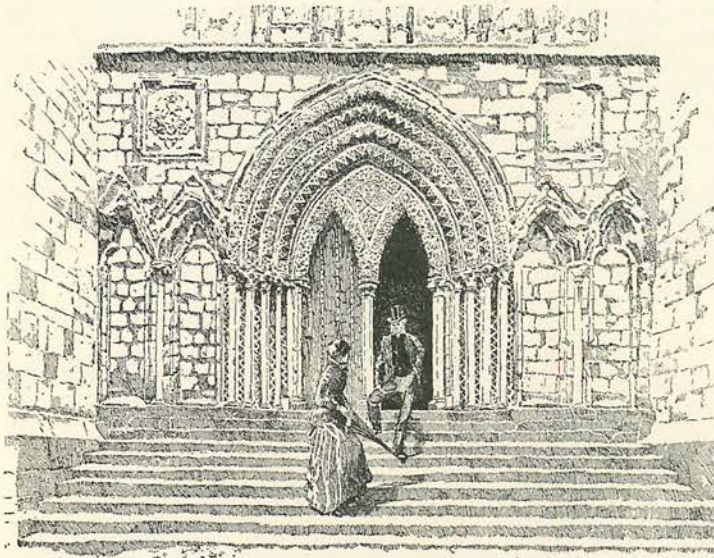
In any and every aspect, but more especially when foliage comes close about it, Lichfield's color assists its other beauties. Gray is the rule in English churches — dark cold gray at Ely, for example, light yellow gray at Canterbury, pale pearly gray at Salisbury; and although dark grayness means great solemnity and grandeur, and light grayness great delicacy and charm, they both need the hand of time — the stain of the weather and the web of the lichen — to give them warmth and "tone"; and the work of the hand of time has almost everywhere in England been undone by the hand of the restorer. Red stone is warm and mellow in itself, and Lichfield is red with a beautiful soft ruddiness that could hardly be overmatched by the sandstone of any land.

X.

A NARROWER examination of the exterior of the church shows that much beauty remains,
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entrances to the church — small ones, but delightful in shape and feature; and we may offset the too great heaviness of the corner pinnacles of the towers by noting the beauty of their parapets. The traceries of the great window were renewed in the seventeenth century — a gift from King James II.; and the big statue in the gable above pictures that very saintly monarch, the second Charles.

The statues which filled the multitudinous niches were defaced by the Puritans, but were not removed until the middle of the last century. About 1820 those which still remained were restored — which much-abused word could not possibly be more abused than by setting it in this connection. The restoration of Lichfield's statues meant that the ruined remnants of the ancient figures were overlaid with cement which was then molded into simulacra of the human form. For some years past attempts have been made to supplement these atrocities by better works; but



J. Powell
1866

DOORWAY IN THE NORTH TRANSEPT.

it cannot be truthfully reported that many of even the newest comers are worthy of their places. The present royal lady of England stands in a conspicuous niche, portrayed by one of her royal daughters; and this piece of amateur art is not the worst of the company.

XI.

PERHAPS the New England tourist whom I have just imagined may find time to rest a while on some bench beneath the giant lime-trees of Lichfield, turning his back now on the canons' homes and his face to the church itself. Perhaps from contemplation he will be led to introspection — will think over the courses he has traveled and weigh the changes in his mental attitude that they have brought about. Then it will be strange if the figure of the seventeenth-century Puritan does not surge up in his thought, striking him with surprise, yea, smiting him with compunction. Here is a figure, typifying much more than itself, with regard to which his mental attitude will indeed seem a new one. At home the Puritan had been honored and revered. Patriotic pride and religious habit had joined to make him seem as venerable as mighty. His faults and shortcomings were acknowledged, but were piously laid to the spirit of his age; his virtues, so much greater than all his faults, were as piously credited to his personal account. The

work which he had done was thought the noblest, almost, that man had ever done — this breaking through a dogmatic, pinching creed, this oversetting of a misused, tyrant throne, this planting beyond the sea of a greater commonwealth whose blazon should mean freedom of action in the present world, freedom of accountability with the world to come. And if a contemptuous shrug at his narrowness or a half-smile at his grim formality was permitted, it was as though before the portrait of some excellent grandsire whose defects might be criticised under the breath, but should not be made a text for public reprobation.

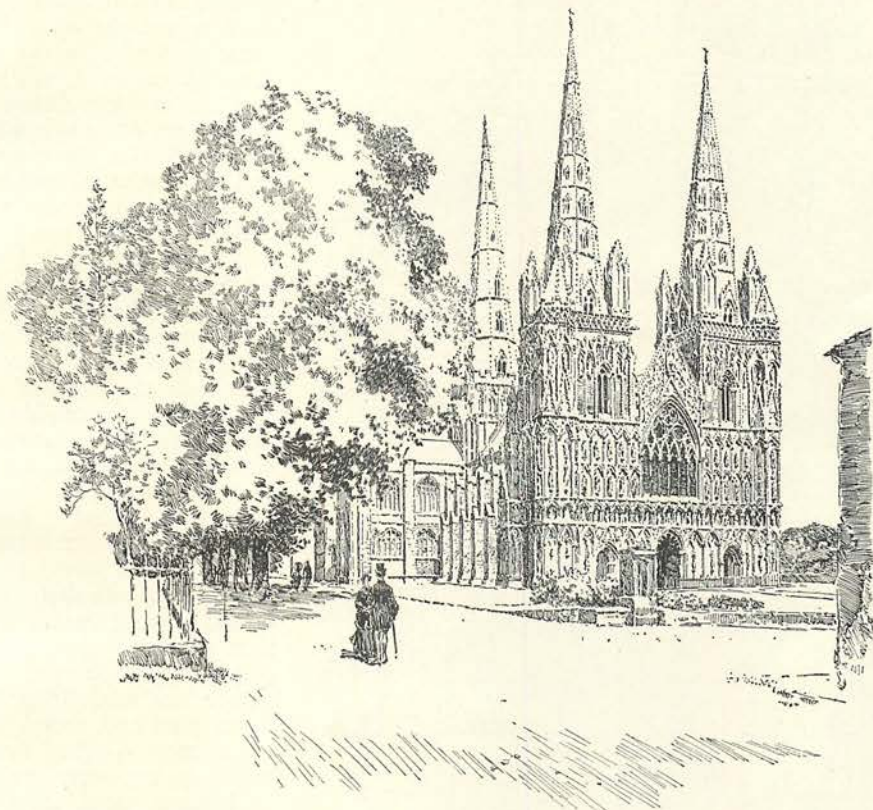
But here, amidst these cathedrals, what is the Puritan to his descendant's thought? A rude destroyer of things ancient and therefore to be respected; a vandal devastator of things rare and beautiful and too precious ever to be replaced; a brutal scoffer, drinking at the altar, firing his musket at the figure of Christ, parading in priests' vestments through the marketplace, stabling his horses amidst the handiwork of beauty under the roof of God.

Yet if the traveler takes time to think a little he will find that it is not his inner mental attitude which has changed so much as his outer point of view. The political, the moral, was the point of view at home; the artistic point of view is that of the cathedral precinct. He has not really come to think that the great benefits which the Puritan bought for him with a price were bought with too high a price. He merely grumbles at being called upon to pay a part of it again out of his own pocket — to pay in loss of the eye's delight for the opportunities which made him a freeman. But grumbling always grows by its own expression, and moreover, the very pain of the reaction in our feelings towards the Puritan leads us imperceptibly into an exaggeration of his crimes. Surprised at first, then shocked, enraged, by the blood of art which stains his footsteps, we lose our tempers, forget to make judicial inquiry, and end by crediting him with all the slaughter that has passed. And our injustice is fostered by the wholesale charges which are

brought against him by the Anglican guardians of the temples where his hammer and ax were plied. It is less trying to the soul of the verger, and, I may say, of his local superiors and of commentators in print, to abuse the alien Puritan than the fellow-Anglican of the sixteenth or the eighteenth century. Thus natural enemy and outraged friend unite in burdening the Puritan's broad shoulders with a load that in greater part should be borne by others.

I thought that in the course of these chapters I had avoided such injustice, though I

desecration of good churchmen in the century before our own, and how much by the well-meant but often inartistic renovations of the good churchmen of quite recent years. I thought I had made it plain that if we should add all their sins together, the sins of the Puritan would seem small in comparison. But it seems I was mistaken, for a kindly critic writes me from England that I am unjust to the Puritan, and even explains — to a descendant of New England pioneers! — that he was in fact a worthy personage, thoroughly conscientious after his lights and most serviceable to



THE CATHEDRAL FROM THE NORTH-WEST.

freely confess that there were moments in my English journey when I hated the Puritan with a holy hatred and wished that he had never shown his surly face to the world — a wish, however, which included the Anglican, too, as his fellow-fiend in destruction, his fellow-pillager of Catholic rights and destroyer of Catholic charms and graces. I thought I had explained how much of the ruin we see was wrought by the good churchmen of King Henry's reign and of Somerset's protectorate, how much by the hideous neglect or wanton

the best interests of humanity. I believe it as I believe in the worth and value of few other human creatures; and I hereby acknowledge that artistic sins and virtues are not those which the recording angel will place at the top of his tablets when he sums up the acts of men either as individuals or as citizens of the world. But it is impossible for any one merely human to hold all points of view at once — difficult for a mere recording tourist to remember that the artistic point of view is not of paramount interest.



THE MAIN DOORWAY, WEST FRONT.

Yet I will try once more to be impartial—to give my hereditary enemy his just meed of blame and to give no more than his just meed to that honored sire whose sins I may have exaggerated just because I could not perceive them without a feeling of personal abasement. I will point out more plainly, for example, that many of the beautiful ornaments of Lichfield had been shattered or removed by order of the early Anglican reformers; and that although Puritan shots ruined the spire, it was churchmen who had made the church a castle. I will repeat that the breaking of the statues of the front was a minor injury compared with their removal and their so-called restoration by Anglican hands, and will add that pages of sad description would be needed to tell what was done by these hands inside the church and inside every great church in England—to tell of the big pews that were built, the coats of white-wash that were roughly given, the chisels that were plied in senseless alterations, the glass that was destroyed, the birds that were allowed to enter through the broken panes, to nest in the sculptured capitals, to be fired at with shots each rebound of which meant another item of beauty gone. It is a piteous chronicle read all together; and read all together—I am glad and proud to say once more—the Puritan's pages do not seem the worst. If I have cited them more often than the others, it is simply because they are more picturesque, more dramatic, more incisive in their interest. The work of the Anglican ravager was done gradually, quietly, almost secretly—half by actual act, half by mere stupidity and neglect. The Puritan's was done all at once, and to the sound of the blaring trumpet of war.

M. G. van Rensselaer.