

winds its way through the heart of the city, the houses rising up straight from its slowly flowing waters, where a low-pointed doorway on the right leads into St. Thomas' hospital, founded, as a fourteenth century charter records, by him to receive poor wayfaring men. Ten poor brothers and sisters still enjoy the fruit of the saint's benevolence, and dwell in the old house built on arches across the bed of the river. The low level of the floor, which has sunk far below that of the street; the vaulted roof and time-worn pillars bear witness to its great antiquity. During the days when the enthusiasm for St. Thomas was at its height alms and legacies were showered upon this hospice, where beds for poor pilgrims were provided.

The most renowned of the hosteleries was the "Chequers of the Hope," where Chaucer's pilgrims took up their quarters. This ancient inn was destroyed by fire in 1865. It stood at the corner of Mercery Lane, still one of the most picturesque streets in Canterbury. It offends all modern laws of street architecture; it is narrow, crooked, dark, and the houses in the upper story project almost to the proverbial proximity at which they were constructed in days of yore, when we are told it was possible to shake hands from the upper windows across the street. Happily the spirit of municipal improvement has not yet touched the time-honoured walls. This lane, which leads to the cathedral, was formerly lined with booths and stalls for the sale of pilgrimage souvenirs, such as are still found in the neighbourhood of all famous shrines on the Continent of Europe. Brooches bearing the effigy of the saint's mitred head were eagerly purchased; also *ampullae*, small leaden bottles, containing water from a sacred spring in the precincts, which welled up on

the spot where the martyr's blood fell.

The precincts of the cathedral are entered through Christ Church gateway, a splendid specimen of perpendicular architecture. The front is sadly worn and defaced by the hand of time, yet it is more beautiful in its decay than the newest "restoration." Passing through this gateway, the visitor stands in imposing effect of the cathedral Erasmus, familiar as he was with the magnificence of Continental churches, was struck with the imposing effect of the cathedral when seen for the first time. He beheld it in its full glory, before its spoliation in the sixteenth century; he saw the stone canopies and sculptured images of the portal all perfect, the traceries and mouldings of the windows, the glorious towers in their pristine beauty and elegance; "Bell Harry Steeple," as the central tower is called to-day, formerly the "Angel Steeple," is 235 feet in height, unmatched in strength and beauty. The nave is the earliest part. There stood the Saxon church of Augustine and Anselm, and probably its Roman predecessor. The present walls are in part the actual walls of the Norman church erected in the days of William the Conqueror.

Chapels and chantries in the Pre-Reformation days lined the vast and lofty nave; altars glittered with lighted tapers and gold and silver ornaments; roof and walls were bright with painting and gilding or decked with silken tapestry and carved images covered with jewels; stained windows, bright with colours unequalled in modern times, casting hues of ruby and sapphire across the floor, all this and much more met the admiring view of the mediæval pilgrim; not to mention the shrine of St. Thomas, embossed with gems, glittering with countless jewels that flashed and sparkled in