

NORWICH CATHEDRAL

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Norwich Cathedral by W. Lefroy

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W. LEFROY

**NORWICH
CATHEDRAL**

16
1892

Norwich Cathedral

By

The Very Rev.
W. Lefroy, D.D.

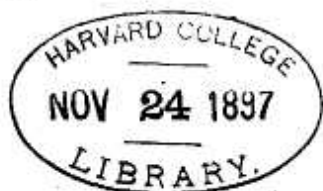
Dean of Norwich

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Norwich Cathedral

IT is no exaggeration to say that the ancient edifice, the story of which is now to be so briefly told, is amongst the most interesting of all our great English cathedrals. It has weathered eight centuries of our national life. It has survived some of the most violent changes in our social, political, and religious history. It has witnessed scenes which would inspire the imagination of the poet, the genius of the painter, and arouse the sorrow of the saint. It has welcomed to the worship of Almighty God, beneath its storied roof, several of the sovereigns of England. It has continued to

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exhibit the original Norman plan to a greater degree than any other edifice of the same magnitude in England, and, while it cannot boast of a crypt or (now) of a Lady Chapel, yet it retains treasures and features which in England are unique, alike in their nature and extent. It represents, in a very rare and remarkable degree, what are so often found in individual, social, political, and religious life—viz., the way in which adversity may minister to advancement, disaster to development, and even calamity to order, to beauty, to stability.

Such broad facts and general principles may fairly introduce some special ideas, which, as they appeal to our mental and moral nature, arouse both sympathy and curiosity, each of which is essential, if a visit to a great Norman cathedral is to be instructive and enjoyable.

Reversing the order of incident, by giving precedence to experience, one cannot but be interested by remembering the place this

Norwich Cathedral

Cathedral occupied in the favour of our sovereigns.

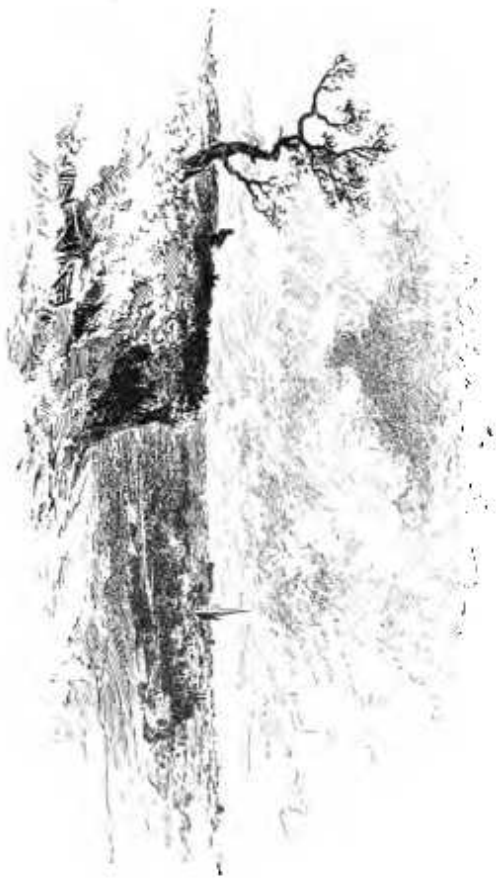
The central tower was struck by lightning in 1271, just one hundred years after the conflagration which constrained Bishop William de Turbe to vow that he would not go further than twelve leagues from his church unless compelled by absolute necessity until it was restored. He is said to have taken his seat daily in a chair at the door of the Cathedral to ask contributions for its repair, and with such success that it was completely restored in two years.

In August 1272, the great church was assailed by a deadlier flame than that of electricity. The lightning of passion, in the hearts of men who represented the traditional feud between the citizens and the denizens of the monastery kindled a conflagration, which consumed well-nigh everything except the Cathedral itself. "For three days," we learn, "the citizens continued burning, slaying, and committing depredations." This riot was so

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great and its growth so probable that Henry III. visited the city, took a personal share in the repression of disorder, and ere he left for Bury St. Edmunds, where he became mortally ill, he no doubt visited the Cathedral. The mischief, so far as it affected the structure, was repaired, and the church was re-dedicated in the episcopate of William de Middleton in 1278. The day of his consecration and enthronement—Advent Sunday—was set apart for the larger function. There were then present Edward I. and Queen Eleanora of Castile—a sovereign who was as ardent a patroness of literature as she was of tapestry. There were also present the Bishops of London, Hereford, and Waterford, each of whom consecrated an altar in the Cathedral—a function which shows that six hundred years ago episcopal etiquette was hardly as rigid and restrictive as it is known to be now.

Edward III. and Queen Philippa visited Norfolk in 1340, the Queen prolonging her



Norwich, from Mansfold Heath