

**AN ITINERARY OF THE  
ENGLISH  
CATHEDRALS FOR THE  
USE OF TRAVELLERS**

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An Itinerary of the English Cathedrals for the Use of Travellers by James G. Gilchrist & T. Perkins

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CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL FROM THE NORTH (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY CARL NORMAN AND CO.)

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## PREFACE.

THIS little book, as originally written by Dr. Gilchrist, was intended especially for visitors from the United States, but with the idea that it would be equally useful to English tourists as a companion to their "Cathedral Series," the Publishers put the manuscript into my hands for revision. Besides correcting a few inaccuracies in the text, I have added at the head of each chapter a brief synopsis of the ecclesiastical character and architectural features of each cathedral church, and at the end have inserted the names of other buildings in the neighbourhood which the tourist, with time at his disposal, will find worth a visit.

I have preserved Dr. Gilchrist's order, beginning with Liverpool, where the American tourist lands, but as the Itinerary brings the reader back to Liverpool a complete circuit is formed, and it is obvious that the beginning and ending may with equal convenience be made at any part of it.

This book is likely to be found useful, chiefly by those who, having but a limited time, wish to see either the whole number of cathedrals, or a group in any particular district. But it will also serve to show those desirous of making a more thorough study of certain features or architectural styles where they may best be found; and then fuller information may be obtained from the monographs in the "Cathedral Series." It is hoped that the Introductory Chapter will be found sufficient to give the tourist, who has not made a study of architecture, enough information to enable him to enjoy intelligently the buildings that he visits. The map and table of the chief dimensions of the English Cathedral Churches will also be found useful.

T. PERKINS.

TURNWORTH, *April*, 1901.



*Photo.*

*Ronald P. Jones.*

WESTERN DOORWAYS OF RIPON CATHEDRAL.

## THE ENGLISH CATHEDRALS

### ON THEIR ARCHITECTURE

THE cathedral churches as they exist at the present time are for the most part the architectural work of the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and first half of the sixteenth century. For although here and there fragments of earlier date are found incorporated in the existing buildings, and some few additions and alterations were made in somewhat later times, yet church-building on an extensive scale seems to have begun with the Norman Conquest and to have ended with the Reformation. Churches of course existed in the so-called "Anglo-Saxon" times, but the style was rude, the buildings small, and the material was often wood; but as soon as the Normans had established themselves in the land, there was a great influx of ecclesiastics whose ideas of art and architecture were far in advance of those of the old English inhabitants of the country, and these new-comers soon set to work, rebuilding or enlarging the churches that they found already in existence and also building new ones. At first the style of the buildings

corresponded closely with that of the churches in the north-west of what we now know as France. Gradually, however, the transplanted style, after having once taken firm root in England, developed in an independent manner; and by the middle of the thirteenth century, if not earlier, there was a marked distinction between the character of English and French architecture.

As a general rule the English cathedral church was longer in proportion to its width than the French church, and far less lofty; its west front was far less imposing; its west doors were comparatively insignificant; but its towers, from the comparative lowness of the roof of the nave, were far more important and striking than the towers of French churches of like character. The French buildings are more impressive at first sight, but the English type has the great charm of reposeful outline. The ambitious French builder seems always to have worked up to, if not beyond, his strength, and had to have recourse to flying buttresses and a multitude of pinnacles to support and balance his walls: to such an extent sometimes was this method of strengthening the walls carried that the building seems, as it were, surrounded by a stone scaffolding. The less daring English builder did not let his fancy outrun his strength, and, to use Ferguson's words, "attempted nothing over which he had not full command." The apsidal ending of churches introduced by the early Normans did not, as a rule, hold its ground in England; for English builders before long reverted to the pre-Conquest plan, with a straight east end and a rectangular choir.

The style of architecture changed gradually and continuously; for in those days it was a living art, and fresh developments were constantly appearing: local varieties, due sometimes to local circumstances, sometimes to the personal taste of some great ecclesiastic or architect, appeared, and one part of the country might in style be a few years ahead of another; but, roughly speaking, the general character was the same in all parts of the kingdom. For convenience of classification, the architecture of the Middle Ages in England has been divided into four styles or periods. The **Norman** prevailed during the greater part of the twelfth century, and then passed through a transition into the **Early English**, which flourished throughout the greater part of the thirteenth century, when it merged

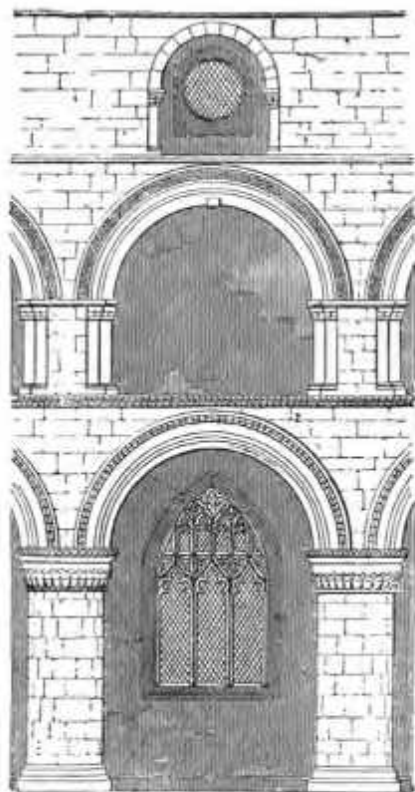


into the **Decorated**, which reached its zenith before the middle of the fourteenth century, and before the end of the long reign of Edward III. had everywhere given way to the **Perpendicular** style, in which all churches were built from the days of Richard II. until classical features were introduced in early Tudor times.

Soon after this the Reformation and the confiscation of Church property by the king, by impoverishing the Church (and fortunately so from an artistic point of view), put an end to church-building. Fortunately, for had the old activity prevailed, there is little doubt that many of our finest Gothic buildings would have suffered much at the hands of architects imbued with classical feeling, as indeed Old St. Paul's did suffer at the hands of Inigo Jones. Some of the cathedral churches felt the violence of the iconoclastic zeal of the Puritans in the seventeenth century; but not so much mischief was done at that time as is generally supposed. Then for about two hundred years Gothic art was undervalued, and the style looked on as barbarous; Gothic buildings were neglected, and in some of the churches incongruous features were introduced.

About the middle of the nineteenth century there was a general revival of Gothic taste: and one after another the cathedral churches, along with other buildings of less note, fell into the hands of restorers, often full of ignorant zeal, who wrought sad mischief in their vain endeavours to restore the church to its original condition, a thing utterly impossible, and most undesirable had it been possible. For an old building is like an old book in manuscript, in which the various pages have been written by various hands through a long course of time, later writers altering in places what previous scribes had written, tearing out now and then a page to insert a new chapter containing their own version of the story. We may regret that they did it, but it is useless to again remove their page and insert a new one containing what we suppose the original writer wrote. But this is what most modern restoration has done and is still attempting to do. Some of the smaller churches of the country have been completely spoiled; others of larger size have suffered more or less, and among them many, if not all, of the cathedral churches. Mediæval builders had, as a rule, little reverence for the work of their

predecessors : if they had occasion to enlarge the building they swept away or altered old work to suit their convenience, but they put something of their own into its place ; it might be better or it might be worse, but it was at any rate original. The



A NORMAN BAY, SOUTHWELL.

(N.B.—The aisle window is a later insertion.)

easily distinguish a piece of Early English from a piece of Perpendicular work ; but this, though the safest test, is not the most obvious one, and the visitor to the church who is not an expert may generally, by observing the character of the pillars,

modern restorer sweeps away genuine original work in order to make room for imitation of some older style, or at best to put in what he calls a "facsimile" of some feature that has been worn by the hand of Time—as if a facsimile, however neat and tidy, sharply cut and brilliant, could have the value of the original, mellowed and weathered by the lapse of centuries.

It may be well, before describing the various parts of a typical English cathedral church, to give a short account of the various styles already mentioned. The architectural expert will trust more to the character of the mouldings than to anything else, when endeavouring to arrive at the date of any part of a building : by running his eye and *hand* over it he will

arches, and windows, approximate with fair accuracy to the date of the building, or rather to each individual part of it; for no important building was ever erected all at the same time. The Jews might bring forward as a proof of the magnificence of their temple that forty and six years had been occupied in its erection, but many of our larger churches took fully ten times as long to build.

The **Norman** style, of which the naves of Durham, Gloucester, and Ely, among others, are fine examples, may be recognized by massive pillars often cylindrical, semi-circular arches, and windows generally narrow and deeply splayed inside with semicircular heads.

The **Early English** style is much lighter and more graceful: the arches are pointed, the windows are lancet-shaped at their heads, and are often grouped together in pairs or triplets or sets of larger numbers. No better typical example can be found anywhere than the cathedral church at Salisbury, which, owing to the site of the earlier church having been abandoned in the early part of the thirteenth century, and the existing church erected on a new site, contains nothing of



EARLY ENGLISH BAY, BEVERLEY MINSTER.