

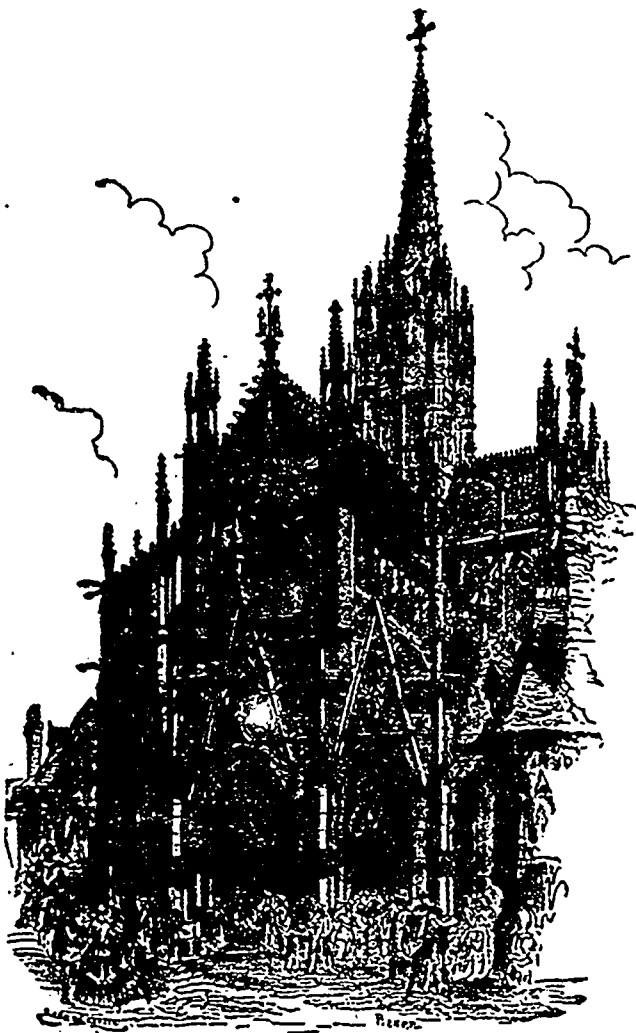
PLEASANT HOURS

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OLD CHURCH AT ROUEN.

ing before the various altars and shrines, the half-seen figures kneeling in the gloom, all tended to produce a strangely weird impression far more profound than that felt in the garish light of day. It dates from 1207, and contains the tombs of Rollo of Normandy and of our English William Longue Epée, and the heart of Cœur de Lion.

The architectural gem of the city, however, is the Church of St. Ouen, one of the most beautiful Gothic churches in existence. Its sculptured arch and niche and column; its great rose windows, stained with the brightest hues; its carved effigies of saint and martyr, and of knights and kings and noble dames praying on their tombs; and the deep-toned organ pealing through the vault-

ed aisles, and the sweet singing of the choir-boys and chanting of the priests gave me my first vivid impression of the grandeur and strange fascination to its adherents of the old historic Romish ritual, which for hundreds of years cast its spell over mediæval Christendom.

One can walk completely around the roof of the church and thus get a near view of the grinning gargoyles through which the water is poured out. The monkish imagination seems to have run riot in carving quaint and grotesque devices—dragons, griffins, strange twi-formed creatures with the head of a goat or monkey or bird, and the body of a man, or vice versa, in every possible combination. One door is called the "Portail des Marmousets," from the little animals that gambol over its arches. Over the central door of many of these old churches are carved with admirable skill and infinite patience, elaborate groups representing scenes from the life of Christ and frequently the awful scene of the Last Judgment.

At Notre Dame at Paris, for instance, Christs sits upon His throne, the Archangel sounds a trumpet, the dead burst from their tombs, and Satan is weighing their souls in a balance. Devils drive the lost to the left and torture them in flames, while angels lead the saved to the joys of Paradise. In the arch of a single door are no less than two hundred separate figures—one of them St. Denis, carrying his head in his hands—a symbol of the mode of his martyrdom.

In those early days art was religion, and the churches were a great stone Bible, often the only Bible the people had or could read. Over and over again is told the story of a man from his creation and fall to his final resurrection. But most frequently and most fully is rehearsed the story of the life and sufferings of our Lord, and of the seven joys and seven sorrows of Mary. I was not prepared, however, to find the presence of the comic element in this church decoration—the grinning and grimacing monkeys, the grotesque conflicts of saints and demons, in which the latter are sorely discomfited, and similar scenes.

The cut on the lower part of this page shows the interior of one of these grand old gothic churches. Everything, you will observe, is stone—the floor, the columns, the vaulted roof, the pulpit, and even the tracery of the windows. But you observe there are no seats. The worshippers kneel on the stone floor. Sometimes I have seen a pile of cheap chairs stacked up in the corner, one of which you can have by paying a penny. Sermons are rarely preached. The worship consists chiefly of the superstitious mummeries of the mass.

In France and Belgium, gothic architecture is largely employed in the ancient town halls and other public buildings, as well as churches. Some of the halls are very magnificent, as those at Brussels, Bruges, Louvain, and Oudenarde. The latter is shown on page 4. The exquisite tracery of the front and tower is all carved in stone.

These engravings are specimens of a series of eighteen on "Early Art and Architecture," which appear in the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*—[See Advertisement on last page]

OLD GOTHIC CHURCHES.

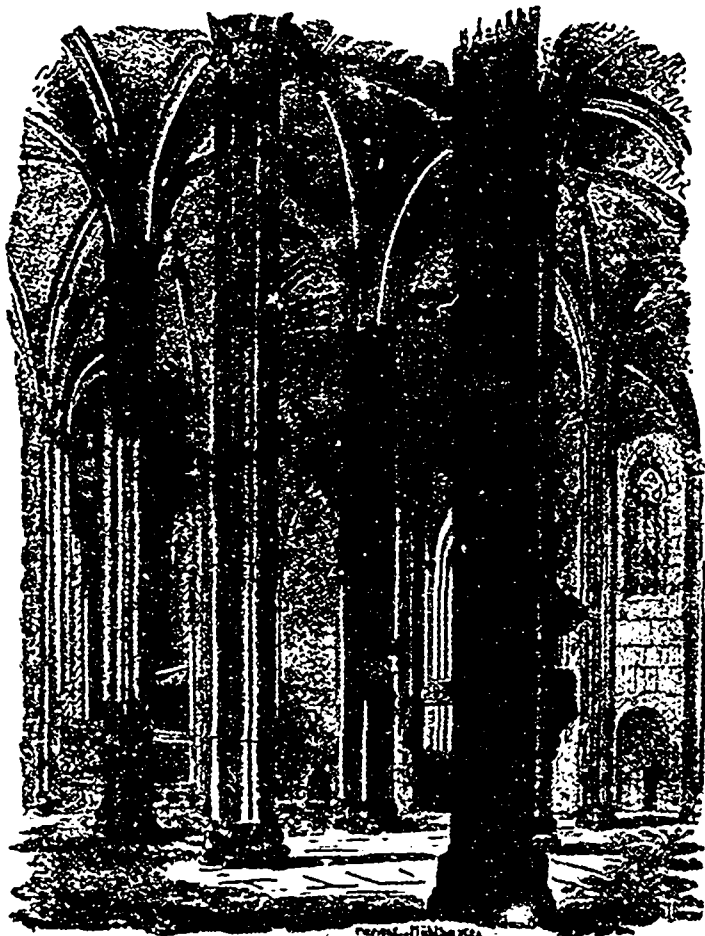
BY THE EDITOR.

Objects with which I am acquainted so carry one back into the Middle Ages as the old Gothic churches of Europe. The very first day I was in France I found my way to one of these old churches. I had left London in the morning, and reached Rouen about six o'clock. After dinner I sallied forth to see the town. It was like stepping back five hundred years. Even the little children playing in the streets seemed almost that old. The ancient timbered houses, with quaintly-carved and high-pitched gables, lean over the narrow, crooked streets till they almost meet overhead.

It was in the dim twilight that I entered the cathedral, and the deep shadows filling the vast and solemn nave and aisles, the tapers faintly burn-

ed aisles, and the sweet singing of the choir-boys and chanting of the priests gave me my first vivid impression of the grandeur and strange fascination to its adherents of the old historic Romish ritual, which for hundreds of years cast its spell over mediæval Christendom.

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INTERIOR OF GOTHIC CHURCH.