

**A GUIDE TO THE ANCIENT CITY
OF WINCHESTER, AND
REMINISCENCES OF
WINCHESTER: A SERIES OF
POEMS BY CHRISTOPHER WOOD**

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Poems by Christopher Wood by William Savage

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WILLIAM SAVAGE

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James Millie Pirce,
Professor of Mathematics,
in Harvard University.
(No. U. 1853.)





ANTIQUITIES
OF THE
City of Winchester.

"Who suffereth not low care still to unfold
His thought in narrow circle of to-day,
But liveth to all time, will love to stray,
Winton, among thy stately piles of old,
And read the tale, in moving language told
By Druid and by Roman stone, and grey
Monument of the Saxon's nobler way,
How fraught with wondrous change for thee hath rolled
The stream of ages. Every step will turn
A leaf of the great volume, and impart
Much that his eager soul will joy to learn
Of thine and England's fate. Each noble heart
And mind, whose life was thine, still speaks through thee
To kindred spirits of all time to be."

CHRISTOPHER WOOD.

WITHOUT having recourse to romantic legends or traditionary songs, it is a sufficient commendation of our City that its history extends beyond the reach of every certain and authentic record. In no place, perhaps, has the "genius Loci" of monastic life more firmly maintained its habitation than in the Saxon metropolis of England. It is impossible to visit it, in spite of the unsparing violence of the Reformation, without feeling that you are still in the visionary presence of abbots and priors, with all their collegiate brotherhoods. It looks the undoubted abode of monastic communities; the stillness of the cell is felt, and hangs about every quarter of it; its High Street is solemnized by a Holy Cross of lofty and venerable architecture; you tread upon the foundations and fragments of ancient buildings in every field and garden of the City; the narrowness and obscurity of many of the streets give an impression not unlike the vague notion we

have of the solitary dimness of cloistral residence. The low valley in which the City is placed, its rich meadows and glassy streams of delicious water, speak of ecclesiastical abundance and enjoyment; and the very trout, everywhere poised motionless in the river, or shooting their way through the green weed, seem to have a reference to Catholic days and the peculiar food which the religious discipline required. And first, as the origin of all her greatness and her power, we will proceed to review her yet beautiful Cathedral.

NOTE.—It is desirable that visitors proceed in the track marked out in the following pages, or valuable time will be lost in reference, the chain of ideas be severed, and, as a consequence, much pleasure sacrificed.



The Cathedral.

"Old temple with the massive Norman tower,
Not one, but many centuries upreared
Thy frame of majesty and power, wherein
Who list may read thy changeful destiny,
With the strange tale of human crime and virtue
Adversity and glory year by year."—C.W.

THIS, the most venerable and interesting monument of antiquity in the Island, was first built by our British Prince, Lucius, A.D. 176, the first royal personage professing Christianity. Milner supposes it to have been erected in the style of Grecian architecture, though Rudborne, its ancient historian, pronounces it to For poem, see have borne the form of a cross, as at the present Cathedral, see end. day. The Church, when finished, was dedicated in honour of the Holy Saviour by the British Apostles, Fugatius and Duvianns, sent hither from Rome by its benefactor, Pope Eleutherius, who also ordained Dinotus a prelate of this See.

Towards the conclusion of the third century it was levelled with the ground, and most of its clergy were martyred by Diocletian. On the accession of Constantius Chlorus, A.D. 313, the Cathedral was a second time rebuilt by the contributions of private Christians, and consecrated by Constans, Bishop of Venta (the ancient name of the city), in honour of St. Amphiballus.

When this city fell under the power of our Pagan ancestors, the West Saxons, all its clergy, together with its lay inhabitants, were swept away in one promiscuous slaughter. But, instead of destroying, the victorious Cerdic repaired the Cathedral, and turned it into a temple of his native gods, wherein he was solemnly crowned king of the West Saxons, A.D. 516.

The ancient Cathedral continued to stand when Kingils was converted, and might have been consecrated to the worship of the true God. The royal convert, however, inflamed with religious zeal, determined upon its re-erection; but before he executed this design, having taken down the former fabric, and collected an immense quantity of materials, he died. Yet the building, after the interruption of a few years, was completed by his son Kenewalch, and consecrated by St. Birinus to the Holy Trinity, and the Holy Apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, A.D. 635.

This structure remained unimpaired until the first conquest of the island by the Danes. After the death of St. Swithun, its clergy were a third time massacred, and the building much damaged. St. Ethelwold, the famous Saxon architect, however, soon afterwards rebuilt it from the ground, and enriched it with subterraneous crypts, introducing at the same time a stream of water into the monastery, and other streams into different parts of the city.* On the completion of this great undertaking, the new structure was re-consecrated, A.D. 980, in the presence of the king Etheldred, St. Dunstan, and eight other bishops, to St. Peter and St. Paul; but the body of St. Swithun having been a little before transferred from the churchyard into the Church itself, in which a sumptuous shrine had been prepared by king Edgar for its reception, that Saint's name was added to the former patrons of the Cathedral.

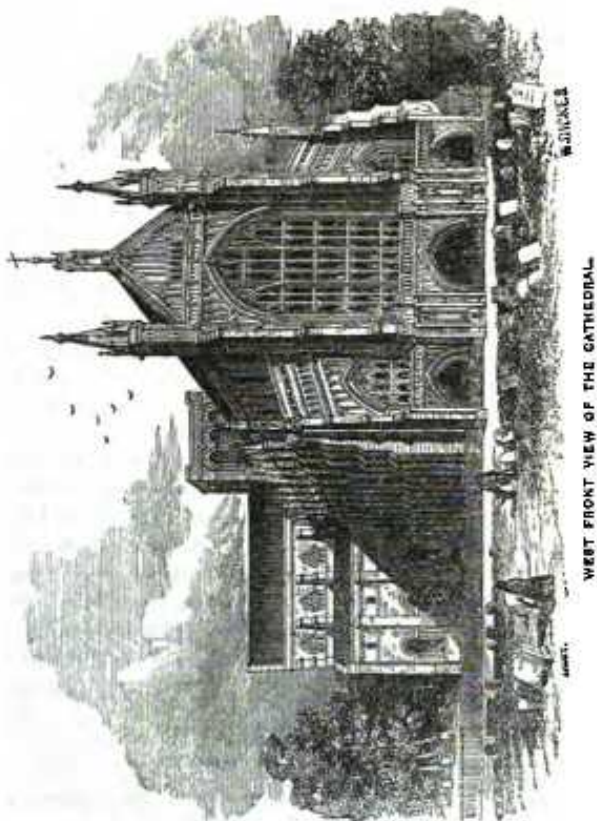
We cannot suppose that a church built by so able an architect as St. Ethelwold could want rebuilding in less than a century,

* "He built all these dwelling places with strong walls. He covered them with roofs, and clothed them with beauty. He brought hither sweet floods of water abounding with fish; the runnings off of the pond penetrated all the recesses of the buildings, and gently murmuring cleanse the whole ocnobium.

"He repaired the courts of that old temple with lofty walls and new roofs; and strengthened it on the north sides with solid aisles and various arches.

"He added also many chapels, with sacred altars, that distract attention from the threshold of the church, so that a stranger walking in the courts is at a loss where to turn, seeing on all sides doore open to him without any certain path. He stands with wondering eyes, fascinated with the fine roofs of the intricate structure, until some experienced guide conducts him to the portals of the farthest vestibule."—WOLSTAN, *Contemporary of Ethelwold*.

when Bishop Walkelin actually undertook this great work. It is true it had again fallen under the power of the Danes, but, as the City had yielded without resistance, it seems to have been exempt from any signal devastation; at all events, whatever damage the impious Swayne might have committed, his religious



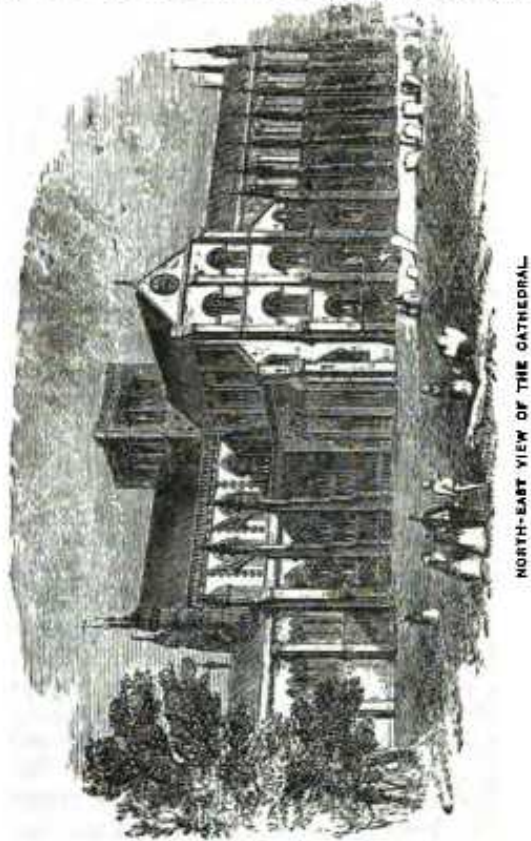
son, Canute, amply repaired. But Walkelin, whose mind was not less noble and vast than that of his relation, the Conqueror, took pains that the Cathedral of Winchester should not be inferior to those which several of his countrymen were at the same time erecting in other Sees. Besides the Church, this prelate undertook to rebuild the extensive and numerous offices of the adjoining

monastery, and completed the whole entirely at his own expense, whereby his name claims pre-eminence among all the founders and benefactors of this Cathedral, and will remain, like his works, immortalized as long as there is an episcopal See in this City. The whole of this great work was completed within fourteen years, and on the 8th April, 1093, the monks went in triumph from their old to their new monastery. The shrine of St. Swithun was carried in procession, on the day of his festival, the 15th July, from the old high altar to the new one.

Of the many works remaining of this Norman prelate, the most conspicuous is the square massive tower, 140 feet high, and 50 feet wide, to all appearance in as firm a state as when built 700 years ago. This tower was evidently intended to serve as a lantern to the choir, as well as to give an idea of height when viewed from the inside, the Normans much affecting height and length in their sacred edifices; the highly-finished workmanship both above and below the ceiling clearly proving this to be the case. The two transepts are also the work of Walkelin, though many alterations have since been made in them, but chiefly in the windows, which have been varied at different periods, according to the style or fashion at each time prevailing.

The eminent prelate Godfrey de Lucy next signalled himself in repairing the Cathedral; the Saxon works, which Walkelin had left remaining, being in a state of decay, with the small tower over it; he accordingly rebuilt them in the architecture of the times, for which purpose he formed a confraternity of workmen, with whom he entered into terms for rebuilding the whole east end of the church, with the Lady Chapel, within five years, dating from 1202, but, dying in the meantime, was buried in the centre of his own work, which, though less lofty, was far more ornamental and beautiful than the main body of the church, whose plain walls, huge unadorned pillars, and naked timbers in the roof, appeared more poor and contemptible from the contrast. But when, by degrees, Gothic architecture had attained its maturity, in the middle of the fourteenth century, it was not fitting that the Cathedral of this opulent and dignified bishopric should remain destitute of the admired and appropriate improvements of this style. Not that Walkelin's work had, in 300 years, fallen to decay, since the transepts, which have stood 400 years longer, are still the firmest part of the whole fabric. This great work was begun by William of Edington, Treasurer and Chancellor to Edward III. He had

actually begun and undertaken to finish the re-building of the great nave, though he lived to execute a part only, namely, the west front, with the two windows on the north, and the first on the south of the nave, with their corresponding buttresses; these buttresses, with the one on the west end, may be distinguished in



NORTH-EAST VIEW OF THE CATHEDRAL.

our plate of the west view, from those of Wykeham's by the greater number of breaks; those of Wykeham's having three, and Edington's four. It is also to be clearly traced in the different colours of the stone, and in a new set off, a little above the two windows on the north, where the work of Edington ended, and that of Wykeham began. This great prelate, Wykeham, did not,