

CATHEDRAL CITIES

time of Constantine, arose the marvellous development of architecture, founded upon the basis of classical remains. This "Romanesque," as this period of architecture came to be called, permeated later the whole of Western Europe.

Basilica. — Relieved from immediate fear of persecution, the Christian architects straightway commenced to convert the "basilica" remains to suit the requirements of the "New Faith." The Basilica, as its derivation from the Greek *Βασιλική* ("the royal house") implies, "was the King's Bench" of the Romans. It was a long rectangular building, with sometimes rows of columns introduced to divide the space into a nave and aisles. One end terminated in an "apse," of semi-circular formation, where the judge and his assessors were accustomed to sit. This apse the Christians utilised as a chancel. The approach to the building was the "atrium," or forecourt, somewhat similar to the English Cathedral cloister, but differently situated.

A chief characteristic of the Roman buildings was the "round arch," mainly composed of brick or stone work. This the Romans for many years had used more in a decorative way than for utility, but which became of more structural significance in the hands of the Christians.