

CATHEDRAL ARCHITECTURE IN ENGLAND.

(Digest of a Lecture by Rev. Prof. Cody, M. A.)

A cathedral is not synonymous with a church of the first architectural importance. It is the seat of a Bishop's cathedra or chair, and, in consequence, the ecclesiastical centre of a diocese. But naturally, architectural splendor was made to express ecclesiastical rank; hence the size and beauty of cathedrals. The method in which Christianity was introduced into England in Anglo-Saxon times has had an influence upon cathedral architecture. There emerges here a contrast with France. In France Christianity was first preached in the towns which were centres of secular authority in the subdivisions of the Roman province. The cathedral was erected in the civic centre, in a town already important. In England dioceses were laid out on tribal lines, and within the territory of the tribe there might be no great municipal centre. The bishop's chair had sometimes to be placed in a missionary station completely in the wilds, and some cathedrals stand still where they stood at first in tiny country towns. The most characteristic English cathedrals do not rise from among the closely-pressing houses of the laity, but stand apart, surrounded by lawns and foliage. This fact is a reminder that in most cases originally the cathedral was first in importance; the city, second.

As a cathedral chapter was collegiate, i.e. consisting of secular priests, bound by the ordinary vows of priests, and having their individual houses, or monastic, i.e. consisting of monks living according to "rule," so would there be architectural differences in the buildings surrounding the cathedral. Within the precincts there was not simply the magnificent church, but a chapter house, dormitory, cloister, refectory, library, school, infirmary, bishop's palace, canons' dwellings, etc. Every kind of mediæval architecture may be found here, from the ornately ecclesiastical to the humblest domestic and utilitarian. In no other country is there so diversified a series of cathedrals. There is nothing on the continent like Salisbury with its lovely lawns and bishop's palace, like Canterbury with its ruined monastic buildings, like Wells with its revelation of the collegiate life of the middle ages.

The English cathedrals were practically paid for by the bishop or monks of the chapter. The direction, enterprise and glory was their's. A secular guild of architects and builders would probably have been better than a monastic, and perhaps the limitations of English Gothic are due to its being the art of churchmen.

The development of style is easily traced in England. There is practically no pre-Norman left above ground in any cathedral. At the time of the Norman conquest every Christian land practiced some form of Romanesque. This was based upon Roman building, and had brought into integral union the round arch and the column. The arch sprang from the capital itself, the entablature carried on columns being thrown aside. This union of arch and column marked the birth of a new art in the widest sense of the word. The Saxon Romanesque was rudely wrought. Norman Romanesque, or Norman as it is more briefly called, being more highly organized and skilfully wrought, easily displaced it. Round-headed doorways and windows and heavy pillars are the chief distinguishing features. The ground plan of a great Norman church was cruciform. There were the long nave with lower aisles to the right and left, the transepts forming the arms of the cross and a choir forming the upper extremity toward the east. An interior section of such a church (Peterborough, for instance), shows as the first stage the pier arches supported by massive pillars separating the nave from the aisles, as the second stage the triforium or blind story arcade opening into

a low story above the aisles, and as a third stage the clerestory or row of windows opening clear upon the outside above the roof of the aisle. Only the aisles of the early Norman cathedrals were vaulted with stone. A flat, painted, wooden ceiling covered the centre, and held its ground in England even when Normandy adopted stone. This love for wooden ceilings seems to have been a characteristic of English builders. The great length and comparative narrowness of Norman churches were specially conspicuous in England. This immense extension of a building of inconsiderable height would have produced a monotonous aspect had it not been for the semi-circular or apsidal east end, the square tower at the crossing and two smaller towers flanking the west facade. In Norwich alone are the apse and centre tower preserved. There was little decoration in the Norman—only simple zig-zags, rolls or fillet mouldings. The general character of Norman architecture is strength, even to massiveness, plainness to boldness. This Titanic work, immense, awful, austere, fitting expression of the aims and ideals of the Norman race at the zenith of its power.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the supersession of the rounded by the pointed arch marks the beginning of the Gothic style and new structural principles. The English treated this pointed arch in a fashion of their own. The lancet-pointed or Early English style prevailed for the greater part of a century. Pointed windows, tall and slender, were grouped together without being actually united into a single complex opening. The massive pillar became lighter and was girt about with slender shafts in more or less intimate union with it—the clustered pier. Capitals instead of being square became circular, with chiselled deep-cut mouldings. Vaults were pointed. The ground plan was altered—the eastern arm of the cross grew longer owing to the growth of saint and relic worship (shrines were usually placed east of the high altar.) The apsidal east end (still retained on the Continent) became square (an English peculiarity) with groups of lofty windows. At the extreme east end of the already lengthened choir the lady chapel was built (for the growing cult of the Virgin Mary) and sometimes an eastern set of transepts was added to emphasize the distinction between choir and sanctuary. Salisbury is an admirable example of this style.

Less than a century came the full-blown Decorated, marked by elaborate tracery in the windows, enriched doorways and beautifully-arranged mouldings. The tracery passed through the stages of simple plate, geometrical flowing. In France the tracery developed into flamboyant, so-called because of its unfettered exuberance by which the lines seem to be twisted and woven into flame-like, stone defying forms. The central date of this style is 1300, a period not marked by much church building on a large scale. It was a time of splendid and expensive wars, of legislative and social innovations, of the half revolt against Rome. Architecture was military or domestic, and the prolific time of church alteration came later. The angel choir of Lincoln, and the greater part of Litchfield and Exeter are examples of geometrical Decorated, while the west window of York is flowing Decorated. Late English Gothic stiffened into the Perpendicular style—an English peculiarity—the prose of architecture as compared with Flamboyant, its poetry. The millions of the windows abandoned their curves and ran straight from top to bottom. They were cut across by strong horizontal transoms, and this panel-like form was frequently extended as a decoration over the wall space. The low four-centred curve was frequent in the arch. This style afforded an enormous window space to be filled with stained glass. The choir and lady chapel of Gloucester are good specimens.

The genesis of the window may be described as follows: First

The Canadian Bridge Co., Limited
Walkerville, Ontario.

MANUFACTURERS OF

STEEL BUILDINGS, ROOF-TRUSSES

Railway and Highway Bridges and Structural Steel and Iron Work of all descriptions
Estimates furnished upon application.