

Matilda are most impressive; beautiful, too, are the ecclesiastical buildings, though some are now but shadows of their former glorious selves. Even in mediæval times Caen appears to have been looked up to, as quite superior to other towns of Normandy, and as having "rich citizens, noble dames and damsels, and fine churches." It would be difficult indeed for the most unarchitectural mind not to notice the abundance of very fine churches at Caen. For there are many splendid buildings besides the two noble minsters around which so much interest centres. On the outskirts of the town is old St. Nicholas, having a comical-looking stone pinnacle, drooping all on one side like a candle in the summer heat.

A halo of romance surrounds the abbey churches of St. Etienne and Sainte Trinité. By a decree of the Pope, William and Matilda were enjoined to erect each a house to the glory of God, as an atonement for the irregularity of their marriage. Caen was a



OLD COURT-YARD AT CAEN.

favourite dwelling-place of the Conqueror and his wife, and the town was chosen as a site for the erection of the two magnificent structures we now behold in a perfect condition, and seemingly destined to last for all time. At the head of the list of abbesses, of the Ladies' Abbey, stands Cicely, the Conqueror's eldest daughter, devoted by her parents to this holy office upon the day of the dedication of the convent. "As a part of that great ceremony," says Mr. Freeman, "the ducal pair offered on the altar of