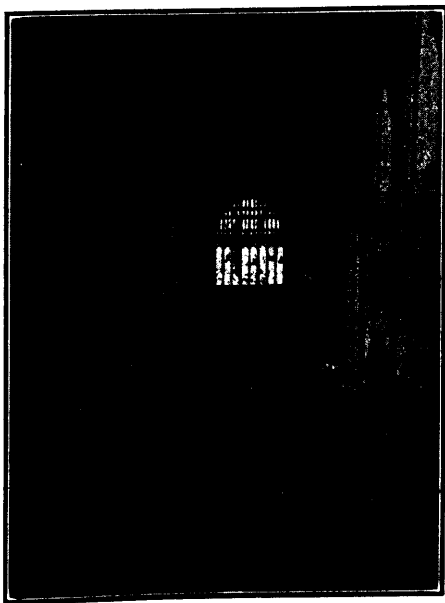


fully desecrated the holy place by tethering horses in the Nave and Choir. This story is probably not true, but whether it is true or false, the fact stands that, owing to a local want of practical interest in beautifying the house of God, no thorough-going system of repair and maintenance was undertaken until 1868 when sufficient money was secured for the purpose and Sir Gilbert Scott was engaged by Dean Howson (better known as the joint author with Conybeare of the *Life of St. Paul*), to 'restore the building to its ancient condition.' How far this brilliant architect has succeeded in detail let beetle-browed critics decide: suffice it the aim throughout was to preserve the individuality of the respective architectural contributions to the whole. The combined resultant of all these discrete efforts of men of diverse times and interests and abilities is the magnificent cathedral-esque structure dominating the city to-day. A hoary age, variety of styles, distinguished associations, architectural, political, religious—these may well lead us to a favouring judgment of Chester.

But time and space press and we have not yet viewed the interior of our Cathedral. Let us hurry through it, therefore, receiving a general impression of the whole and glancing here and there at details of interest. We enter by the small Perpendicular west door, descend by one, and then a second flight of four steps to the floor of the relatively small Nave, little larger in fact than the south transept or the Choir. Here, pausing, we look about us. Above, the oaken vault of fan tracery, skilfully wrought from designs by Sir Gilbert



Chester Cathedral: Interior, looking West.

Scott; right and left, six bays of arcades; showing between the piers of these on the right, south side innumerable mural tablets, unsightly, perhaps, but more in harmony with their English Protestant surroundings than the highly decorative marble mosaics of Bible scenes facing them along the north aisle. Having satisfied ourselves with the view of the Cathedral's full extent, away to the baby east window of modern coloured glass, let us pass up the centre of the Nave, between rows of portable chairs, with here and there a straggling worshipper or tired visitor