

LÂON, RHEIMS, AND SOISSONS

sources insuffisantes."—Viollet-le-Duc. The beautiful portals, "deep and cavernous," record by their thousand sculptures, in a clear and impressive manner, the creation of the world, the whole history of the Old Testament, the life of our Saviour and the redemption of mankind, and convey to all who pass by this great object-lesson of their faith. The tympana of these porches are glazed instead of being filled in with stone. This was done to guard against the possible breaking of the doorway lintel, which, if large, might very well give way under the weight of the superincumbent mass of stone.

Mr. Bond, referring to the deeply recessed porches of the French cathedrals—which, if we exclude the Galilees, find few analogues in the English churches—considers them as lineal descendants of the ancient narthex. "As a rule we did not care to develop the western doorways. The reason may be that our churches are all comparatively low; to give west doorways, therefore, any considerable elevation would be at the expense of the western windows. We needed western light badly in our English naves, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and preferred to develop the western window at the expense of the western doorway, reaching in the end such a façade as that of St. George's, Windsor."