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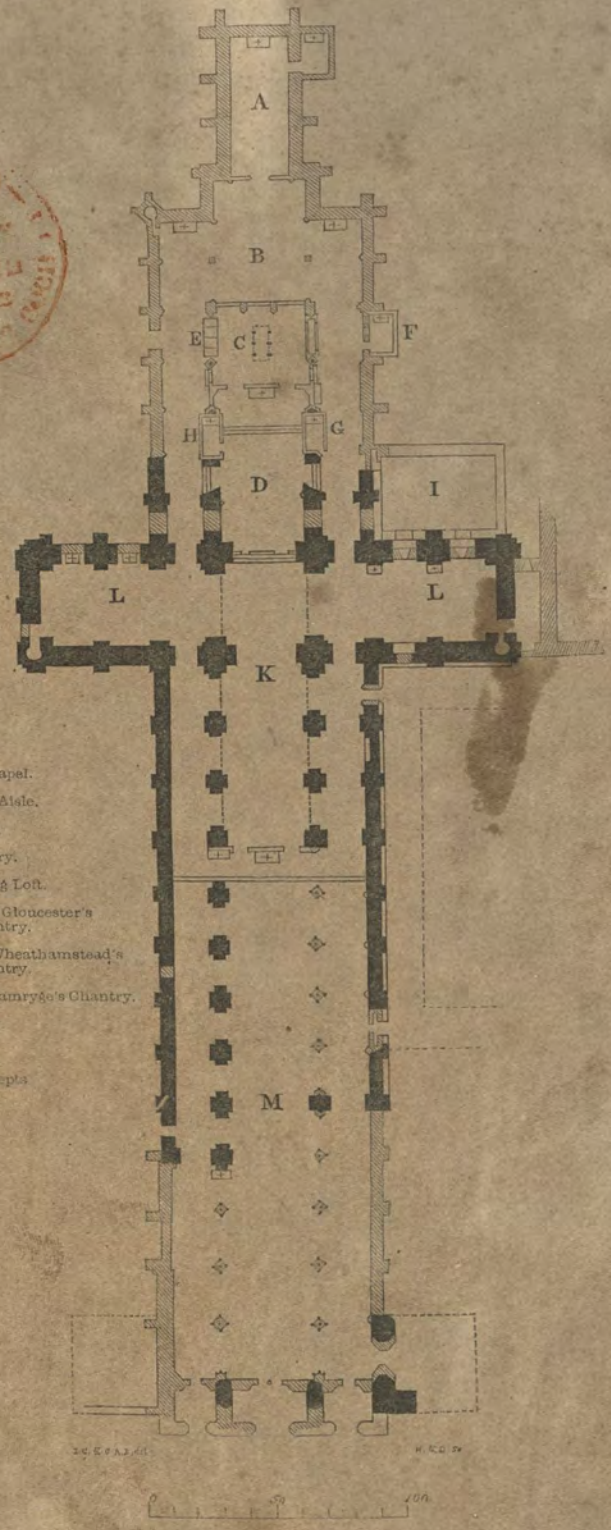


A. Lady Chapel.
B. Eastern Aisle.
C. Feretory.
D. Sanctuary.
E. Watching Loft.
F. Duke of Gloucester's Chantry.
G. Abbot Wheathamstead's Chantry.
H. Abbot Ramryge's Chantry.
I. Sacristy
K. Choir.
L. L. Transepts
M. Nave.

GROUND PLAN OF THE ABBEY CHURCH OF ST. ALBAN

A HISTORY

OF

THE ARCHITECTURE

OF

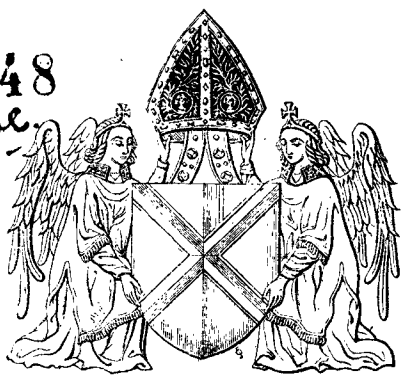
The Abbey Church of St. Alban,

WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO

The Norman Structure.

BY

I. C. BUCKLER AND C. A. BUCKLER.



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TO

WILLIAM KNIGHT, F.S.A.

OF OAKLANDS, IN THE COUNTY OF HERTFORD, ESQUIRE,

This Account

OF

THE ABBEY CHURCH OF ST. ALBAN

IS INSCRIBED

BY HIS FAITHFUL SERVANTS,

I. C. BUCKLER,
C. A. BUCKLER.

PREFACE.

THE present Volume, devoted more particularly to an inquiry into the History of the Norman Architecture of the Abbey Church of St. Alban, is the fulfilment of an intention intimated so long since as the year 1833, in a letter upon the same subject, published in the pages of the Gentleman's Magazine.

From that time until now, this venerable and very interesting structure has engaged the attention of the writers, but not without intervals of considerable length, occasioned by employment of a more urgent nature: the delay, however, has proved beneficial, inasmuch as it has afforded ample opportunities for repeated examinations of the Building, and mature investigations of those portions of its earlier architecture which remain, and much of which is so singularly intermingled with later works of different ages, that too great care could not have been bestowed in collecting evidence in support of the notion that the figure or ground plan of this Church did, when entire, exceed both in form and dimensions the opinion current upon the subject.

The testimony presented to view, although quite sufficient to lead a careful observer to imagine that much of the Building has been effaced, must nevertheless be allowed to have been far too incomplete to prove satisfactory and conclusive upon the question without the assistance to be derived from the labour of opening the ground around and within the walls: and the authors, having brought their various memoranda with respect to the

edifice in its present condition above ground to a close, obtained permission during the course of the last summer and autumn, to pursue their researches beneath the pavement, and within the soil, which in the course of time has accumulated on the outside of the walls. No conjecture as to the former existence of Towers in union with the West front was ever promulgated, — a fact which would not be deemed remarkable if it were not for the elaborate and valuable engravings of this Church published in the year 1810 by the Society of Antiquaries, in which the fragments of the one towards the South are accurately delineated, but evidently without having been understood. That the same relics should up to this time have escaped recognition as having belonged to a Tower is perhaps not wonderful, on account of their partial concealment by the walls of a dwelling-house which has been attached to the Church in the particular situation referred to.

The letter in the Gentleman's Magazine contained a general description of the Norman Architecture of the Abbey, and was accompanied with engravings exhibiting the peculiar construction of the brickwork, the mode in which the form of the mouldings was originally completed with cement, and the positions in which masonry was occasionally employed.

The substance of the former remarks has been incorporated with the present work; but the various sections then given have been revised and extended in illustration of the Volume now produced, after a more searching investigation of the walls and pillars than was deemed requisite before the subject could be brought fully under review.

The early history of this Abbey would have been lamentably deficient if the learning and indefatigable industry of Matthew Paris, one of the Convent in the reign

of King Henry III., had not bequeathed to us a treasure of the most valuable information connected with the period in which he lived, in addition to much of an almost equally valuable kind belonging to times preceding his own.

We allude more particularly to the work to which we have so frequently referred in the elucidation of the earlier architecture — the biography of the first twenty-three Abbots of St. Albans*, wherein are incidentally comprised the valuable references to the successive alterations and embellishments of the Church, cited in the following pages.

With all that related to the government of his Religious Superior, Abbot William, the good Benedictine seems to have been deeply interested, and his notices of the architectural changes made under the patronage of that prelate, for the enlargement and splendour of the Abbey, and particularly its Church, though concise, are at the same time so intelligible, as to cause regret that they were limited to the more important performances, and seldom reached to a *description* of all that he must have witnessed in progress under the hands of the builders.

No one architect, at any period since the completion of the Norman edifice, perfected so many important improvements as Trumpington: he seems to have bent all his energies towards the adornment of his Church, every part of which engaged his attention, leaving no intermission to this arduous employment: and so bold were his undertakings, that if they had been projected by a genius of less pure taste, or by one who had the opportunity of exercising its influence at a less happy era of ecclesiastical

* Vitæ Viginti Trium Abbatum S. Albani. Editore Gulielmo Wats. 1684.

architecture, we might have experienced regret on account of the zeal, no less than the ample means at his command: but, in truth, the designs of his various works evince attainments in science of so high an order that the records of many which it appears were subsequently destroyed are not perused without concern.

Other sources of valuable information besides the labours of Matthew Paris are at hand, but have not been diligently consulted, as they relate to the history of the Abbey at a later period than that to which we have restricted ourselves on the present occasion.

Every particular connected with the architecture of Paul, the first Norman Abbot, whether as regards the Church as it was reared under his direction, or of the innovations which were made upon it in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, has been carefully selected, together with the evidence touching the alterations that first changed the aspect of the original structure, the absence of which would have obliged us to rest upon mere conjecture.

It has been found difficult to restrict the inquiry as to the progressive changes tending to the enlargement and decoration of this Church, the works of successive ages which now compose it being so closely interwoven with each other, and with the Norman fabric, that the detailed narration which is involved amounts almost to a completion of the architectural annals of the Abbey: but if it should be discovered that we have transgressed the limit proposed to ourselves, the fault may perhaps admit of ready excuse.

Rockingham Row, New Kent Road.
March, 1846.

THE ABBOTS OF ST. ALBAN'S.

1. Willegod.
2. Eadric.
3. Vulsig.
4. Wulnoth.
5. Eadfrid.
6. Ulsin.
7. Ælfric I.
8. Ealdred.
9. Eadmer.
10. Leofric.
11. Ælfric II.
12. Leofstan.
13. Frederic.

14. Paul of Caen	from 1077	to	1093
15. Richard d'Aubeny	1097	—	1119
16. Geoffrey de Gorham	1119	—	1146
17. Ralph de Gobion	1146	—	1151
18. Robert de Gorham	1151	—	1166
19. Simon	1168	—	1183
20. Warren de Cambridge	1183	—	1195
21. John de Cella, or of Studham	1195	—	1214
22. William de Trumpington	1214	—	1235
23. John de Hertford	1235	—	1260
24. Roger de Norton	1260	—	1290
25. John de Berkhamstead	1290	—	1301
26. John Maryns	1301	—	1308
27. Hugh de Eversden	1308	—	1326
28. Richard de Wallingford	1326	—	1335
29. Michael de Mentmore	1335	—	1349
30. Thomas de la Mare	1349	—	1396

31. John de la Moote	from 1396	to	1401
32. William Heyworth	1401	elevated to the see of Lichfield	1420
33. John de Wheathamstead	1420	resigned	1440
34. John Stoke	from 1440	to	1451
John de Wheathamstead re-elected			1460
35. William Alban	1460	—	1476
36. William Wallingford	1476	—	1484
37. Thomas Ramryge	1492	—	1524
38. Thomas Wolsey, Cardinal	1526	—	1530
39. Robert Catton	1530	—	1538
40. Richard Boreman de Stevenache	1538		
The Abbey suppressed			1539

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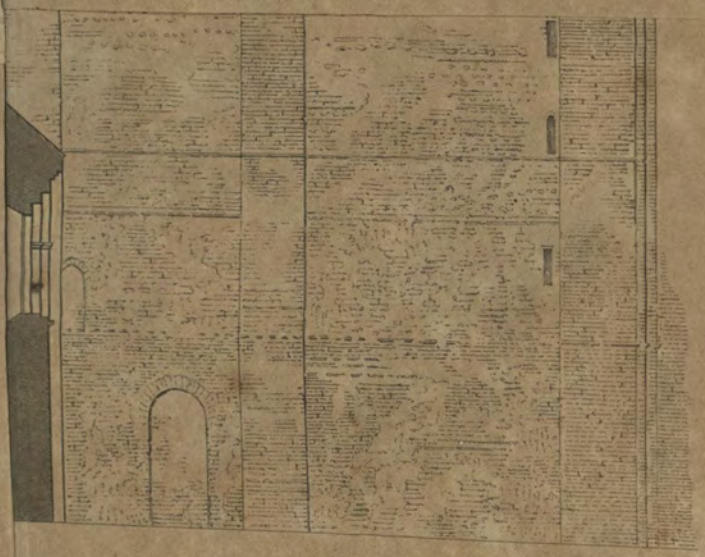
TRANSVERSE SECTION OF THE CHOIR, AND WEST ELEVATION OF THE TOWER AND TRANSEPT.



H. Shaw sc.

E TOWER AND TRANSEPT.

THE

ABBEY CHURCH OF ST. ALBAN.

Of all the grand architectural monuments of the piety and munificence of former times, or of the most deep historical interest, perhaps not one possesses stronger claims upon our attention than that which forms the subject of the present work. It is undoubtedly the most ancient that has survived the processes of early change, the inroads of time, or the insatiable enmity of sacrilege.

Early in the fourth century our illustrious Protomartyr gave glorious testimony of steadfastness in the Faith with which his charity had been rewarded, and in ten years the reign of the first Christian emperor beheld a noble church rise over his honoured remains. This edifice, which was visited by St. Germanus* of Auxerre, who was sent into England to extirpate the Pelagian heresy, was subsequently demolished by the pagan Saxons, but the ruins still continued to be frequented by multitudes who sought the holy patron's intercession.

In the year of our Lord 793, Offa, king of Mercia,

* "St. Germanus was the titular saint of many churches in England, and of the great abbey of Selby in Yorkshire, the abbot whereof was a parliamentary baron. A chapel near Verulam, in which St. Germanus had preached, was a place of great devotion to him among our ancestors, and was afterwards dedicated under his name."—Alban Butler.

having been admonished in a dream to raise from the earth, and deposit more becomingly in a shrine the relics of the British Protomartyr, founded a grand church to the glory of God, and in honour of his holy servant Alban, to be served by monks of the Order of St. Benedict, the benefit of whose good prayers he sought when his own should have ceased.

The ancient account of the incidents connected with the foundation of the Abbey, may be thus given in a few words. By the advice of his counsellors, Humbert, archbishop of Lichfield, and Unwona, bishop of Leicester, King Offa consented to give his third daughter, the Princess Etheldrida, in marriage to Ethelbert, king of the East Angles; but the invidious and haughty queen resisted the proposal, and finding that no artifice would prevail, accomplished the treacherous assassination of the amiable suitor. Etheldrida, renouncing the vanities of the world, took the habit of religion; the king, retired in his chamber, afflicted his soul with fasting and tears; and the wicked Quendrida, who spent the remainder of her days in a place of retirement wherein she might bewail her sins, was eventually hurried out of life by violent hands.

After the death of his queen, Offa led a life of celibacy, instructed and advised by the two prelates, his holy counsellors. Accompanied by them, the king, attended by a numerous retinue, upon the appointed day hastened to Verulam, where a great concourse of people had assembled.

The resting-place of the relics at Holmehurst being revealed, they were recovered, and reverently enshrined in the adjacent chapel of St. Germanus, until the new church was prepared to receive them.

The Royal founder's earnestness projected the noblest architectural work that could be accomplished, and one which, when completed, was doubtless foremost amongst the more famous structures of the time. He enriched the church with his own wealth, and obtained for it the

highest spiritual privileges from the Roman pontiff, Pope Adrian I. The king appointed Willegod abbot of the community, which had been assembled from the best regulated monasteries, and chiefly from the Abbey of Bec, in Normandy. "And all the buildings (except an ancient one which he found, of the old structures of the pagans, built long ago) he constructed at his own expense." *

Towards the close of the tenth century great preparations had been made for the rebuilding of the church.

Abbot Ealdred, in exterminating the decayed walls and vaults of Verulam, carefully sorted all the whole tiles and stones which he found fit for building, reserving them for the fabric, which, having in process of time become dilapidated, he purposed, if he lived, to construct anew; for which reason he dug to a considerable depth in search of structures of stone. In like manner his successor, Abbot Eadmer, diligently sought from among the vestiges of the Roman city, and laid by the stone tablets, tiles, and columns which he found, and which would prove useful in the erection of the new church he proposed to build to St. Alban.

The good work was delayed by a grievous famine which prevailed in all parts of England, and occasioned the next abbot, Leofric, animated by the example of St. Lawrence, to dispense the treasure which had been set apart for the fabric, and dispose of such jewels intended for the shrine-work as found purchasers, together with the vessels of gold and silver, as well those of his own table as those appropriated to the church, for the support of the poor.†

Hence it may be inferred that the original church, as left by the founder, remained without any alteration of its primitive character until its demolition to make way for

* Matthew Paris, in Vitâ Offæ Secundi.

† Vitæ Viginti trium Sancti Albani Abbatum.

the structure which forms the most considerable, and perhaps altogether the most interesting, portion of the existing edifice.

THE BUILDING OF THE NORMAN CHURCH.

THE Norman Conquest wrought a complete change in ecclesiastical affairs. In the year 1070 the venerable Lanfranc had been nominated to the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury; and in 1077 Paul, of the abbey of Caen, his kinsman, whom he had brought with him into England, was appointed to preside over St. Alban's.

The great work of re-edification on a scale of dimensions vastly superior to those of the pre-existing church, was commenced by this abbot, with the assistance, and under the auspices, of the archbishop.

"Abbot Paul, when he had presided eleven years, within that time constructed the entire church of St. Alban, and many other buildings of brickwork, Lanfranc powerfully assisting him, who, as it is said, contributed one thousand marks upon the fabric.

"When the same Abbot Paul had actively governed the church of St. Alban for about twelve years, Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, his best friend and able assistant, died; to whom Anselm, abbot of Bec, succeeded, who, like the former, became most friendly to him; but before he was fully instituted King William II., as long as he held the archbishopric in his own hands, impoverished it unmercifully. But Abbot Paul assisted and consoled Anselm when in need; whereupon, when inthroned, the important benefits which on many occasions he had received he returned to the abbot, and afterwards assisted to finish that which was imperfect in the buildings of the church of St. Alban."*

The abbot* enriched with painting the vaulting† of the apse behind the high altar, and furnished the tower with bells.‡

Matthew Paris, whose words we have just given, also establishes the fact, that the church was built by the Norman abbot "of the stones and tiles of the ancient city of Verulam §, and of the timber which he found collected and reserved by his predecessors."

The new church was magnificently dedicated during the abbacy of Richard, his successor, on Tuesday, the 5th of the calends of January, in the year of grace 1115, "by Geoffrey, archbishop of Rouen, assisted by the Bishops Richard of London, Ralph of Durham, Robert of Lincoln, Roger of Sarum, and many more abbots. King Henry I. and the good Queen Matilda were also present, and many earls, barons, noblemen, and illustrious personages, archdeacons, deans, priests, and ecclesiastical dignitaries, of whom the number is unknown, by reason of the great multitude. On which day all, or the greater part, honour-

* "The same Abbot Paul also granted to Robert the builder, and his heirs, for his skill and labour, in which he excelled all the builders of his time, lands at Syret and Wanthon, and a house in the town of St. Alban, free and undisturbed: whereas the wife of Derlewin had formerly held the land at Syret, for which she returned every year sixty shillings to the church of St. Alban. At length, after the lapse of some time, the same Robert, conscious that he had not a legal entrance (whence dissatisfaction prevailed in the convent), in his last illness resigned to Hamelyn, the prior of St. Alban's, the ruler of the monks, as he formerly was, the aforesaid land at Syret, entirely and free from all calumny, as well of himself as of his heirs."

† "Concamerationem quoque quæ est ultra majus altare, pictura venustavit."

‡ "A certain English noble, name Litholf, who resided in a woodland part of the neighbourhood, added two still larger and more laudable than the rest. Having a good stock of sheep and goats, he sold many of them and bought a bell, of which, as he heard the new sound when suspended in the tower, he jocosely said:—'Hark! how sweetly my goats and my sheep bleat!' But his wife procured another for the same place, and the two together produced a most sweet harmony, which, when the lady heard, she said—'I do not think that this union is wanting of the divine favour, which united mé to my husband in lawful matrimony and the bond of mutual affection.'"

§ "Ex lapidibus et tegulis veteris civitatis Verolamii," &c.

ably remained feasting and rejoicing in the court of St. Alban, in honour of the blessed Protomartyr of the English, as well in the palace in hospitality as in the church in the solemnities, through Christmastide to the Epiphany."

There can remain, therefore, no doubt that this specimen of architecture justly claims a more remote date than can be assigned to any other of eminence now remaining. It vied in grandeur of dimensions and proportion with the most celebrated Religious structures founded or rebuilt about the same time, although it may very probably have been surpassed by several of the Cathedral and Abbey churches in elaborate workmanship, in consequence of the material which was selected to form the bulk of its walls and pillars. The period at which this church was rebuilt may be regarded as the commencement of a new era in our national history, and the present instance as one of the first steps in the path of a science of which only imperfect traces were till then to be discerned. Individual exertion, how much soever it might have distinguished particular localities, or have given a tone to the people of a district, was productive of small effects viewed on general or public grounds. The church builders, previously to the arrival of the Normans, seem not to have acquired the high attainments in architecture which the experience of their enterprising conquerors had already gained. Upon a review of the subject in its most ample scope, the entire re-edification of St. Alban's abbey in the 11th century may be considered as one of uncommon interest, accompanied and closely followed as it was by similar works in every quarter of the kingdom, thus doing honour to Religion, exciting the energies, enlarging the notions, improving the taste, and placing before the common view monuments of genius and high conception which, from their first erection, never ceased to engender emulation, and many of which were eventually removed only to give place to other

structures still more distinguished by magnificent and costly architecture.

In respect of situation there were very few Abbeys in England superior to that of St. Alban; not many among the number occupy ground of more lofty elevation; and perhaps no one of them stands so grandly on the summit of a hill, accompanied with a larger extent of richly varied and interesting landscape.

The different heights of the ground around the Abbey are finely apparelled with wood, and perhaps far less change has taken place in the general character of the scenery than in the appearance of the renowned Abbey itself.

We may view in imagination, from among the lingering relics of the walls of Verulam, the Abbey in the full glory and perfection of its buildings on the opposite hill, the long slope of which, from the summit to the very edge of the little river which washed the base of its outer wall, was covered to a wide extent with the quadrangles, the gateways, the chapter-house, the halls, the towers, the turrets, and every variety of form and feature suitable to the position and the destination they held in the systematic arrangement. Above all this goodly array of architecture rose, as its crowning feature, the stupendous church in its full proportions, with its three towers, the central one augmented in height and beauty of appearance by its lofty octagonal lantern and tapering pinnacles.

But the reality quickly returns, and we observe only the shattered forms of the church and Abbey gateway; trees and shrubs have trespassed upon the cloistered walks, and hovels upon the places once devoted to studious retirement and holy meditation; but we must be grateful that an age which consigned so many similar edifices to utter destruction, was more lenient towards the one raised in honour of the English Protomartyr, not that on this account it owes any acknowledgment to the Mnemoclasts. It was seized and offered for sale, and the sum of 400*l.*,

the price set upon this glorious fabric, was, in accordance with the mercenary spirit of the time, deemed of more value than the materials in ruins would have proved.

The surrounding objects are now so little in unison with this venerable pile, that one would think the protection it formerly received had ceased to be consistent with its present condition as a parish church. The most destructive encroachments are sanctioned for the pleasures and produce of a garden, and it is quite lamentable to observe the mischief that has been inflicted upon the building by the annual process of training fruit-trees against the southern wall. Unseemly appendages of various kinds effectually preclude the possibility of viewing the church in its full extent from any single position sufficiently near to afford an adequate display of the peculiar merits of its design; and regret is heightened by the reflection, that improvement in this respect is not likely to be effected by a more fitting disposal of the misappropriated land.

The Church in its complete Norman figure, and as it subsisted in an unaltered state through the greater part of a century, must have presented a grand and very majestic character, arising from the vast scale of its dimensions, and the simple yet dignified style of its architecture. Its exterior appearance was well calculated to impress the beholder with awe as he viewed the broad and mighty forms it presented, rising in a combined and stately group above the summits of the walls and buildings with which it was begirt, and which, from their height or proximity, shrouded the church in a manner worthy of its exalted destination. In this part of the arrangement St. Alban's strictly agreed with other Abbeys, but, owing to the nature of the ground, a more striking prominency was given to the main structure than is seen in instances where, on account of the level site, the monastic edifices almost rival the altitude of the aisles of the church.

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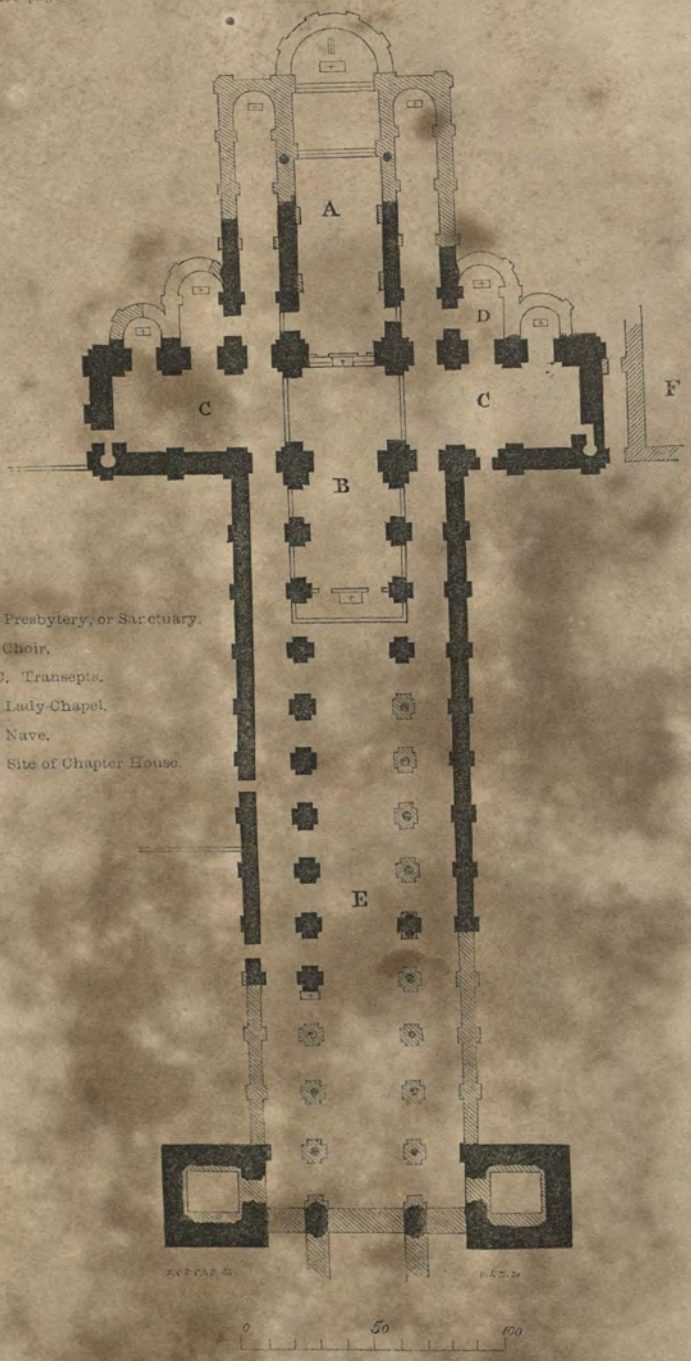


GROUND PLAN OF THE NORMAN CHURCH OF THE ABBEY OF ST ALBAN.

GROUND PLAN.

THE ground plan, or general form of the building, may be described as having consisted of two members, the greater extending from East to West, 440 feet in the clear length, comprehending the sanctuary, choir, and nave, crossed at right angles, and at the distance of 124 feet from the East end of the apse, by a transept, 176 feet in extent; thus presenting a figure resembling that of the true cross.

The lantern tower formed the central, most lofty, and most brilliantly illumined feature of the choir, which included a portion Westward of the intersection, the screen at the entrance from the nave being attached to the pillar of the second bay on each side. The design of this length of the building is uniform in thirteen bays; four subdivisions of greater space, terminating with the apse, formed the sanctuary.

The aisles extended from East to West, but there was no such addition to the transepts, which had apsidal chapels on the eastern side. The West front of the nave was flanked by two towers.

The plan was arranged without regard to a crypt, which so frequently formed a portion of the design of the earlier churches, and no addition of the kind was subsequently made, although the floors of the sanctuary and feretory were raised to a greater elevation than in the Norman edifice.

The visible remains of the church whose general figure we have just described, are portions of the aisles and side walls of the sanctuary, the transept and lantern tower, three entire bays on each side of the choir, and six on the north side of the nave.

Particular regard seems to have been paid to laying out the plan of the church, and fixing the subdivisions for the positions of the piers; and measurement proves

that this part of the work was performed with such ability that only slight deviations from accuracy and uniformity occur, points which were not to be so easily maintained in carrying up the work. An exception to the former remark must not be overlooked, a regularly increased width having been given to the North transept from its junction with the tower to the opposite extremity; but with respect to the superficies of the walls and pilasters, and their retreating members, obedience to the line and rule was by no means strict, and as the discrepancies in the structure were not concealed by the application of the cement, considerable irregularity is found to prevail upon a near examination of the interior.

It is to be remembered that blemishes of the kind referred to, detract nothing from the generally correct appearance of the building, and that the defects in the execution are amply compensated by the *character* which was given to the design without the means usually at the command of the architect.

In reference to the rule by which the leading features of the plan were arranged, it may be remarked that the subdivision of the width between the walls into nave and aisles was made with considerable attention to exactness, and the result is a handsome proportion in the spaces formed by the piers of the arcades: a line passing through the centre of these in a longitudinal direction, gives to the nave one half of the entire breadth, the symmetry of the avenues being preserved by the equal division of the piers upon the imaginary limit; but this scale, which may also be discovered in the plans of other Norman churches, does not, in the present instance, apply with any precision to the rest of the design.

FOUNDATION.

THE foundation which upholds this stupendous fabric is not the least interesting portion of its construction: it was designed with care and precaution, and provided with solidity and strength fully adequate to insure the permanent preservation of the building.

The ground, presenting beneath the surface different degrees of firmness, was excavated to various depths, in order to provide equal security for every part of the superstructure.

The spot destined for the tower rendered any considerable preparation for the basements of its huge pillars unnecessary, and they were not sunk more than four feet below the floor of the church; but the other foundations, on all sides, were carried down to unequal levels, varying from six to full twelve feet.

As stone is mentioned with the other materials as having been brought from Verulam for the building of this church and monastery, we may believe that it was obtained in no mean quantity, and of a kind to prove very useful in the construction of those portions of the fabric which required the greatest precaution to secure them from accident; accordingly, we find it liberally employed at the base of the central tower, not promiscuously, but in ponderous blocks laid in even courses compactly joined together, and combined with brick and almost indestructible cement.

Stone of the same description to any considerable amount has not been observed elsewhere underground; flints sorted, and laid in regular courses, form the bulk of these lower walls in every direction, and the quality of the cement, compounded of lime, gravel, and occasionally of pulverised brick, binds the whole together with astonishing firmness.

The church may truly be said to be based upon a rock;

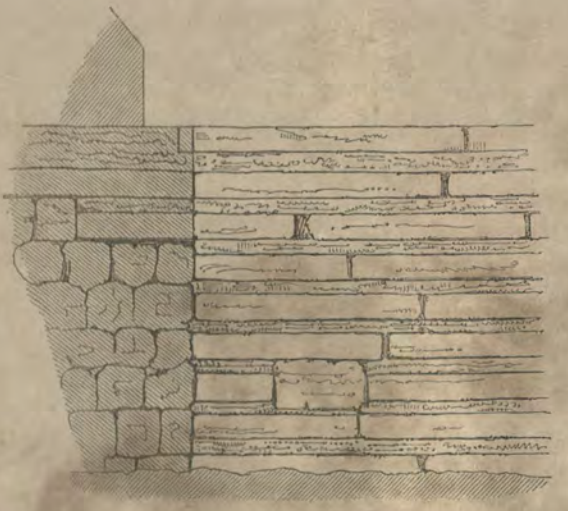
its foundation thus skilfully seated in the ground, may be described as consisting of continuous lines of walls, of greater or less substance in proportion to the scale of the superstructure: those which uphold the walls of the aisles rise from a broad base, and contract to the required width at the point of meeting. There does not seem to be any extra breadth or footing on the outside, but all the walls appear to have an excess of this kind on the inside, though irregularly, and the sloping form just described has been discovered only on the south side of the nave.

The detached piers on the sides of the nave stand upon square masses, generally exceeding the measure of their own area; their connecting walls varying from five feet six inches to seven feet six inches in thickness.

The whole of this work was raised to the level upon which the pavement was laid, and formed of flint, with layers of Roman brick at unequal distances and in different thicknesses, as in the walls above, but in all cases extending quite through the substance, and forming the upper surface upon which the plinth was seated; and it is curious to observe, that when the West front was pulled down, and a portion of the foundation walls of the nave removed to obtain a lower level, the new work, like the original, was deposited upon a course of tiles, which upon recent examination proved to be laid with due regard to its value as a bond, with a perfectly level surface resembling a pavement.

The bonds of brick are not always continuous, the number of courses being in some cases diminished until suddenly terminated with a single layer.

The West wall, from the surface of its reduced level, retains two courses, but the connecting wall of the foundation of the pillars on the South side has nine courses, measuring twenty-three inches, and it is probable that they extend still lower down; thus far, however, it is a wall of brick; but farther Eastward, and to the same



depth, flint alone appeared, except on the upper surface, to receive the base of the piers.

The robust character of the walls and piers rendered any additional breadth or footing beyond the plinth unnecessary upon a foundation so well calculated for their support as the one just described. The level upon which the superstructure was commenced, and that upon which the pavement was laid, were originally the same, but in the course of time, and for various reasons, the latter has been buried more or less deeply. We are not, however, without the means of tracing the levels of the ancient floor throughout the interior, or of showing the extent to which the ground surrounding the walls has been raised with the spoils of architecture, the graves in the church-yard, and waste rubbish brought from a distance. The irregular introduction and unequal height and projection of the plinth, wherever it appears in the interior of the building, is deserving of notice; and after making every allowance for the injuries it has sustained, there can be no doubt that the walls and piers were planted upon it regardless of uniformity.

The defects referred to are very apparent in the aisles, and have been rendered more conspicuous by the increased elevation given to the floor, which, in the nave, was covered in some places with red tiles, many having been discovered beneath the present pavement. In describing the plinths of the Norman piers it will be sufficient to refer to the most Western one on the North side. It has a single projection of two inches, with a slope in cement as a finish to the otherwise plain form in which the bulk rises to the impost of the arch. But if all the plinths agree in this respect, not many will be found to correspond in height.

The whole of the pavement Eastward from the steps in front of St. Cuthbert's screen has been raised twelve inches, an alteration which has concealed only a portion of the Norman plinth, showing in that which remains at the base of the piers of the lantern tower extreme irregularity, occasioned, it would seem, by the accidental form and dimensions of the masonry, which was applied to the purpose just as it came to the hands of the workmen. The level of the floor of the nave appears to have been carried Eastward into the transepts and aisles beyond.

As it was proper that the chapel or altar of St. Cuthbert in the centre of the screen which formed the entrance to the choir in the Norman church, and was eventually replaced by the beautiful stone screen remaining, should be raised above the floor of the nave, the elevation assigned to it, now extending across the entire width of the church, and also throughout its length Eastward of this position, was formerly limited to the breadth of the screen. This determined the level of the floor of the choir, which was raised by steps above that of the aisles, but without side entrances except in the sanctuary, which doubtless had a still greater elevation by an ascent to the High Altar.

This ancient arrangement has been destroyed, but the present, so full of incongruities, is not altogether of modern date, and by a gradation, the altar-pace still retains

the increased height given to it in the fifteenth century, full six feet above the floor at the Western extremity.

The modern pavement is laid on an ascent of two feet from the West doorway to the steps before St. Cuthbert's screen; it is far more rapid in the length between the porch and the first of the remaining Norman piers on the North side, than beyond.

It has been discovered that the floor of the church was originally paved with tiles made for the purpose on the spot, and consisting of gravel, broken brick, and lime, a most durable composition, and a very serviceable appropriation of the refuse materials produced by the excavations, as well as by the operations of the workmen during the progress of the building. Many fragments have been found under the present floor in every part of the interior, showing that the tiles were six inches square, and one in thickness, with no other polish than that conferred upon them by use. Next to these in point of date, and brought to view at the same time, are tiles $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches square with a plain jet black surface, similar to those still remaining on the high-altar-pace in the choir of Fountains Abbey. Other tiles of a brilliant red colour, with handsome patterns of raised work, and some fragments figured in blue, were also found, having replaced the concrete tiles during the progress of the alterations; and with the earth and rubbish under the pavement, particularly in the Lady Chapel, were mingled considerable quantities of the painted glass described as having conferred so much splendour upon the interior, and of which the havoc was so complete that scarcely a remnant of the kind has been suffered to remain in any of the windows; and in order to exclude the weather, after the purchase of the church, it became necessary to wall up many of the openings to save the cost of glass of a less offensive description.

The most injurious interference with the levels on the outside must be dated from the dissolution; it commenced

with the heedless dispersion of the ruins of the Abbey over the ground once occupied by a stately pile of buildings.

The walls of the church were encumbered at their base with the rubbish thus produced, and the gradual and unchecked encroachments of the ground ever since, have buried them full six feet in the soil, detracted from the grandeur of their elevation, and defaced the interior by the unceasing supply of moisture.

The misappropriation of the ground around the church precludes the possibility of any improvement in this respect, but in every other, except the sadly desecrated Eastern aisle, which seems devoted to destruction, the structure is kept in substantial repair.

MATERIALS.

THE materials, and the peculiar mode of employing them, completely coincide with the account of Matthew Paris.

The venerable age of these at the time of their being collected together and accumulated on the spot destined to be distinguished by one of the most renowned and splendid monasteries in the kingdom, is an interesting particular in the history of this church; and when these materials of Roman manufacture were wrought up into the structure of which so large a portion remains, not one, perhaps, of the fine Norman Abbey or Cathedral churches now in being had risen upon its foundations.

Matthew Paris expressly records the fact, that the ruins of Verulam were resorted to for the purpose of supplying materials for the re-edification of the church, and a most satisfactory proof that the intention was at once performed is seen in the occasional practice of re-laying the brick in alternate courses with flint.

The testimony adduced is decisive upon the question of the manufacture of the brick. We have, on a former

occasion, remarked that the art of brick-making in this country was not entirely laid aside at any period*; but the bricks were, in size and thickness, very different from those of Roman production. The variety in these respects in the present instance is not likely to have occurred except under the circumstances related of its having been brought from more ancient buildings.

There could be no necessity to provide by extraordinary labour, that which was already superabundant, with the trouble merely of removal from one side of the river to the other; and we very much doubt whether, without this facility for carrying on the work, resort would not have been at once had to stone and flint; but over and above the vast gatherings that were applied to the use of the monastery, there still remained undisturbed very considerable portions of the walls and foundations of the city, besides heaps of useful brick and flint spread around, which, by lapse of time, are covered with the soil; and very much more than now remains visible must have been seen in ages nearer to the period in which they were so copiously demanded.

The evidence seems irresistible that the material was not made for the Church of St. Alban, but that the building was designed to suit its peculiar qualities.

At one and the same time it may be supposed that the work of demolition on the South side of the Ver, and that of rebuilding on the consecrated spot on the opposite side, were seen in rapid progress, the structures rising with almost as much activity into form on the one hand, as those on the other were sinking into shapeless fragments; and it is not surprising that a mode of construction thus rendered familiar to the workmen should have been adopted by them in the re-employment of the materials.

The resemblance is strongly marked in different parts of the building, and the courses of brick, whether single,

* Gentleman's Mag. Sept. 1833.

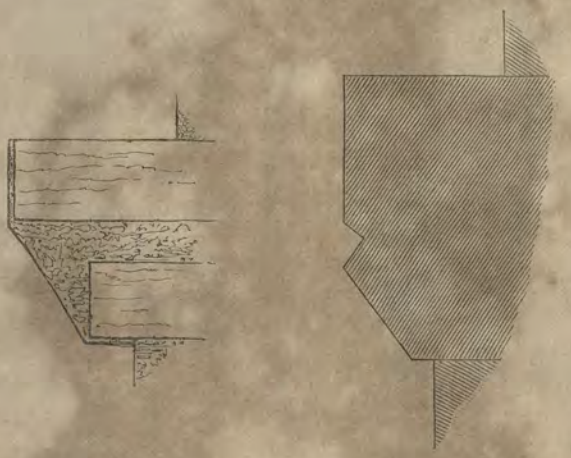
double, quadruple, or more numerous, are in almost every instance carried quite through the substance of the walls.

It is not intended to maintain that the quantity of flint used in this manner bears any proportion to that of the brick in the composition of the walls above ground; the former preponderates in the foundations, but was, in comparison with the other, so unequally employed in the superstructure from its very commencement, that it cannot be viewed in any other light than as a subordinate ingredient, which was applied with more or less freedom as it was supplied. There can be no doubt that wherever flint was introduced it was arranged in thicknesses between courses of brick, and only occasionally passed through to the inside of the wall. It was often a mere facing; and to show how little regard was paid to method in this particular of construction, and at the same time to prove that no systematic assortment of the various available fragments brought to the spot was made, it will be sufficient to observe that stone found its way by the side of bricks as coverings to the openings of loop windows, here and there on the angles of the buttresses, and sometimes in even and consecutive courses. We do not confound modern with ancient work; the two kinds are sufficiently distinct, and very much of the original has been obliterated by successive repairs; but the North transept has escaped in this, as in almost every other respect, with fewer alterations than any other part of the exterior, and it accordingly furnishes the strongest signs of the imitation of the Roman manner of building.

The distribution of the limited quantity of masonry which has been admitted into the composition of this building is singularly irregular, and in some places disadvantageous to its appearance; but in most cases it was skilfully employed, as in the columns, capitals, and bases of the windows in the circular turrets of the transepts, and the abacus-mouldings of the other windows and arches. It is also seen on the exterior of the tower, and, in many of

the cornices on the outside of the building; and, what is still more remarkable, the stone capitals just enumerated, and many on the outside and inside of the tower, have abacus-mouldings of brick and cement.

The main horizontal cornices throughout the interior of the church are formed of two courses of brick, but the impost members of all the principal arches are of stone, wrought for their situations; those surmounting the piers of the tower being considerably deeper than the rest, but of similar section.



One of the jambs of the most Southern window in the clerestory on the West side of the South transept has a stone column with capital and base: it appears like a model of what might at one time have been intended for the embellishment of the plain architecture, but it was left a solitary specimen of the use of masonry, in this situation, in the upper stage of the building.

A rare example of the union of stone and brick, in the cornice of the parapet of the clerestory on the South side, must be named, it having been added to the Norman wall, at the time of the extensive alteration of the nave, in the 13th century, for the purpose of completing the eleva-

tion thus far uniformly. The ancient material was at no period rejected, however abundant the supply of stone; and this cornice, when first completed, and for a long time afterwards, appeared to be wholly of masonry, but the mouldings and corbels only are of stone, all the other members being of brick, cased and perfectly formed with cement.

The remaining portions of the Norman building were repaired with masonry during the progress of the early improvements, and in modern times, with flint and brick, the latter of very inferior quality to the original.

No waste of the Roman brick seems to have been permitted, it having been re-used at the different periods of alteration; the South, and a portion of the North side of the clerestory wall of the sanctuary are built of it in the most substantial manner, and remain in perfect condition; while the sides of the nave, finely finished with ashlar, have yielded to time, and incline from the perpendicular.

The newel and steps of the staircase in the upper part of one of the piers on the North side of the nave are of stone, and should be noticed as the only instances of the kind, coæval with the Norman structure.

Plan of the staircase on the north side of the nave.

The material brought together with so much labour and diligence, and reserved till the time arrived for the commencement of rebuilding, had its share in determining the general character of the design of this church. The architect was not likely to neglect the opportunity and advantage of viewing it as presented in the construction

of the arched and vaulted chambers, the remains of Verulam, which were spread upon the slope of the opposite hill. In its re-application he adopted a similar fashion of construction, and we may presume that the vaulted roofs were in exact accordance with many of Roman workmanship, which yielded materials again to be produced in the church of St. Alban.

Under these circumstances he had not the opportunity of giving to his design any of that fine finish, either of surface or of enrichment, which distinguished the architecture he was wont to practise; and accordingly there was no greater diversity of form or display of ornament in the design of the interior than in that of the exterior, and no difference in the mode of finishing the surface of the walls.

These remarks apply to the main constituent forms of the structure in brick: the determined simplicity with which the design was carried out must be regarded as the choice of the architect, who could have abated the stern character if he had found any inducement to advance at least one step towards ornament; but the influence prevailed in another direction, and a Roman, not a Norman model was before him.

The Priory church of St. Botolph at Colchester, though built under nearly similar circumstances, and interiorly even more plain than the edifice under review, presents on the exterior, a successful effort at enrichment, produced without any increase of means. Although the scale of dimensions and the age are inferior, the design was equally subservient to the nature of the material: the mixture of brick and stone in the design of the West front, which has been extremely imposing, is productive of a very singular mien, which is increased by the injuries and exposure it has sustained.

The genius of a later age succeeded in giving to brick the shape and figure of stone for the purposes of ornamental architecture, in cases wherein its introduction was indispensable.

It is perhaps worthy of remark, that the architect had no resource for materials at the time of his commencement of the building, beyond that supplied as we have seen, with the addition of some portions from the Saxon structure, which he wholly demolished. With these means, limited in quality but abundant, he set zealously to work, as if the absence of stone, which would have enabled him to give a comelier form to the pillars and arches, could not be allowed to impede the progress of his undertaking; and assuredly if he found himself shackled in this respect, he was perfectly uncontrolled in a higher department of his art, and has left a monument not to be excelled in dignity of proportion and regularity of arrangement.

We are not at liberty to assign the use of the Roman remains to the want of ability to procure other materials for the purpose, but it is certain that none of a more tractable nature than those which formed the bulk of the ruins at Verulam were sought for: they were in abundance and on the spot, and as it became expedient to exterminate the ruins of the old city, and above all, as the quality of the brick or tile especially recommended its appropriation, it was used instead of stone, the comparatively small quantity of the latter that appears having been mostly derived from the same source.

Any particular relative to the materials formed and fashioned so many ages before they were employed in the composition of the walls of a Christian church, nearly eight centuries since, cannot fail to be interesting.

Experience had proved their fitness for every purpose of strength and durability, and skill was not wanting to derive the utmost advantage from these sterling qualities.

The brick is mostly of one size, namely 16 × 12 × 1½ inches*; and no less regard was paid to lapping the

* A brick of these dimensions, extricated from a bank by the road passing over the site of Verulam, is preserved at Oaklands; its weight is 21 lbs.

courses, or preserving the bond, than could have been in the construction of masonry. Hence we observe the influence that the material exercised over the design; the retreating members on the angles of the piers and arches, and on the pilasters standing in advance of the walls, are in proportion to the measure of the slabs. Brick of a still larger superficial dimension than that just named appears occasionally, particularly in the staircases, but in point of substance it generally varies: this inequality, however, was unimportant, the concrete mortar was used with an unsparing hand, and with a confidence which showed perfect reliance upon its temper for duration; and in cases of disparity, an approach to a level line in laying the courses was obtained by giving more or less substance to the joints.

The bricks vary in shape and durability in proportion to their exposure to the fire in the process of burning. Many are vitrified and warped by excessive heat, and but few are observed to have yielded to the action of the weather upon the exterior of the building. The earth of which they were made was evidently prepared with great care: their texture is close and fine, and the hardness such that they seem as durable as the flint with which they have been so admirably combined in the walls. They are mostly of a deep red colour, but many in the interior of the belfry are of white earth.

The supply lasted at least as long as it was required for the building, every part of which, in all its essential features, from the foundation to the uppermost finishings of the walls, even to the parapet of the tower, is of tile-brick, so that the original intention in this respect was fully accomplished, and it was not until a later period, and under the influence of another style of architecture, that we observe the introduction of solid masonry without any admixture of brick, except as forming one of the ingredients of the rubble-work of which the core of the walls consists.

The newels of the staircases show that the columnar form was not overlooked, although so rarely adopted in connexion with the Roman material. It cannot be questioned that the brick might easily have been adapted to this figure, if it had been required, in the main pillars of the church. The fact seems to be, that the rectangular pier was selected for the design on account of the facility of shaping its angles with the brick as it was found; but the circle, as more suitable for the central pillar of the staircase, was readily formed, and the difference between the bricks thus roughly altered from their originally square shape, and others which were made with a circular side, is readily observed. The absence of stone as a product of the soil was perhaps seldom regarded as an insurmountable difficulty by the builders of any period. It might in many instances have been employed with economy, but in the subsequent alterations and enlargement of the structure before us, it was called into use without stint, at the same time that the brick displaced to make way for its introduction, was again required to form certain portions of the walls: and in this manner the original material was removed and re-laid so long as the church continued to flourish under the influence of the ancient Religion.

The exterior covering of the walls never having been replaced, or even repaired in modern times, has, in the course of ages, almost wholly disappeared, and left the brickwork exposed to the weather; but, owing to the thickness of the walls and the strength of the joints, the damp has not penetrated to the interior between the ground and the roof.

This denuded condition of the building is favourable to the examination of the various peculiarities in its construction, but gives a rough, ruinous, and neglected appearance to the exterior, to which the rest of the fabric, although cased with masonry, forms no exception, the

weather having mutilated or destroyed nearly the whole of the elaborate finishings of the architecture. We observe in the older portions, more or less distinctly, traces of the Roman method of forming the walls in layers of brick and flint; but it is not to be imagined that a regular system of the kind was followed in every part.

The kind of work just described does not appear in the construction of the Priory Church at Colchester, in which brick bears a very subordinate proportion to stone; and wherever the Roman material presents itself, except as forming the arches and many of the angles, it is in broken and dispersed fragments, the promiscuous gatherings from a quarry the product of which was vastly inferior in every respect to that of Verulam. There is scarcely a single brick of moderately large superficies, and it may be regarded as certain that no provident hand had given itself to the toil of laying up a store of materials in anticipation of the building of the church.

The work at St. Alban's was seldom so accurately performed as to present a regular series of horizontal lines, and the fashion referred to may be said to be strongly indicated rather than formally adopted. Appearance was out of the question, and in places where there was no particular stress the bond was less carefully introduced; but on all the angles, with a slight exception here and there, brick only was used, the same broad joint being observable as in the body of the walls.

The spread of the joints, generally speaking, is not less broad on the outside than on the inside of the building, and a fair notion of the relative proportion of brick and mortar in the composition of the walls, may be formed from the statement that after comparison in various places, it has been ascertained that there is nearly an equal quantity of each. The deep joints seem never to have been compressed by the weight of the courses which were successively added to the walls, and the probability is that the mortar set or hardened as quickly

as the *cement* of modern days. The process of building was by no means rapid, not more than an average of 7 feet in height all round the church having been erected in the course of one year.

The angles of the buttresses and pillars throughout the building were carefully constructed with bricks selected for the regularity of their size and the superiority of their manufacture; but the inside of the walls is composed of different materials,—flint, stone, and brick, the latter predominating, and in some places presenting the promiscuous character of rubble-work.

The less ancient brickwork, which was built with the intention of being exposed to view, is laid with perfect regularity, and with a closer joint than the Norman; and the frequency with which it was removed, and again restored, may be viewed as evidence that a valuable material at hand was as readily employed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, as it had been in the eleventh.

It might be supposed that, besides brick of various sizes, and blocks of masonry, with flint, there would be other fragments of the Roman buildings of use in forming the substance of the walls of the church; but it must be admitted that no great diversity in this respect has been discovered, and certainly nothing on the exterior: but it ought not to escape observation, that in the wall of the staircase which juts into the North transept, several *flue-bricks* have been built up among the courses: one, nearly perfect, measures in the section $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches square, and nearly 1 inch in thickness; and, in order to preserve the solidity of the work, the cavities were filled with fragments of brick and cement. The wall referred to has lately been stripped as high up as the string-course of the windows, and thus accidentally disclosed these singular fragments.

The common bricks in this wall uniformly measure $17 \times 12 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$ inches, but there are several $16 \times 11\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in thickness.

In the construction of the walls with brick of a miscellaneous description, those of uniform figure were generally selected for the outer surfaces; but among the fragments which have been discovered underground, many vary in shape, proving that they had been manufactured for purposes for which they were no longer required. Several of the larger bricks were found to have had the remains of bosses or handles in the centre, as if intended to be used for covers to apertures, while others were manufactured with a flange on one side, the clay having been thus shapen, without particular neatness, as soon as it had left the mould.

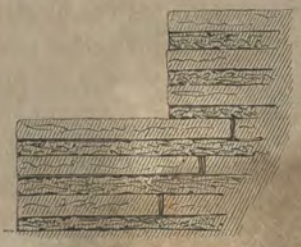
The staircases, and galleries or passages formed in the thickness of the walls, exhibit ingenious and very interesting specimens of construction in perfect preservation.

The circular shafts in the extreme Western angles of the transepts, terminating with turrets above the parapet, are nearly 7 feet in diameter, with newels of the same figure but of different sizes, the larger towards the North being 7 feet in circumference.

The spiral form of the under side of the steps, springing from the newel by a most clever application of the material, cannot fail to attract attention; the process by which this portion of the construction was advanced may be distinctly traced. The staircase was built to a certain height, upon a cradle or frame of wood, which was moved, or, as it may properly be described, screwed upwards, and as the work proceeded so the centre was raised. The boards fixed upon this spirally formed frame in order to complete its figure, and immediately upon which the brickwork rested, were three and four inches wide, lapped and wedge-shapen, in lengths of 14 and 18 inches, alternately arranged. The mortar with which the new work was overspread, retains the impression of the boards, and perfect freshness of appearance.

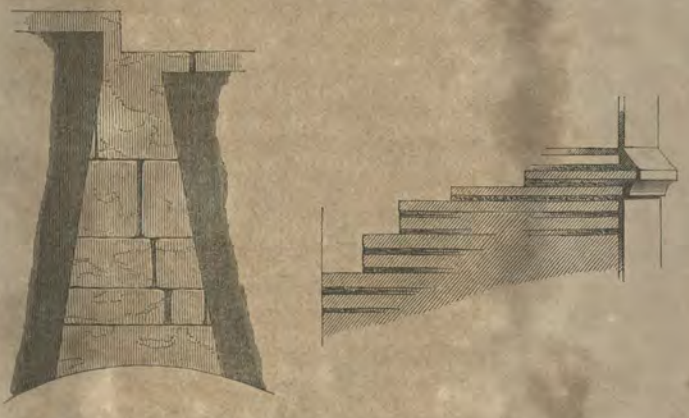
It is impossible to ascend the staircases without occasionally stopping to examine the merit of every part of

these useful features of the original building. The steps consist uniformly of three courses of brick of the largest size, and are seven inches high.



Section of brick steps.

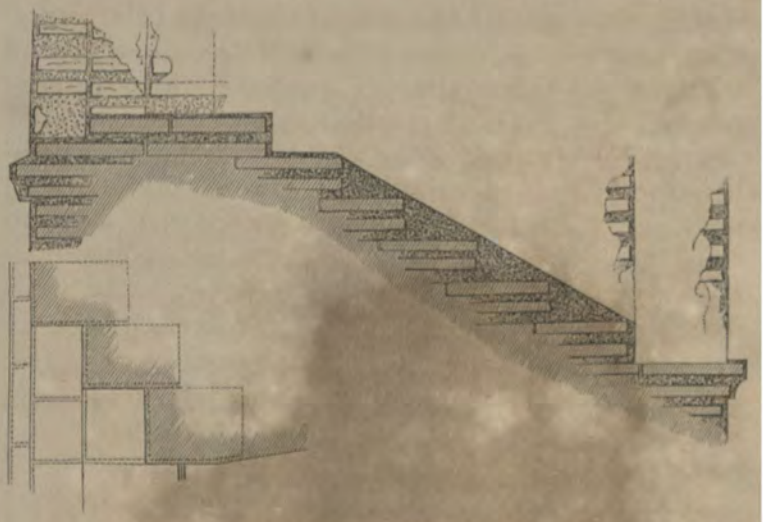
The loops which admit light are deeply splayed on the inside, and have their sills stepped in single and double courses. This method of forming the sill is common throughout the church; those of the windows in the clerestory are very steep, and of the kind described, but have been mutilated or altered, and those in the lower stage in the North transept are



Plan and section of the sill of one of the loops in the staircase of the north transept.

brought to an even surface with plaster, which may have been the original finish in these instances; but not so above, where the steps were preserved, although covered with cement, an addition never conferred upon the sills of the loops in any of the staircases.

The galleries pass longitudinally through the walls throughout the clerestory and the triforium of the transepts; but in the nave and choir the walls were not pierced in the same direction, — a difference which was of some



Plan and section of the sill of the windows in the north transept.

importance in ancient times, inasmuch as the spaces within the side roofs were broad, lofty, and often appropriate for religious uses, whilst the others were merely narrow passages of communication. These are arched, and in some cases vaulted overhead, those in the triforium of the transept having had doorways into the various roofs. The straight line of passage is intercepted in every pier by a broad convex projection in the inner wall, and a concave recess of corresponding dimensions opposite, a contrivance adopted for the sake of augmenting the strength of the detached piers.

The holes in which the putlogs rested are not too trifling to be observed, considering the neatness with which they were formed, in this instance, with brick, that they might remain open to facilitate the re-erection of scaffolding in case of repairs: they penetrate more than half-way through the thickness of the walls, and are seen in many places on the inside as well as on the outside of the building.

We will next refer to the material with which the walls

of the church, inside and out, were originally covered, and upon the expert application of which owes every part of the building its general appearance, no less than the characteristic features of its architecture.

The term "*indissoluble*," as used in reference to the quality of the cement with which the brickwork had been originally constructed, is expressive of its great strength and durability, properties which it still retains unimpaired. It would, indeed, have been wonderful if, anciently, when stone was employed in every quarter of the kingdom to an incalculable extent, the art of making cement or mortar with lime produced from the best material, should not have been discovered, and practised in perfection.

It seems certain, at least in the present instance, that there was only one compound of the kind, the manufacture of which varied considerably, in some portions of the wall forming a coarse concrete and in others a fine substance not at all different from that with which the surface of the walls is finished. We may suppose it to have been prepared, just as it might happen, either with gravel or sand; and from the various degrees of coarseness in the flint or gravel which forms so important an ingredient in its composition, it is obvious that the maker had no misgivings on this account, as to any inequality with respect to strength.

The employment of composition or cement for the purpose of defining ornaments and mouldings, if not coæval with Ecclesiastical architecture, was at least applied with this important object in some of our most ancient churches; and though, perhaps, in no other instance to the extent in which we view it in that of St. Alban's Abbey, yet many interesting examples might be referred to as illustrative either of the remoteness of its antiquity, or the value that was attached to it, and also as exhibiting the naked forms upon which the ornamental features were produced.

But we must limit our remarks on the present occasion

to the arch of the tower of the Church of the Holy Trinity at Colchester. This tower belongs to the class of buildings designated by Mr. Essex "long and short," * on account of the characteristic shape and arrangement of the quoin-stones, which, in the instance cited, are concealed beneath a covering of rough-cast. The interior of the walls presents stones and bricks in irregular layers; the jambs of all the openings are formed entirely of the latter material, of which the inner member of the arch leading to the church is also composed; but the outer circle, which stands in advance of the wall, resembling a label, consisted, when entire, of a prominent torus moulding, composed of cement upon small blocks of stone, which remain, while the greater part of the composition for which they formed a core has perished.

The absence of stone at St. Alban's induced the architect to call in the aid of cement; but in the instance just named, the superior material was introduced for the greater security of the compound with which it was incrusted. It is obvious that the arch and its jambs were formed to receive a casing of cement, with no nearer resemblance to masonry than that afforded by the evenness of its surface and its colour; and the Church of St. Alban's Abbey was precisely similar, both within and without. On this account its brick-walls, buttresses, and arches were built with little attention to exactness, the roughness of the surface and angles being in favour of the application which was to conceal from view the rude but substantial work of the structure. The different angles of the exterior as they now appear robbed by time of their covering of cement, which, as before observed, has never been replaced or even repaired, afford a most imperfect notion of the good appearance they presented in times when decay was speedily followed by restoration; and we have only to examine the fragments of this work now remaining in the

* Archæologia, vol. iv. p. 101., with an engraving.

dark recesses on the East side of the South Transept, in order to be convinced of the care that was so successfully bestowed in giving accuracy to all the forms of the design, and of the excellence of the compost employed for that purpose.

It should be remarked that some pains have always been taken to preserve the casing of the tower, which must therefore be accepted as a specimen of the kind of work sanctioned by remote antiquity.

The original interior appearance of the Church thus covered with cement from the floor upwards, on all the angles of the piers, arches, and string-courses, was scarcely less complete than a more solid substance could have made it, considering that it was the custom to prepare the most finely finished masonry by covering it with a thin coating to receive painted enrichments. Injury and neglect, however, have changed the aspect of the walls, and left but slight evidence of the neatness with which this part of the work was performed. A roughened surface, broken cornices and angles; in fine, the ancient brickwork exposed where it had been so studiously concealed and protected, present themselves on all hands, and give to this building a more rugged air than will be found in any other composed of dissimilar materials.

It has already been observed that the apse of the Norman Sanctuary was enriched with paintings by Abbot Paul, but it should be remarked that the most ancient specimen of this mode of decoration now apparent is not earlier than the thirteenth century, and consists of lines so disposed as to represent the joints of masonry; these are double and of a red colour upon the white ground. Examples of this style occur in the groining of the North aisle of the Sanctuary, of the South aisle of the Nave, and on the arches formerly opening to the apsidal Chapels in the South Transept.

The alteration made in this portion of the Church in the reign of King Edward the Second, and the destruction

of the large Sacristy of that period, in the sixteenth century, by which the Norman arches were in part concealed, and finally rendered useless, have been the means of perfectly preserving the composition on the brickwork, with its painting, and of leaving to the present day a fair memorial of what was once the whole of the interior surface.

The Norman vaulting, as well as the walls, was lined in the manner just described, and the colour is not entirely effaced, but the interior of the church was at a later period rendered lustrous with fresco painting.

The simple lines at first adopted were overlaid early in the fourteenth century, with rich diapering on the walls, and patterns of elegant design on the margins and retreating members of the arches of the Norman structure.

The most interesting remnant consists of a running pattern of foliage in white upon a ruby field, bounded by green stripes and subdivided in imitation of painted glass.

Of these enrichments which were obliterated in the fifteenth century, in order to the display of other subjects and ornaments, the remains are few and imperfect; whilst of the last only one intelligible trace on the East side of the North transept, the Confession of St. Thomas the Apostle, has been brought to light from beneath the liberal coverings of whitewash which in modern times have been added to the walls.

The timber-groining of the Sanctuary was adorned by Abbot John of Wheathamstead with the emblems of his patron saints, alternately arranged within foliated circles; and his decorations were also partially extended to the side roofs of the Eastern aisle.

The ceiling of the nave and transepts has been rudely re-painted in modern times in imitation of the ancient pattern, which corresponded with the cusped panelling of the under roof of the central portion of the Eastern aisle.

Abbot Wheathamstead contributed greatly to the beauty of his church; and, besides enriching the effect of the

interior with painting and gilding, removed the stonework of many of the earlier windows, and supplied their places with others having increased space for painted glass. He altered the Norman triforium by the insertion of arches and splayed jambs within the original openings, thus converting them into windows for the same purpose, and caused "a fair large window" to be made at the West end to illuminate the church. This munificent Abbot doubtless made his church appear more light and glorious by the alterations he effected; and if they were still to be seen in their full beauty, they would indeed be viewed with admiration: but the paintings in glass and on the walls have disappeared; and as upon these, rather than the fabric, the chief cost and care were bestowed, there remains of his generous labours in this decorative portion of his work, very little that can be said to have added to the permanent splendour or the interest of the architecture.

This church was preserved from the mischances which befel so many other Norman buildings of the noblest class. We have seen with what consummate ability the foundations were planned and constructed, so as to preclude the most remote probability of accident in that part of the work; and in rearing upon them the walls and pillars, equal attention was paid to strength and soundness. The usual recourse to concrete or rubble-work, faced on either side with well finished masonry, was out of the question in the present instance, the walls consisting almost wholly of brick and cement, and showing in places through which openings have been broken at different periods so firm and consolidate a mass as to excite no surprise at the absence of such flaws as have in other buildings ended in ruin. It is very remarkable that whilst so many of our grandest churches should have been partially rebuilt in consequence of the falling of their towers, or required strengthening to secure them from impending danger, this of St. Alban should not even, at this distant day, betray a defect either from an inequality in the settlement of the

larger piers, or from any imperfection in the construction or workmanship. The industry of eleven years was expended in its erection, a longer time than was allowed to others of perhaps rival magnitude, and with more finely finished architecture; and this may in some measure account for their insecurity, it being evident in several of our Cathedrals that the walls gave way before they had attained half their height; but the confidence of the workmen seems not to have been shaken, and the result justified the experiment, at least in those examples which have come under notice. In some instances, as in the lantern tower of the Norman choir of Ely Cathedral, and the Western tower of the Cathedral of Hereford, the whole structure fell into ruins, the former during the prelacy of Bishop Hotham in the fourteenth century, the latter so recently as the year 1786. The substitute for the one is so very magnificent that the Cathedral cannot but be viewed as having gained by the accident; in the other instance no attempt was made to supply the loss with any thing worthy to be associated with so dignified a specimen of Norman architecture.

It is certain that the walls of St. Alban's Abbey could not have endured the processes of excavation which were so freely inflicted in their very centre if they had been differently composed. Trumpington's improvements were of a kind not to be completed without these trials of the strength of their brickwork and *indissoluble* cement. Piercings similar to those which remain to be described do not appear in the walls of other Norman churches, to the concrete or rubble composition of which a comparatively slight ashlar, without deeply inserted bonds, is generally found to be attached, as at Norwich, where the average depth of the masonry is 5 inches, in walls as many feet in thickness.

Perhaps the duration of the Norman church in its complete condition exceeded the term usually allotted to Ecclesiastical structures of so high a rank. A new order of architecture having gained the ascendancy before the

building had sustained any visible impression from age, it could not be left without an augmentation of splendour by the introduction of the pointed style; and the West front was fixed upon to exhibit the essay of improvement, an exception to the common practice of antiquity, which was to begin with the Choir.

The alteration of the Eastern extremity followed the completion of the Western; and when the Norman edifice had so far yielded its sober dignity as to satisfy the ardour of its earlier Abbots by the increased magnificence given to its design, their successors in the fifteenth century found no inducement to project any alteration affecting the symmetry of the pointed architecture which had replaced the older style, and happily so little to diminish still further the yet considerable remains of the primitive building, that it was left with but few memorials of their taste and liberality.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NORMAN CHURCH.

Two remarkable features in the design of this magnificent structure, which was perfectly symmetrical, attract attention—the unvaried extent and altitude of the Nave and its aisles, and the number and order of the chapels attached to the transepts, and opening into the aisles of the Eastern portion of the choir. The former of these characters remains unchanged; but, as an architectural composition, the general design has been materially impaired by the loss of the stately bulk of building with which the front was once distinguished.

The variety and combination of the component members of this Church were very striking; it was grand in form and vast in all its dimensions: but the severe style of its architecture admitted of none of those accessory embellishments which in other churches of less pretension to extent

added elegance and richness of effect to the various elevations.

The buttresses denoting the bays and terminating the angles are broad, and stand but little in advance of the walls, to which their additional strength might be regarded as superfluous.

A staircase in the Western angle of each transept required a crowning turret; but the love of uniformity, prevalent as was its influence, was not sufficient to occasion the introduction of similar turrets on the corresponding angles: these additions were made in a subsequent age without any attempt at agreement either in figure or proportion with the originals.

A single feature in the form of a turret rose above the long length of parapet on the North side of the nave, over a staircase constructed, as before remarked, in the upper part of one of the piers, and receiving light from a small loop on the inside. The situation is singular, but the purpose was convenient, as the steps led from the floor of the triforium to the gallery in the clerestory, and thence to the roof, as its only accessible point from the interior.

We pause in our attempt to realise the many important features of which the church has been deprived at its two greater extremities. It has lost much in every direction, and, what is very remarkable, nearly the whole of the abridgments were made in the palmy ages of the Abbey: the aspiring form of its gables and roofs from East to West, and from North to South; the steep roofs of the aisles, and those which clustered around the Sanctuary, more lofty and fleet in their form than any of the others.

We cannot refer to any church that has been spared, at least in our own country, as presenting what we should regard as a near resemblance to the pile which we may conjecture as having existed at St. Alban's; but without excessive strain of invention, we may picture in our minds, as rising upon the foundations which have been discovered towards

the West, a grand and simply formed façade of expansive proportions, supported and extended by towers, altogether not generally unlike the prouder front of the splendid but melancholy ruins of the Priory Church of Castle Acre; and, towards the East, the bold circumference of the great apse, releasing itself from those of the aisles and chapels, as the central and pre-eminently grand feature of an uniform design. Without calling into view the minor objects which embellish these leading outlines of the Norman fabric, we think the observation should not be omitted that, owing to the complete detachment of the Church from the buildings of the Monastery, its just appearance and perfectly good effect have been seriously impoverished.

The entire structure rose from the ground on the outside, without any member in the form of a plinth; but it may be here observed, that there is a coarse and very unequal projection of the kind, on the inside, extending along the Norman walls as far as they remain perfect.

Each entire range of windows has a string-course of brick under the sill, and the upper, or clerestory, a similar member to receive the springers of the arches. The uniform level of the windows preserved the parallel arrangement of these horizontal lines throughout the exterior; and the wall above most probably terminated with an overhanging cornice of brickwork, overlapped by the eaves.

The walls of the apsidal chapels had buttresses for the sake of effect, and the great Eastern semicircle is not likely to have been without a similar distinction: but its foundation does not remain, it having been destroyed, together with much of the Eastern wall of the aisles, for the sake of numerous interments.

The walls of the church are reduced in thickness on the several stages, the difference is slight and unequal, but it occurs inside and out, the chief reduction having been made in the space between the springing moulding of the clerestory windows and the wall over.

The upright line of the walls is preserved throughout

Section of the clerestory wall.

their height, which measures 68 feet 3 inches, from the original pavement in the nave; but this is not the case on the exterior of the Lantern tower, the sides of which, up to the belfry-stage, are pyramidal, while those above are perpendicular: the contignation is abrupt, and perhaps not altogether pleasing in the general appearance. The characteristic buttress preserves the angles below, but the circular turrets above, completing a portion of the design of greater simplicity than the rest, were carried up to their terminations without any change of form, and perhaps with little altitude: but these and the present parapet are the only abatements from the perfection of this interesting feature of the building.

Pursuing these general remarks upon some of the more interesting forms which have reference to the construction or the combination of the various members of the plan and elevations of this church, we observe that it is not precisely of one width from East to West. The measure within the walls Westward of the tower is 74 feet 2 inches, and Eastward 76 feet 8 inches: this disparity occurs in the aisles: the present difference between the clear width of the Nave and the Sanctuary having been made at the time of the alteration of the latter: the inner surface of the Norman wall was then removed, in order to give space for the recesses of the pointed arches, and for the completion of the rest of the design. It is obvious that unless the alteration had been performed in this manner, the breadth of the Sanctuary would have been contracted by the addition of pillars and arches; as it is, it is enlarged by about 3 feet 3 inches between the upright of the walls.

The lantern tower is an oblong square, 32 feet 3 inches × 30 feet 9 inches, inside, owing to the width of the transepts; this, and other departures from minute accuracy in setting out the plan, are imperceptible and unimportant to the good effect of the building.

Many of the smaller arches are curved with an irregularity not uncommon in Norman architecture of more elaborate design and of superior material. In numerous instances the form is so exceedingly distorted as to constrain us to believe that they were turned over the openings without the assistance of wooden centres, or at least with frames so rudely prepared as to have occasioned the conspicuous deformities observable in almost every direction. The four great arches of the Tower, which consist partly of stone, are perfectly shapen, and exceed the semicircle; a figure which improves their appearance: a similar elevation of the chord line above the impost-moulding has also been given to nearly all the other arches throughout the structure.

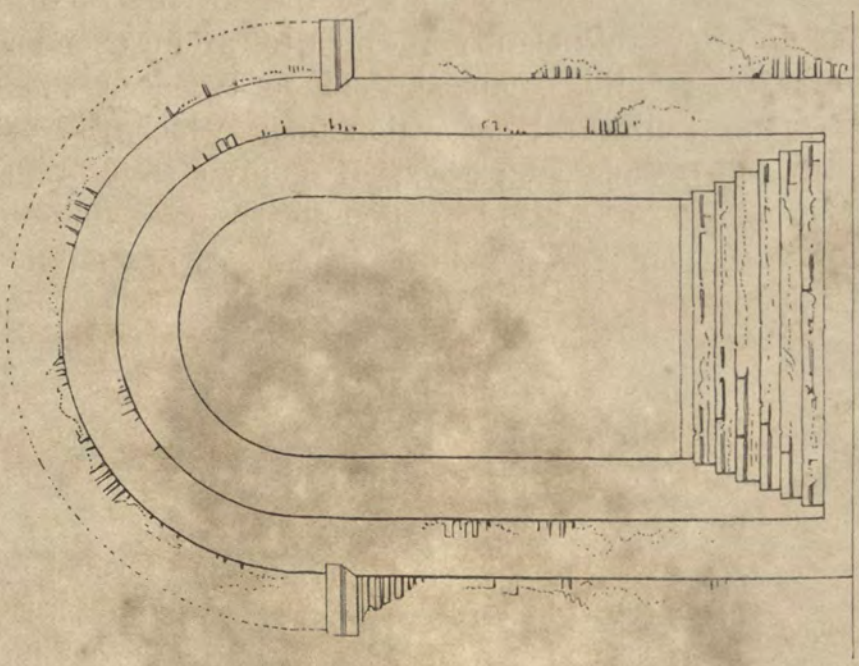
The interior length, from the wall of the West front to the Western arch of the tower, measures two hundred and seventy-six feet, the bays or divisions being formed by piers of great solidity, with facing-shafts or pilasters carried up in the nave to receive the principal timbers of the roof, and in the aisles to sustain the arches of the brick vaulting.

The commanding aspect of the Norman design is pre-eminently displayed in this part of the interior, where alone we have the opportunity of viewing in all their pristine simplicity the complete arcades, tier above tier, ascending from the pavement to the lofty height at which the roof is sustained, and in conjunction with these appear the noble arches of the tower elevated upon piers, which rise to the third stage in corresponding plainness of figure. The more fascinating architecture which has superseded so much of the original, and is presented to view at the

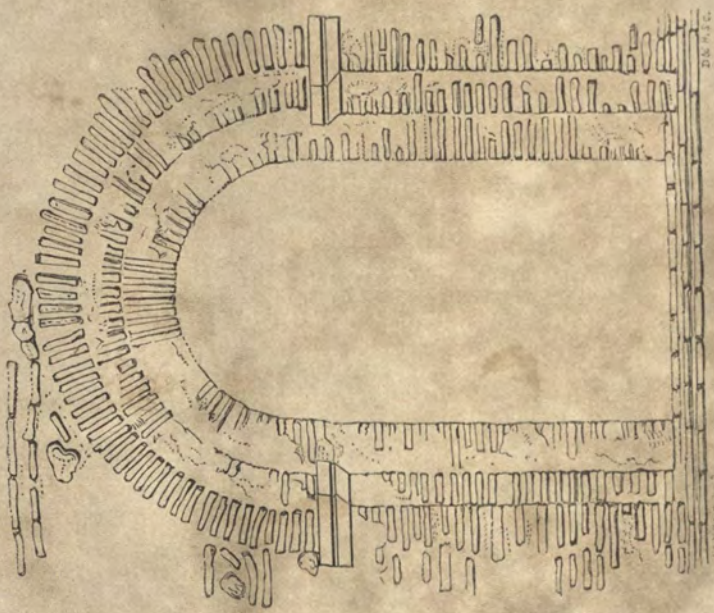
commencement of the nave, may for a time divert attention from the venerable remains of the earlier structure, the deeply interesting claims of which to careful examination will be readily admitted. There is not a single moulding or sculptural decoration upon which the eye can rest, and the plain surface derives only a slight relief from the pilasters and indented angles of the different apertures, the bulk of the fabric being clearly exhibited in the profiles of the piers and arches, which are at right angles with the plane of the walls. Good proportion is the merit of the design, and the evidence of sound judgment in the architect, who has regulated with the utmost skill the heights and widths of the bays, and the several stages of which they consist.

The bays, or divisions, of the Transepts are formed by pilasters attached to the piers of the arches, and between the windows, in accordance with those of the nave; and as the height of the interior is, or was originally, the same throughout, the triple stages into which it is formed for the aisle arches, the triforium, and the clerestory, are uniformly arranged, a character maintained in all the subordinate parts of the design, except the triforium.

Many examples of the original windows remain in perfect preservation, those in the upper tier were less deeply recessed than the larger windows on the lower range. The size of the bricks determined the breadth and depth of the retreating members of the arches and jambs; the outer circle is formed in some instances with a single ring, and in others with two, the whole compactly and regularly constructed and most firmly bonded. The sill-cornices in both instances are of brick, but the impost-moulding of the aisle windows is of stone. The sill is stepped on the outside: no precaution was taken in the construction of this part of the work for the exclusion of the weather, and the interior was at least as neatly protected from its effects as at the present day.



Interior elevation of the windows in the north transept.



Exterior elevation of the windows in the north transept.

Ecclesiastical architecture does not present a more plain model than this: it is wholly unrelieved by the lighter features which in general embellish Norman edifices built of materials selected under different circumstances: there must also have been an unusual share of simplicity in the Sanctuary, or portion Eastward of the Choir; but it is no longer possible to describe this part of the church as it appeared when in full possession of its primitive character.

THE CHOIR AND SANCTUARY.

We will endeavour, with the assistance of the various remains extant, to give some account of what we believe to have been the original design of this part of the structure.

In the genuine Norman plan of Conventual churches, the Lady Chapel seems usually to have occupied a lateral position, and not to have formed the Eastern extremity of the building: its introduction in the latter situation belongs to the design of churches of subsequent antiquity.

An Eastern Lady Chapel was added to this edifice in the fourteenth century, and was the last considerable structural alteration it underwent, in order to complete the entire church according to the most magnificent arrangement, conferring upon it in its remodelled state an extent not exceeded by that of any other now remaining in England, and producing a variety of the most interesting architecture reared on a plan of uncommon regularity, beauty, and elegance.

The Norman Choir had as its centre the lofty area of the lantern, and the space of the four great arches by which it is supported, thus commanding in a single view from the most distinguished and most sacred part of the interior all the chief architectural embellishments of the building. By this noble arrangement a flood of light

was shed from many windows above and around upon the High Altar, which stood isolated at the East end of the Sanctuary, in front of the Shrine, which was canopied by the semidome of the Apse.

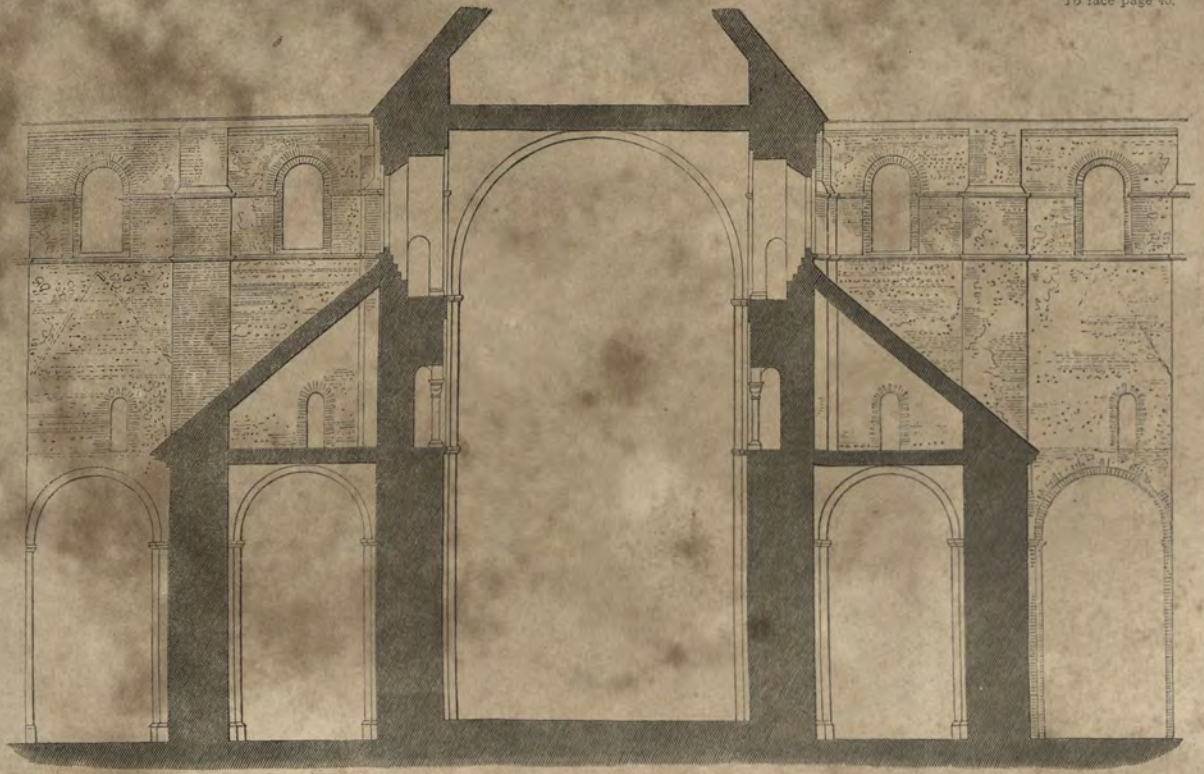
By reference to the ground plan (page 9.), it will be seen that this part of the building presented a most uncommon figure, and it would be difficult to find its parallel in any other Anglo-Norman church in existence.

The elongation of the Sanctuary was remarkable, but it is the entire combination presented to view, of Sanctuary, aisles, and chapels spreading out to the extreme angles of the transepts, to which we would more particularly advert, and for which the East side of each transept was pierced with arches, three in each, on a line with that of the tower in the centre.

These arches are uniform, one on either hand opening to the aisles; the other two, respectively, to apsidal chapels, of which those adjoining the aisles have a greater length than the outermost: these had access only to the Transepts, but a direct opening was formed across the Sanctuary and aisles from the chapel adjoining on one side, to the corresponding chapel on the other. There can therefore remain no doubt that the Stalls once ranged on the sides of the Choir terminated at the pier of the Eastern arch of the lantern, and that these doors at the lower end of the Sanctuary formed the approach for the celebrant and clergy who served at the High Altar, and also provided for solemn processions, besides giving access to the altar of the Holy Cross and to the side altars in the aisles, chapels, and transepts.

The destruction of the apsidal chapels seems to have taken place at different periods: those towards the South in the reign of King Edward II., to make room for a spacious Sacristy; those on the North side survived till the fifteenth century, when they were taken down, and windows formed within the arches, the deep recesses being occupied by the altars, to which had formerly been assigned more retired positions.

To face page 45.

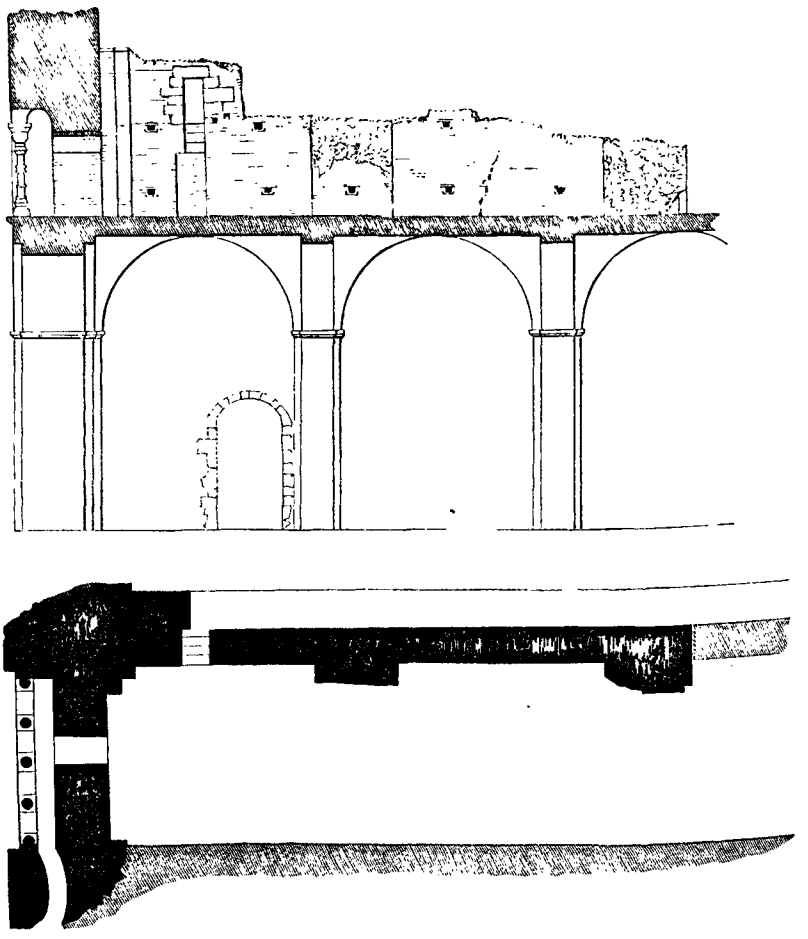


TRANSVERSE SECTION OF THE SANCTUARY AND EAST ELEVATION OF THE TRANSEPT.

It is perhaps a singular coincidence that the interior length, from the arch of the tower to the interior extreme of the Apse, was the same as in the Abbey at Peterborough: the two churches were further similar in having four bays on the sides of the Sanctuary, in which particular Norwich Cathedral also agrees; but St. Alban's presented a character altogether at variance with other known authorities, the vast and most dignified portion of the interior named, having been embraced by walls which formed solid separations between it and the aisles. The parallel walls are of equal length, and terminate towards the East with a mighty mass of foundation carried quite across and joining that of the North and South sides. The bold sweep of the Apse was alone viewed beyond the straight line described, and formed the extreme Eastern feature of the church. No other underground remains have been discovered in the length of the aisles, and the spacious area of the foundation at the East end renders it probable that apses were constructed upon it as shown in the plan, and resembling those remaining in the very interesting church of the Benedictine nunnery at Rumsey, where the aisles are square on the outside and apsidal within. We may remark that the range of the aisles was another point of resemblance in the abbey churches of St. Alban's and Peterborough; but here the comparison must cease between these two examples, which, with respect to age and architecture, differ so materially.

It is evident that the walls of the Sanctuary, though solid, were not left without the appropriate distinction of arches, one in every bay, recessed and separated by pilasters of greater strength than any others within the church, by reason of the weight that was imposed upon them, the roof having been borne up by arches, and vaulted between. In order to avoid the great inequality that would have occurred in vaulting the aisles if the bays of these narrower spaces had been made equal in length to those of the Sanctuary, the subdivisions, although of equal number,

were arranged without reference to the distance between the piers in the latter case; a scheme which could give rise to no discrepancy of appearance, or difficulty in point of construction, on account of their solid separation. It will be seen by reference to the longitudinal section of the South aisle, that the remaining abutment-piers on the exterior of the upper wall take their places beyond the lines of those below, and are based upon the brick vaulting with perfect security. We know of no similar instance in



Plan of the triforium, and section through the south aisle of the sanctuary.

which the Sanctuary was so effectually disengaged from its aisles. The reason is not obvious; but it should be remarked, that the freedom of communication between the Sanctuary and its aisles would scarcely have been greater if, instead of a wall, a screen of limited height had been built within the arches.

The great Apse may be imagined to have presented a glorious appearance as seen from the Choir, the windows disposed in two tiers, with the triforium between, and its ceiling highly enriched with painting, that the fabric might be rendered worthy to contain the precious Shrine which stood in the centre, immediately beyond the High Altar; a position still retained by the shrine of St. Severin, in the polygonal apse of the grand church in Cologne, under his patronage.

There was no distinct Feretory in the Norman church of St. Alban, as the Shrine originally stood within the Apse; but, in the thirteenth century, the length which had been assigned to the Sanctuary was divided, the Western portion being dedicated to the performance of the sacred functions, and the space beyond appropriated to the shrine.

The effect of the Apse must have been most solemn and imposing, and we may here add to the description of its architecture a few remarks upon the splendid objects which it contained, and which are recorded by Matthew Paris.

In the midst stood the High Altar, with its superb frontal* of carved work inlaid with metal, executed in the

* "In the time of Abbot John, by the industry and lawful seeking of Master Raymund, the prior, and Brother Roger de Park, the cellarer, a great frontal was made (of which part is of metal, and part of wood, most elaborately finished), which is before the high altar in our Church: also two texts of silver gilt, on one of which a cross, with a crucifix, and Mary and John, are figured; but on the other the Majesty, with the four Evangelists, is engraven in elegant chasings, by the mechanical skill and diligence of Brother Walter de Colchester, who, at the persuasion and advice of Brother Ralph Gobion, by a happy omen took the habit of religion in our Church. Also by the hand of his brother

time of John de Cella; the sumptuous Shrine of St Alban appeared over it, with shrines of numerous relics around, and from above was suspended the Blessed Sacrament, in an exquisite pyx, the pious gift of Abbot Simon, canopied by the well-poised dome, displaying its pictured vault.

The description of the splendid Shrine made early in the twelfth century, as given by Matthew Paris, is too interesting to be omitted.

"Abbot Geoffrey, in the fifth year of his prelacy, commenced a glorious shrine of marvellous workmanship, for the Blessed Alban, our patron: and when he had expended sixty pounds upon it, he discontinued the work, and left it unfinished until he could renew it with fresh vigour. . . . . Returning, therefore, from this digression to the matter from which we lately turned aside, let us declare somewhat more fully that the Shrine of St. Alban was wrought and finished by the said Abbot. For he had commenced it as before said, and laid out upon the same work sixty pounds or more: and whereas a time of great scarcity ensued, and a dearth of food in one year, so that in summer corn was sold for the sum of twenty shillings, Abbot Geoffrey commiserating the distressed,

William a painted tabula was completed in front of the altar of the Blessed Virgin, with a super-altare carved, and a cross placed upon it; and painting on the wall above, and at the sides, exceedingly skilful (the said Ralph himself affording the necessary means for this purpose). Also all the frontals before the altars of our church, that is to say, of St. John, St. Stephen, St. Amphibal, St. Benedict. By the hand, also, of his brother and disciple, Master Simon the painter, the frontal of St. Peter and St. Michael; also by the hand of Brother Richard, nephew of the above Master William, and son of Master Simon. The frontal of the altar of St. Thomas (upper and lower) was accomplished partly by his own hand, and partly by that of his father. The frontals, also, of St. Benedict, with many other carvings and paintings, were executed by the labour of those above mentioned (not in the time of the said Abbot John, be it recorded, but in after times), to the honour and adornment of God's House. For this reason we have prolonged these writings, that they might be committed to undying remembrance; so that although we are in no wise ungrateful, the memory of those who, by their studious application, left behind them works ornamental to our Church, might survive with blessings."

pitied and compassionated the poor, who were perishing with hunger (as one who always bore bowels of compassion towards the afflicted): he had the plates of silver stripped off, but they were not as yet gilt, with certain jewels set in them, and he turned them all into money, and therewith he commanded food to be bought, that the poor, who were famishing with hunger, might be fed. And it came to pass, that he who, for the love of Christ, who said 'As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me,' put a stop to the work he had begun, the Lord multiplied his power, and increased the faculties pertaining to the Abbot, so that he, who before seemed to beg, in all things abounded to the utmost. And in the twelve months following the year produced great plenty, so that the Abbot was not as before importuned by the extreme want of the poor. Therefore having collected money, he more diligently and effectually pursued the work of the shrine; and it came to pass that, by the exertions of Anketil, a monk of this church, the work was so prospered and despatched, that it excited the admiration of beholders. And he made it of hammered work raised and brought out, and he filled in the hollows with cement, and completed the elegance of the whole body of the shrine by a steeply raised ridge, and this still further beautified the whole affair.

"He did not complete the cresting at that time, waiting a more convenient opportunity, which might abound more largely in gold, and silver, and jewels, whence the delay from many emergent causes, as the daily increasing malice of the world occasioned, he suspended the work for his whole lifetime, and beginning to build, did not engage to finish what he had undertaken. But he had undoubtedly purposed to make that cresting so handsome and sumptuous that it would have emulated the beauty of the whole, and it would be of more value than the remaining covering of the entire shrine.

"And when all the parts of the shrine were thus handsomely executed, he had the whole richly gilt, so that they rather appeared to be of gold than silver. And when from the ancient treasury of this Church jewels for the decoration of the shrine work were brought forth, certain large stones were produced which we call Sardonyx, and more commonly Sardine, and one stone which was of such size that it could scarcely be held in one hand, nor was there another found worthy to be compared with it or to be embodied in that work.

"Which stone, moreover, we hold by the gift of King Etheldred, the father of Edward the most pious king of England. . . . . The Shrine, therefore, being made, Abbot Geoffrey diligently urged the Translation, as will be related in that which follows.

> "These things were done in the twenty-ninth year of the reign of King Henry, on the 4th of the nones of August.

"Furthermore, as the solemnity of the translation could not be duly celebrated on the day of his translation, on account of St. Peter ad Vincula, on which day the translation was actually made (because it so happened by reason of a necessity which then required it), he appointed, by the provision and unanimous assent of the convent, that the festival of the translation of the Blessed Alban should be kept on the morrow of that solemnity which is of St. Peter.

"In the presence, therefore, of Alexander Bishop of Lincoln, and the Abbots Walter of Eynesham, formerly Prior of St. Alban's, and Robert of Hornsey, and the Abbots Elias of the church of the Holy Trinity at Rouen, and Andrew of the church of Nogent, with the whole Convent of the monastery of St. Alban, besides other Religious clergy, a large number assisting, the very ancient tomb of the martyr was opened. But inasmuch as a

certain community in Denmark*, and at Ely† in England, mendaciously asserted that they possessed the body of St. Alban entire, or a part of the body, therefore before all who were able to attend, in the presence of the multitude, all the bones of the martyr were numbered, and shown one by one. And the head was lifted up in the sight of them all, in the hands of the Venerable brother Ralph, then Archdeacon of this monastery: it was found to have

* "Hujus quoque abbatis tempore, debacchantibus Danis in Anglia, qui superficiem terræ cooperuerant, inæstimabile facientes exterminium, et ad Sanctum Albanum hostiliter venientes, cum audissent quod Angliæ protomartyr extitit famosissimus: ossa ejus, fracta capside, rapuerunt, et in suam regionem detulerunt. Et ea ibi veneranter in feretro precioso, ad hoc specialiter fabricato, reposuerunt in quadam domo Religiosorum, scilicet monachorum nigrorum, ut sicut in Anglia sic in Dacia conformiter venerarentur. Sed quia non placuit Sancto ibi commorari, sed potiùs ubi sanguinem suum pro Christo fudit, suam procuravit repatriationem."—*Matthew Paris, in vitâ Vulnothi, quarti Abbatis Ecclesiæ Sancti Albani.*

† "Ipsis quoque diebus, præmatura morte surreptis Rege Cnutone, Haroldo, Hardecnutoque filiis suis, in sceptris agebat Rex Edwardus piissimus ac Deo acceptissimus. In cujus tempore, se præparaverunt Dani, cum Rege suo, hostiliter Angliam intrare, ipsam feraliter vastaturi, vel suo denominatui subjugaturi. . . . . Abbas igitur Alfricus, fecit reliquias Sancti Albani, muro quodam salvo et secreto, cum feretro recondi, scilicet sub altari Sancti Nicholai: paucis conscîis de fratribus electis personis gravibus et honestis. Misit autem ex industria in propatulo ad Abbatem et Conventum Elyensem, petens humiliter, ut penes se reliquias Sancti Albani, donec pace reddita reposcerentur, reservarent. Erat enim eorum insula intransmeabilibus circumdata paludibus et arundinetis; unde hostium incursus, nequaquam timuerunt. Veruntamen Abbas sicut vir prudens et circumspectus, fraudem hominum pertimescens, ne fortè cupiditate obcæcati Elyenses, ipsi Abbati contradicerent requirenti, si ipsas veras reliquias committeret eis reservandas, transmisit illuc cujusdam monachi sancti reliquias, in capsida pretiosa, ac si essent ossa ipsius Martyris Albani, veras ejus reliquias in prædicto muro, ut dictum est, reservanda. Hujus intentionis prudentia, ut si fortè pars adversa supervenientium barbarorum prævaluisset, et thesauros Sancti Albani perscrutarentur eis opinio relata de prædicta asportatione satisfaceret, et furorem compesceret. Erat enim in Ely, cum dicta capside, multa Ecclesiæ Sancti Albani ornamenta asportata, et ut verum videretur, quòd reliquiæ beati martyris illuc certissime transportarentur, quendam panniculum villosum, qui Gallice *villuse* dicitur, dictus Abbas Alfricus cum memoratis ossibus involutis, in ipso fecit transportari, asserens ad cautelam, ipsum fuisse Beati Amphibali, Beati Albani Magistri, camicallam."—*Matthew Paris, in vitâ Alfrici undecimi Abbatis Ecclesiæ Sancti Albani.*

a little scroll of silken thread attached to the hinder part, and inscribed in very ancient characters of gold, *Sanctus*, that is to say, *Albanus*. The venerable King Offa had indeed placed a golden circlet around the skull, engraven with these letters, *Hoc est caput Sancti Albani Anglorum Prothomartyris, Amen.* Subsequently, however, this circlet was destroyed, as it is said, for the sake of the material towards the fabric of the shrine: but another was made, the Abbot being indignant, that it might supply the place of the former.

"But this public translation could not have been made if (as iniquity flatters and falsely persuades itself) by stealth the body had been retained by those of Ely, and another substituted in its place in the shrine. For in theft seldom is any thing done either orderly or deliberately; whereas the manifold signs which St. Alban works, and which he has many times renewed, are exercised in the place where he shed his blood for Christ, a clear testimony which they cannot allege."

Matthew Paris has also given the following account of the magnificent and costly character of the new Shrine set up by Abbot Simon towards the close of the twelfth century: —

"This Abbot Simon, of pious memory, prudently and wisely began to amass most diligently a great treasure of gold, silver, and precious stones, and undertook to make, by the hand of the most incomparable artist, Master John the Goldsmith, the outer shrine which we call the Feretrum, (than which, from that time, we have seen none more excellent,) and within a few years he happily completed so laborious, sumptuous, and skilful a work. And he set it up in its more exalted place, that is to say, above the High Altar, in front of the celebrant, that as before his face, so also in his heart, whoever was celebrating Mass at the same altar might have the memory of the martyr.* And

* The shrine of St. Swithin, in Winchester Cathedral, after the alteration of the Norman apse, from the appearance presented by the

on that account, as an object of the sight of the celebrant, the martyrdom of the same, that is to say, the decollation, is figured. But around the shrine, to wit, on the two sides, he had the course of the life of the Blessed Martyr, which was the earnest and preparation of his passion, plainly portrayed in relieved figures of silver and gold of raised-work (which is commonly called embossing). But at the head, which faces the East, he reverently placed the Crucifix, with images of Mary and John, and divers jewels in most comely order, and in the front towards the West, an image of the Blessed Virgin, sitting on a throne, holding her divine infant on her lap, in relieved work, within jewels and precious ornaments of gold. And, in like manner, the order of the martyrdom being set forth on both sides of the ridged top, the shrine rises into a crisped and artificially wrought cresting. It is beautifully squared on the four corners with open towers, with marvellous bosses of crystal. In this, therefore, which is of wonderful magnitude, the shrine of the martyr (which is, as it were, its inner part, and that wherein his relics are reserved) made by Abbot Geoffrey, is suitably enclosed.

"Of the six wax lights appointed by Abbot William to burn around the shrine of St. Alban:—

"For the lighting of which, and to increase the honour of the martyr, the said Abbot William appointed that the six wax tapers should be lighted on those feasts which are celebrated in copes, and especially on the principal days; for the maintenance of which, he assigned, with the consent of the convent, a mark to be received of the house at Binham, instead of the pickle which we were accustomed to receive annually."

The following passage contains a description of the

dismantled Feretory, seems to have been elevated upon a platform, against the stone screen whose superb arcade adorns the eastern aisle, the shrine being approached on either side by an ascent of steps, and the altar standing in the centre beneath it.

Shrine of St. Amphibal, through whose ministry St. Alban received the Faith of Christ, and his nine companions; the invention of their relics, which were borne in a solemn procession of the whole convent to the Church of St. Alban, happened in the year 1177.

"In the year of the Incarnation of our Lord, 1186, by the command of Warren, Abbot of the Church of St. Alban, by the Sub-prior of the same church, Adam the Cantor, Gilbert and Baldwin the Sacrists, and Roger de Spittle, Keeper of the relics of St. Amphibal and his companions, the aforesaid relics were translated on the 8th of the kalends of July, from the coffer in which they were first placed under Simon the Abbot, into a new shrine prepared for this purpose, splendidly adorned with gold and silver of unrivalled workmanship, to the honour of the same martyrs, and the glory of the house of God. Which wonderful shrine a certain middle partition divides interiorly, and in that part whose front on the inside exhibits the passion of St. Amphibal are reserved the relics of the martyr himself and of three of his companions, who were found buried together, each in separate wrappings; but in the remaining part the relics of his six other companions, who were found buried apart, each wrapped up in separate ligatures. But in the coffer which before contained the said relics, a small portion of the same remained, together with a considerable number, of venerable bodies, becomingly placed there from reverence. And that coffer, with another like it, was placed in the Presbytery, upon the wall, at the right side of the High Altar: in the other are placed the minute particles of the dust and bones (into which dust it is believed that the flesh of the holy martyrs was converted, as it was found in their tombs with the bones)."

ALTERATIONS BY JOHN DE HERTFORD.

WHETHER Trumpington's work at the East end of the Sanctuary was limited to interior embellishments, or extended to the alteration of the main forms of the structure, cannot now be known, although it is likely, from the circumstance of his translation of the Shrine of St. Amphibal from the East end, that he had some intention of eventually remodelling that part of the Church: but the High Altar retained its place in the Apse until his successor, John of Hertford, undertook the entire alteration of the Sanctuary; the preparation for which was no less than the destruction of one half of the length of the building, which was pulled down close to the centre pier on each side; and as the higher range stretched beyond the lower, the dislocation of the Norman structure was made in such a manner as to leave the former, with the wall above, in an overhanging position, the new work being attached to the upper part with a perpendicular joint which was never disguised: in the lower part it was underbuilt with columns of such a form as to evince that an extension of the plan had not been overlooked at the outset of the alteration, entirely as it was laid aside before the design had attained completion. The concatenation presented by the union of the works of different periods in the position referred to on the South side is very striking.

Although the extent to which the Norman Sanctuary and its aisles had been partially altered, previously to their almost total obliteration, cannot be ascertained, it is obvious that the bay, distinguished by the monument of Abbot Wheathamstead, had sustained a change of design which was extended to the aisle, and the care with which the wall now appearing over the canopy was embellished with arches, columns, and highly sculptured capitals, renders the idea probable that the Sedilia were placed against the lower part of the wall towards the Sanctuary: these

however, were subsequently destroyed, but the elegant arches and groining, which claim the age of Trumpington, still remain. This alteration was performed with studied regard to the proportions of the Norman aisle, two bays of which were left entire on account of the adjoining Lady chapel which he had recently beautified: a slight additional height was given to the groined roof, without infringing upon the level of the triforium over, and consequently the arch assumes a more depressed form than that which was adopted at a subsequent period.

The springers of groins on the outer columns of this bay, stretching towards the East, confirm one of two suppositions, either that the architecture of the same age once extended further in that direction, or that it was designed to have done so: it is, however, certain that the almost entire rebuilding of the Sanctuary was effected a few years later, when the springers of antagonist groins were planted upon the columns in close connexion with those before named, as if John of Hertford had meditated the extension of the work Westward. By carrying the groining of the roof to a loftier pitch than his predecessor had chosen to do, he unavoidably opened to view the space over the ancient vaulting, and to enclose the unsightly chasm, he built a wall upon an arch, resting its abutments upon the springers of the earlier groins, and thus the building remains, presenting one of the most singular instances of alteration to be found in the pointed architecture of this Church.

The stretch of solid wall on the sides of the Sanctuary was determined by the length of the aisles; and when the time arrived for the demolition of the Apse, and of the whole of the extremity of the building, it became necessary to pull down not merely the end of the aisles, but also the vaulting of two of the bays. This was the extent of the alteration on the South side, but on the North side three of the bays were destroyed; and the foundations of all the Norman walls now uphold the graceful pointed

architecture which immediately replaced the older and more ponderous style. In the execution of this alteration, additional width was given to the aisles by lessening the thickness of the wall on the inside to such an extent that the stone seat at its base falls short of the breadth of the original foundation, which still appears above the pavement in a rude and irregular line of brick and flint work.

In rebuilding the Eastern part of the Sanctuary there could be no necessity to add to the length of solid wall left standing, and much beauty and advantage would be gained to the interior by the introduction of open arches supported upon clustered pillars. We observe how skilfully this design has been executed, and with what admirable precision the bays were formed to agree with those of the Norman aisles, wherein they were previously narrower than in the Sanctuary; but in rebuilding from the foundation the Eastern portion, consisting of three bays, together with the aisles, space was found for more width than could be given to those formed by casing the Norman walls: the disparity is conspicuous, and no attempt was made to conceal it by exact uniformity in the windows of the clerestory. It was found that the walls could well spare a portion of their substance to increase the interior width; and full nineteen inches on each side were removed for this purpose, in order to receive the blank arches with which they were faced, and thus far to complete the regularity of the design now so justly admired.

There can be no question that the chief reason for the alteration of the original East end was the absence of an aisle round the Sanctuary, at all times a more splendid arrangement, but on great festivals almost indispensable for the complete order of a grand procession.

The pillars of the three arches at the East end of the Feretory found a base of ample breadth and solidity in the connecting wall which crossed the Norman church at

the springing of the Apse, and which was not removed very far below the level of the pavement; and it has been discovered that the foundations of the pillars of all the additional work Eastward were strengthened with connecting walls of the same kind, but not so substantial as the Norman, having blocks of masonry mixed with the flint, but no bricks as seen in the other.

The Norman structure was a stubborn subject to be dealt with in the way of alteration, and no attempt could be made to assimilate its sturdy architecture with that of any other period. It presented obstacles not to be overcome in this, as it oftentimes was in other churches, having no title to so curious a history relative to the source whence the materials of their walls were derived: accordingly, the Norman design, wherever it remains, is viewed in bold contrast with the work of later periods: at the West end the union was formed in abrupt vertical lines, but at the East end the architect emancipated himself from all difficulties of the kind, partly by casings of stonework upon the solid brick walls, and partly by demolition, which was the fate of the Apse. This form in Norman churches was sometimes preserved, and largely embellished with the ornaments of pointed architecture; but in many instances, the present among the number, it was wholly removed, and substituted by a straight line of wall, which, in setting out the remainder of the plan, served as a base line, with which the aisles and chapels beyond were aptly squared. The conjecture that the Apse extended beyond the triple arches which once opened from the Feretory to the Eastern aisle is not offered without good testimony; to which it is the more satisfactory to refer, because portions of its foundation wall have lately been discovered, besides which, there has always been exposed to view a fragment of the wall or of one of the piers, carrying on the line of Norman work between the extremes of the Sanctuary, and now forming on the South side the rubble basement of the clustered

pillar at the West end of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester's tomb, and on the North side answering the same purpose at the corresponding extremity of the watching-loft. Thus the length of the sides, from the Tower arch to the chord line of the Apse, is most distinctly defined: the cross-wall, remaining quite entire, formed the tie below the pavement at the base of the pillars of the arch which, with a broad soffit, spanned the Sanctuary at the very entrance of the Apse.

Of the foundation of the Apse itself, only three feet remain on each side beyond the cross-wall just named, and the curve of the semicircle is by no means slightly indicated in the Southern of these fragments. The width of this foundation is nine feet and a half, so that greater precision in its form under ground is scarcely to be expected; but on the North side the width is increased on the inside, as if to serve as an abutment on account of a defect in the soil, or to provide for the support of some additional weight above.

The length of the Sanctuary was sub-divided into four bays, which were sided by the aisles, and thus far the walls formed a solid separation between them, not less than seven feet three inches in thickness. The bays were separated by pilasters of considerable strength, and from these sprang the semicircular arches, which supported the vaulting of brick, and extended to the Apse, which was enclosed with a semi-dome of the same material.

Within the triforium of the Sanctuary, on each side, still appear the Norman walls as they were left at the period of the alteration of this part of the church; very irregular in point of height, and mutilated with an unsparing hand, wherever space was wanted for the addition of any portion of the new work.

The length of these interesting and highly valuable remains is forty-nine feet and a half on each side, and the line of junction between these ancient walls and those

which were built to them in the thirteenth century, is conspicuous within the triforium. They are now very considerably below their original altitude, the outer thickness of the upper portion having been taken down to the sill of the clerestory windows, and the inner to the level of the triforium. On the North side, very little of the original exterior surface of the wall remains, on account of the groining in the aisle beneath; but on the South side it is tolerably perfect, and here, as well as over the North side, we find, in the massy abutment-piers, incontestable evidence that the same length in the Sanctuary, divided into three bays, was formed into four in the aisles. These gloomy and neglected spaces within the roofs of the aisles furnish the architectural antiquary with a variety of curious matter bearing upon the history of the building at different periods.

The Norman fragments are especially interesting, for without them very much must have remained uncertain with respect to the design of the Sanctuary; and with the assistance thus afforded, it can safely be stated that there was a triforium in the thickness of the wall, surmounted by a clerestory, both agreeing in elevation and design with the stages in the Transepts. One of the apertures in the wall of the Norman triforium on each side remains; but it was closed up, and another formed over it to suit the level of the new stage in the pointed style. The area of the Norman triforium was blocked up with the groining of those portions of the pointed architecture of the aisles which were rebuilt, the original spaces being preserved over the bays of the Norman building left standing. Its aspiring arch rises high above the ancient vaulting with which it is connected. The original triforium thus encroached upon was replaced by another in the substance of the wall, upon the re-edification of this part of the Church.

These, and the various additions of earlier date, were made with an extraordinary disregard to appearance, not

that in this situation appearance demanded any particular respect, but it was not shown in places where perhaps it might have been expected. Probably, no other church exhibits so many incongruous junctions with so much refined and stately architecture.

The interior of the Sanctuary was remodelled with consummate skill, and compelled to assume an air of lightness and elegance to which, before, it had been a stranger; but in the aisles, and along the Nave, the different portions of the building were brought together with an abruptness quite inconsistent with the care which was bestowed upon the design and its workmanship.

The monument of Abbot Wheathamstead on the South side, being pierced with an arch, required the removal of a portion of the Norman wall over, but the loftier and more sumptuous sepulchral chapel of Abbot Ramryge on the North side led to a singular alteration. The beautiful open work of the canopy would not have appeared to the utmost advantage in front of a solid wall; the hitherto blank arch was, therefore, pierced by the entire removal of the wall; and, in order to secure both building and monument, a substantial inner member was added to the arch of the thirteenth century, handsomely finished with mouldings of a kind not calculated to conceal the period of the addition so cleverly executed.

The stately monuments which add so much to the beauty and interest of the interior, are, comparatively speaking, of late date, and it was for their introduction in the fifteenth century, that the Norman remains were no less rigorously treated than they had been in the thirteenth.

The design of the present Sanctuary unites the graces of proportion with the most chaste simplicity: the arches are of a more elevated character than any others in the church; and to attain this aspiration it became necessary to carry the walls of this part of the building to a greater height than had been before assigned to them. The raised

ascent to the High Altar was an encroachment upon the Norman walls, and an additional obligation for raising the new work to an equivalent altitude; and the dimension thus acquired admitted ample scope, in bays of more narrow space, for the elegance of form conferred upon the arches in the several stages.

The erection of this beautiful portion of the Church was undertaken by John of Hertford, in the thirteenth century, in conformity with the advancement of the age, rather than in accordance with the prevalent style of that period. It is without sculptural ornaments of any kind; the mouldings are on a plan formed with more regard to depth than breadth, and the slender pillars composing the clusters stand in high relief. The arches of the Triforium are simply cusped, but the lofty windows of the Clerestory are plain lancet-shaped triplets, enclosed by recessed arches highly finished with mouldings, and coëval with the lovely window of geometrical tracery at the East end.

Upon rebuilding this part of the Church an arrangement totally different from that of the original was given to it by the erection of a Feretory for the reception of the Shrine of St. Alban.

It has been already remarked, that the arches on the sides of the Sanctuary were blank; but in the re-arrangement of the design, those of the Feretory were thrown open, and this part of the fabric was super-embellished by more richly moulded arches, and the elongation of the shafts which support the groining over-head. Thus the position assigned to the High Altar at this period is clearly defined: its open screen was fixed to the third cluster of columns from the Lantern, now partly concealed by the monument of Wheathamstead on one side, and that of Ramryge on the other, and remained undisturbed until the present screen was built, the singular position of which may be accounted for, upon the supposition that it was completed before the removal of the High Altar to the place prepared to receive it.

We are readily inclined to believe that, by the removal of the Apse, and the introduction of the three pointed arches, for the purpose of adding to the view the extended range of architecture towards the East, the interior gained considerably in beauty of effect, which was still further increased by the removal of the blank walls on the sides, and the introduction of open arches enclosed with screens. In the course of time these were displaced by the Duke of Gloucester's monument, with its open-work of iron, the magnificent loft of oak, wherein was maintained a continual vigil, and, finally, on the erection of the present High Altar screen, by the screens containing the side entrances into the present Feretory from the aisles. The Shrine retained the same position in this as in the earlier Feretory: the sockets of the six pillars by which it was upheld still remain in the purbeck curb, which measures 11 feet 4 inches in length, 6 feet 9 inches in breadth, and is 13 inches wide.

The gorgeous High Altar screen erected by William Wallingford separated the Sanctuary and Feretory: it is placed nearly in the centre of the second arch from the East wall, and, by its great height and solidity, has destroyed the most wonderful architectural scene the church could have presented in the days of its early prosperity. Its introduction formed one of the most important alterations effected at any period in the arrangement of the interior, and was designed to give seclusion to the Feretory, and to enhance the magnificence of the High Altar, by the increased splendour with which it was accompanied.

It will readily occur to every reader that this screen closely resembles those in the Cathedral of Winchester, and the Priory church of St. Mary Overey in Southwark, and that in each instance it obstructs a prospect which had been studiously called in from the farthest Eastern limit of the Lady Chapel, in order to augment the sublimity of the Sanctuary.

The screen is in three grand divisions: the High Altar

occupied the full width of the central compartment, having a rich dorsal, over which appeared the reredos, consisting of thirteen canopied niches, surmounted by a space of cruciform figure, with a niche on each side, and four over the arms of the cross. The lateral divisions are in three compartments, each with a doorway in the centre communicating with the Feretory, the side spaces being filled by niches crowned with rich canopies: over these are six other niches, in two tiers, carried up to the summit of the cross; the entire elevation terminating in a lofty range of canopied work with a perforated cornice, and originally finished at each angle with a wreathed shaft, of which only fragments exist.

It is impossible to describe the beauty and splendour of the ornaments spread over every part of the design, of which the greater number have escaped excessive injury, though the screen fell a prey to iconoclasm.

The Eastern front presents a design of no ordinary merit: in the centre between the doorways appears a broad arched recess, with a handsome niche over, corresponding with those by which the doorways are surmounted.

The arms of the Abbey and of John of Wheathamstead are introduced among the sculptured enrichments, and the spandrels of the recessed arch are distinguished by figures of angels with thuribles. The entire surface of the screen above is covered with panels uniformly arranged between the buttresses forming the several upright divisions of the design, which is completed with a boldly-projecting cornice similar to that on the front.

The three Eastern arches of the Feretory, to the height of eight feet from the floor, were filled in with a solid stone altar-screen of the thirteenth century, terminating towards the aisle with a moulded cornice five inches in thickness, leaving the recess of the arches and pillars to the interior.

The doorway opening to the North aisle of the Sanctuary from the exterior was inserted at a late period;

and, as if economy were of moment, it was composed of fragments of various ages collected from different parts of the church during the course of alterations, and arranged with much dexterity to produce uniformity. It, however, defaces the earlier architecture with which it is combined, and was designed to supersede the more ancient doorway beneath the graceful window of the adjoining bay, opposite the entrance to the Feretory, which was closed up in the fifteenth century for the introduction of a lofty sepulchral recess.

The description of architecture so complicated as that which composes the design of this part of the edifice cannot fail to be somewhat intricate. In a review of the alterations which were made in the Norman church, it would be impossible to detach the mention of the different kinds of architecture employed; but any obscurity in the minds of those who are not intimately acquainted with the subject in question will be readily obviated by reference to the ground plan, which has been as nearly restored to its original form and proportions as existing traces will permit.

ST. CUTHBERT'S CHAPEL.

No mention of the screen at the entrance to the Choir occurs before the time of Abbot Richard, who, in thanksgiving for a miraculous cure obtained at Durham, built a chapel in honour of St. Cuthbert, on his return to the Abbey. "At the instance of Abbot Simon, the Bishop of Durham dedicated the chapel of St. Cuthbert, which is near the cloister of St. Alban, in honour of the same St. Cuthbert and St. John the Baptist, on the 16th of the calends of June, which afterwards Abbot William repaired and handsomely enlarged; but of this hereafter."

It appears to have consisted of a wall or screen of stone finished with a wooden capping, the altar being raised in the centre, towards the nave. The position assigned to

this erection is the second detached pier from the lantern, but the screen was removed in the thirteenth century by William de Trumpington, who built a more magnificent one, formed so as to inclose the altar. The account is given in the following words:— "It tends moreover to the benediction and eternal memory of the same abbot, that the old chapel of St. Cuthbert, being dilapidated, the upper part of which was at this time worm-eaten, and the bulged wall threatening ruin, he constructed very elegantly a new one of carved stone, with its glazed windows and all other appurtenances; in which he raised an altar, and therewith had the chapel dedicated by Bishop John, in honour of SS. Cuthbert, John Baptist, and St. Agnes the Virgin and Martyr; whence the verse—

> Confessor Cuthberte Dei, Baptista Johannes,
> Agnes Virgo, tribus vobis hæc ara sacratur."

At the same time he made a covered way from the Chapter house to the said chapel, the entrance to the Church being by the Norman doorway on the side of the transept. This cloister was formed of timber, and in order to increase the beauty of that part of the South aisle through which the passage lay, the Norman windows were removed, and others of elegant design on the inside inserted. But the doorway appears not to have been superseded, unless it be supposed that he formed a new one in the wall of the aisle in the place occupied by the later entrance now so pre-eminently distinguished by the richness of its design. The above description, together with these accessory embellishments, leads us to conclude, that the screen and chapel for the sake of which they were made, were well worthy of the age and of the munificence of the Abbot.

Presuming that the Eastern side of the screen stood in the room of the older one, the depth required for the chapel would carry it across the opening of one of the Norman arches on each side, and the greater part of the piers Westward, the figure of the screen resembling those in the Cathedrals of Norwich, St. David's, and Gloucester,

which consist of a front and inner wall a considerable distance apart.*

The screen at St. David's is a superb structure of stone, inclosing tombs and effigies, and brings clearly to view the manner in which St. Cuthbert's Chapel in this Abbey was separated from the entrances to the choir, one on each side, with partition walls pierced and glazed. The chapel was raised of a height sufficient to admit of a chamber over it, which is thus described :—" The same chapel also, rising aloft, above the top (which is commonly called the vaulting †), supplies the deficiency and want of the dormitory. This apartment, containing about twelve beds, admits light by divers windows of glass, by which it is sufficiently illumined; and the summit, composed of well chosen material, is secured by a leaden covering."

The remark evidently refers to that which in other churches forms the rood-loft, although its appropriation in the manner described is very unusual. Access was gained by means of the staircase in the angle of the South transept, thence along the triforium, and through the arch in the third bay on the South side; and in connexion with this part of the subject it may be observed as curious, that the corresponding arch in the triforium on the opposite side was walled up with masonry in order to cut off all communication with the gallery, the recess being towards the loft, and the wall pierced in the upper part with a narrow cross-loop, which on the inside is splayed to the angles of a square aperture.

The floor of the chamber was 31 feet above the pavement of the church, and laid upon seven joists, each 8 inches in width and 7 in thickness, mortised into a plate of oak which still remains at the back of the recess, as well

* This character as to *depth* was occasionally maintained in the chancel-screens of parish churches, as in the early example at Gilden Morden, Cambridgeshire, which is of oak, of slight and elegant construction, open on all sides, and, since the destruction of the rood-loft, at the top. Each lateral inclosure is 7 feet in width, and more than 6 feet in depth.

† Avolta.

as another of nearly the same scantling fixed on the outer edge of the sill of the arch of the triforium. Two beams, about 7 feet apart and 8½ feet from the floor, extended across and supported the roof, and over these were moulded cornices, of which fragments remain. The interior width appears to have been 12 feet.

But the chapel of St. Cuthbert, together with the chamber over, which William de Trumpington had erected, were not permitted to receive the impress of age, for very shortly after the completion of the five most Eastern bays on the South side of the Nave, by Roger de Norton, in the reign of King Edward I., they were removed, and the present beautiful stone screen raised, most probably on the Western boundary of the former.

The altar of St. Cuthbert resumed its uninclosed position in the centre space between the two doorways, as in the original screen built by Abbot Richard.

The present screen is most worthy of the dignified place that has been assigned to it, and of infinitely more respectful treatment than it has experienced at the hands of those who in times past only entered the church for the sake of committing violence upon its most choice embellishments. There is an almost exact uniformity in the design as it appears between the arches on the sides of the Nave: the surmounting cornice is pierced, and the reredos over the altar of St. Cuthbert consists of niches in two tiers, the upper, seven in number, distinguished by their size and ornament. The spaces over the doors leading to the Choir are panelled, and each door is flanked by two niches in harmony with those in the centre; a portion of a third niche remains at the South angle, and an altar having been raised in the reveal of the Norman pier on the North side, the lower part of this reredos was recessed in order to gain space; and a series of small niches, formed under a continuous canopy of groinwork, surmounted by two others more lofty than the rest.

The reduction of the piers, in order to make way for the

screen without encroaching too much upon the free spaces of the arches of the Nave, is no detriment to their appearance, the chasm being supplied with solid stonework faced with handsome enrichments, and carried in a straight line across to the furthest extremities of the piers, thus giving a character of completeness to the alteration not often aimed at, or, if attempted, seldom so successfully performed. By this means several feet were added to the length of the Choir, and it may have been that upon this occasion the stalls were renewed, but no mention whatever is made of them, often as they must have been replaced within the period embraced by the records from which so many other interesting particulars have been derived.

We may be sure that the walls and pillars of the Norman church were not mutilated for the sake of gaining room for this kind of furniture, until the removal of the original woodwork for other of a more refined character, before which time, however, the interior of the church was nearly stripped of its pier-shafts, many in the transepts and aisles being almost wholly obliterated, and others, particularly in the Choir, hacked away: those of the tower piers are pendent twenty feet from the pavement, rudely sloped off, because no doubt hidden by the canopies of the Stalls for the sake of which the alteration had been made.

The extent occupied by the Stalls was from St. Cuthbert's screen at the entrance, to the Eastern arch of the tower; and as the arrangement of this grand portion of the interior was in accordance with that which, with few exceptions, distinguished every great church served by a quire, a screen of slighter construction parted off the Sanctuary at the extremity of the stalls. A solitary instance of the kind has been allowed to remain in perfect preservation in St. David's Cathedral. The fragments of screens in a similar position are occasionally to be seen in the larger parish churches; and it will not fail to be observed that the subdivision referred to, without the distinction of a screen, is faintly indicated in the chancels of the smaller churches,

the sanctuary in these instances being Eastward of that portion occupied by the chancel-seats.

The following extract refers to the Rood-screen raised by William of Trumpington, in the position just named, midway between the High Altar and the altar of St. Cuthbert: — "Also in the time of this Abbot, Master Walter de Colchester, then Sacrist, an incomparable painter and sculptor, erected a loft * in the middle of the church, with its great Rood, and Mary and John, and other carvings and handsome decorations, at the cost of the sacristy, but by the diligence of his own labour. Abbot William solemnly translated the shrine containing the relics of the blessed Amphibal and his companions from the place where it formerly stood, namely, near the High Altar and Shrine of St. Alban, towards the North, to a place in the middle of the church, which is inclosed by an iron railing and grate, the altar which stood there being most handsomely constructed, and the frontal and superfrontal richly painted; and he caused the altar to be solemnly dedicated by John Bishop of Ardfert †, in honour of the Holy Cross, as it had previously been, and also in honour of St. Amphibal and his companions, because their bodies rested there: and he had the same prelate to consecrate the great Rood which was placed over this altar, with its images."

From the above statement it is evident that an altar in honour of the Holy Cross, inclosed by an iron screen, stood at the entrance to the Sanctuary; and it is an interesting confirmatory fact, that the end of the moulded beam of the rood-loft subsequently erected in the same place should still remain in the centre of the pier on the South side.

The general arrangement, which gave great dignity to the Eastern portion of the interior, bears a strong resem-

* Pulpitum.

† "At Ardart, or Ardfert, the capital of the county, and an episcopal see, was a monastery, built in the year 1389, by one of the Fitz-Morrices, English gentlemen, who were barons of Kerry and of Lixnaw."— *Monasticon Hibernicum*, County of Kerry, p. 270.

blance to that of many of the earlier churches. In the famous Basilica* of St. Gereon and the Theban Martyrs in Cologne, the High Altar, elevated by a flight of steps, is brought forward to the entrance into the Choir, and above it is suspended the rood; the stalls are ranged on the sides beyond, in conformity with the primitive plan; and the Apse at the East end forms the Lady Chapel.

"Abbot William also, after he had handsomely accomplished these things, conferred two shrines of gold, in which formerly, before the time of Abbot Warren, were reserved the relics of the blessed martyrs Amphibal and his companions, with those which were contained in them, upon the church of the same in Redburne, from honour and veneration of the place in which these holy martyrs obtained the reward of their sufferings; and he endowed there a perpetual keeper, a watchful and diligent monk, who was night and day with the treasure there reposed, so worthy of such custody." William de Trumpington also built an altar in honour of St. Wulstan the Bishop and Confessor, "near the altar of St. Oswin, hard by the ancient shrine, that is to say, towards the East."

"Moreover, I think it is to be remembered to the increase of the fame of the said Abbot William, that he constructed certain most noble erections around the High Altar, with a kind of beam, on which is represented the history of St. Alban, which surmounts that artificial framing: which most splendid work Master Walter de Colchester (of whom we have already made frequent mention) effected, not without very laborious study and diligent application, the Abbot generously bestowing ample means."

* "In the primitive times, the great churches were called Basilicæ, either because the Basilicæ, which were stately buildings, where the magistrates held their courts, were, upon the conversion of the Gentiles, turned into churches by the Christians, as Ausonius says, 'Basilica olim negotiis plena, nunc votis,' *i. e.* the Basilica, thronged heretofore for business, is now frequented for prayers; or, because they were built in an oblong form like the Basilicæ."—*Sanderson's Description of the Bishoprick, or County Palatine, of Durham*, p. 24.

From the foregoing description of the embellishments added to the Sanctuary, it appears that they consisted of screens of sumptuously wrought oak, lining the walls, and extending behind the High Altar. The elaboration of the design, no less than the skill of the workmanship, excited admiration at the time of its completion, and we may fairly conjecture that the arrangement included the sedilia in the second bay on the South side. The sanctuary of Selby Abbey still retains its lining of ancient oaken screen work, but it possesses nothing of the attractive character which must have distinguished that executed by the masterly hand of Walter de Colchester. There were at this period no canopied tombs on the sides, and what perhaps was then regarded as an impediment to their introduction, namely the solid walls, was in later days viewed as no insurmountable barrier to their erection in so dignified a position. This *splendid* screen, bearing on its summit in expert carving the history of St. Alban, was not long suffered to remain entire, as the Sanctuary was completely remodelled in the succeeding abbacy.

One would imagine, viewing the denuded state of the Choir, that the Stalls were not included in the bargain completed between the sellers and the purchasers of church property, at the time of the Dissolution: at all events, nothing like ancient wood-work remains in the places where so much of an appropriate description, and in keeping with the majestic character of the building, must have appeared.

The present furniture is only remarkable for its meanness.

We are not entirely left without evidence of the splendour of the oak work which this church formerly contained. The watching-loft, the doors in St. Cuthbert's screen, and that on the North side of the Feretory, are admirable specimens. The doors within the central porch at the West end are more highly enriched than those just named, but these are far exceeded by the design of the oak doors in the approach from the cloisters to the

aisle of the Choir, both sides of which are ornamented, each with so much elegance, that it is difficult to decide, whether the claims of the more gorgeous interior finishings surpass those of the less pretending exterior.

EASTERN AISLE.

We have had occasion to observe that the Norman system of building walls across all the openings, in the foundation, in order to tie the whole of the work together for greater security, was sometimes followed by the architects who succeeded; and the extent of this underground work, as lately disclosed within the Eastern aisle, and in conjunction with the Norman, is truly astonishing. The discovery exhibits the plan originally laid down for the design of this most beautiful portion of the structure, which we behold in ruins, not worn out with age, but reduced to its present condition by neglect, degradation, and wanton mischief. It is not surpassed by the magnificent architecture of Godfrey de Lucy, at the East end of Winchester Cathedral, which example it more nearly resembles than any other in England, in dimensions and general arrangement; but it is less ancient, and would have been more gorgeous had it been completed. A change of plan, however, affected this part of the work as it did almost every other, during its progress: two ranges of pillars in the centre, to form triple aisles of equal breadth, in order to correspond with the arches at the East end of the Feretory, were intended, but never erected: springers of stone were provided on the pillars of the arches of the aisles, which were completed with groins of wood; and similar springers were designed to receive a roof of corresponding form and materials over the triple aisles of the centre, but the architect who conceived the plan and carried up the building to this point, suddenly relinquished his intention, and covered the broad space

with a flat ceiling of oak, in square panels, enriched with mouldings, cusps, and carved bosses.

The foundations of the pillars no longer remain entire: the greater part of these, with that of the apse, were uprooted in the fifteenth century, to make room for the graves of the distinguished warriors who were slain in the battles fought in the neighbourhood, between the rival armies of York and Lancaster. We view in the architecture of this part of the building the same regard for the advanced style as exemplified in the Sanctuary itself, but with still further progress towards enrichment The wall under the windows in the aisles had already been distinguished by an arcade elevated upon a stone seat, and a similar feature was introduced throughout the Eastern aisle forming the approach to the Lady Chapel. The arches in the latter instance are highly embellished, and denote, both by their form and mouldings, that the work was in hand at the precise period of transition to a style fully developed in the larger windows over, which exhibit tracery of novel and most beautiful design, in immediate contrast with others, to the simple forms of which there still remained a lingering attachment. The columns which carry the arches across to form the alleys are octagonal and perfectly plain, and with the capitals of the other columns are not of an adequate size or shape to receive the clustered springers of the roof, which were provided, but afterwards destroyed; and upon the determination to change the design in this respect, the capitals were wrought to their present figure.

It should be remarked that in the five aisles planned for this position, and brought so near the point of completion, there would have been no difference in the height of the groining between the centre and the sides; but too little remains to show precisely the manner in which the triple avenues were to have terminated in front of the Lady Chapel. The figure of this portion of the building, as exhibited in the ground-plan, denotes the absence of the

intermediate columns, which were evidently intended at the outset, and omitted in execution to obviate the throng of pillars which would otherwise have obstructed the freedom of the ante-chapel.

LADY CHAPEL.

THE broad arch forming the entrance to the Lady Chapel, and formerly closed by a screen of oak, of which the frame-work and moulded cornice remain, is coeval with the building just described; but, although the elegant chapel itself is of later date, the work was consecutive, and well worthy, by the merit of its design, to form the most Eastern termination of this glorious Abbey Church.

This once resplendent chapel was built by Hugo de Eversden, in the reign of King Edward II., and received a large share of injury at the time of the suppression of the monastery. It remained in a state of ruin until fixed upon as the receptacle for a School of Royal foundation; an assignment which, if it has been the means of saving the roof and the interior from the unchecked operations of the weather, has exposed its rich architectural embellishments within reach, as well as those of the aisles leading to it, to unsparing injury and desecration. Upon the destruction of the canopied stalls which lined the sides of this beautiful chapel, and furnished its interior in the most gorgeous and appropriate manner, the mutilations which had been made for the sake of their introduction, were brought into full view, the piers with their niches, and a portion of the thickness of the wall, having been entirely removed from the floor upwards to a height sufficient to admit the ornaments of the woodwork. The injury to the fabric was doubtless so well concealed, as to excite no regret on account of the impoverishment of the architecture, the design of which had been suited for the reception of stalls of a less lofty and sumptuous character than those afterwards added; but no atonement could be

made for the mischief perpetrated upon the superb Sedilia at the same period, when the chapel adjoining was re-erected upon the ancient foundation.

The lofty niches and panels, with canopies, pinnacles, and a rich display of subordinate ornaments, exhibit the highest attainments of design, and perfection of sculpture, whereof the beauty can scarcely be appreciated at the distance from which it is generally viewed. The characteristic ball-flower was the favourite ornament of the architect: the windows and mouldings in the interior are edged with it, and it once appeared within the bold cornice of the parapet on the exterior. Almost every feature of the detail of this building indicates an advance in richness and variety upon the more dignified style seen in the chapel of Merton College, Oxford, but owing to unskilful restorations, this exquisite specimen of architecture has been materially injured.

The handsome wooden groins of the roof spring from the canopies of niches in the piers: the windows on the sides vary in the design of their tracery, and are remarkably elegant, and uniform in their proportions, the central mullions being enriched with exquisite figures in niches. The arch of the East window, which presents a design of great singularity and uncommon beauty, is more broad and depressed, with an inner arch surmounting the crocketted gable-canopies of the five compartments, which rise from the sides to the centre.

The tile pavement, which was on a level with that of the Eastern aisle, has been entirely removed, and its fragments buried in the soil. It was of the same pattern as the small specimen still remaining in good preservation at the base of the great screen in the Feretory.

The material of the Norman buildings, demolished to make room for this chapel, forms in part the substance of the walls: but it was hidden from view on the exterior by a casing of flint-work, the only example of the kind in the present church. In this, as in every other instance,

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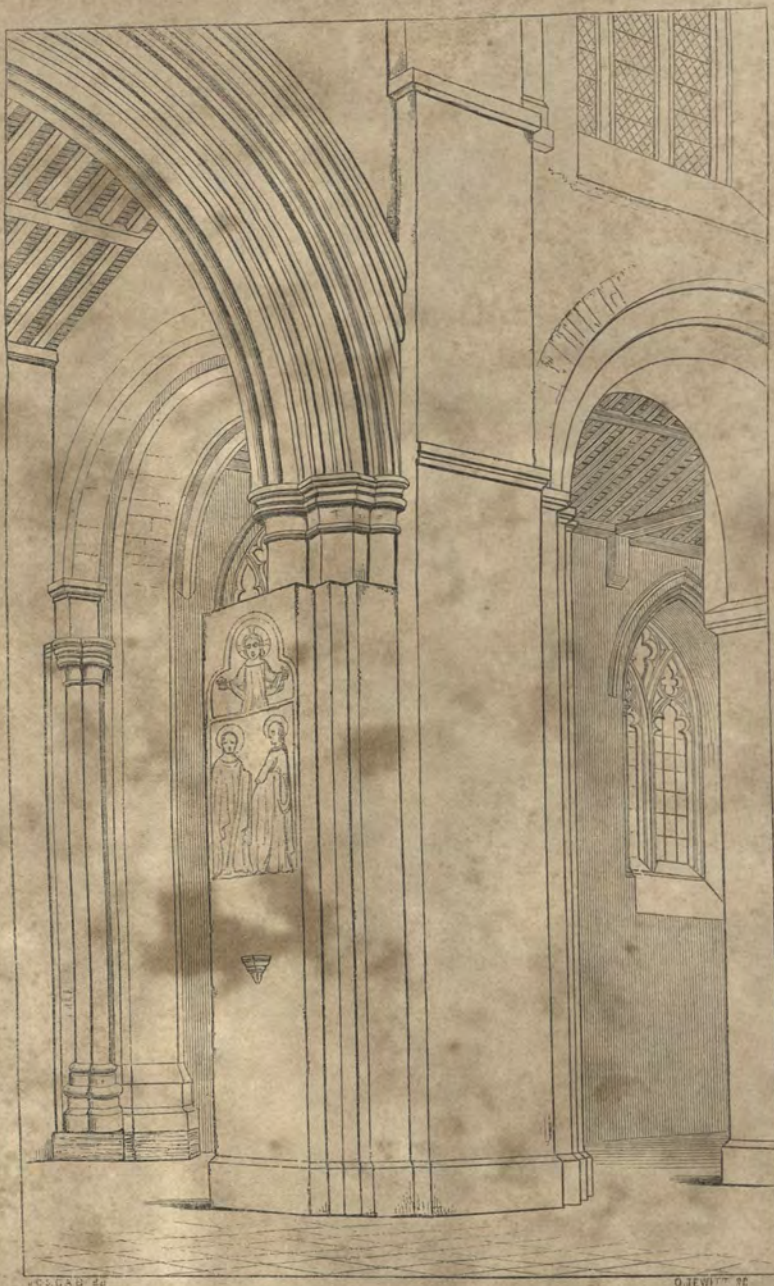


WESTERNMOST NORMAN PIER ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE NAVE.

the work of removing the walls of brick and flint was found too laborious to be carried below the surface upon which the floor was laid. The remains extend over a considerable portion of the area, between the entrance and the centre, and terminate with a broad platform of extraordinary solidity. Further traces of the foundations of Norman walls, taking a South-easterly direction, have been brought to light between the East end of the church and the entrance to the Lady Chapel; but as these vestiges appear to have belonged to structures apart from our subject, and are moreover very much broken, and intercepted by the present edifice, which partly stands upon them, their investigation has not been pursued to a greater extent than was sufficient to ascertain beyond doubt, that the buildings of the Norman monastery approached within a very short distance of the church, both on the East and South sides; and it may be that of the number were some which actually joined the aisle, and among these the original Sacristy, which was on the outside of the church. The East end of the Chapter house stood in an open space, which stretched along its Northern side, and was approached from the cloisters by the covered passage or *slype* in front of the Transept.

THE NAVE.

QUITTING the Eastern portion of the Church, for whose alteration and adornment such a sacrifice was made in the Norman structure, and so many successive Abbots had devoted the various resources at their command, we will direct attention to the changes commenced in the Nave, which, as already observed, was the part of the edifice first fixed upon to exhibit the splendours of a style, fully calculated to cast into the shade the solemn one in which the Church of St. Alban's Abbey had been completed.

Perhaps the wonder is that so much of Abbot Paul's church should have been left standing: its alteration was an undertaking of a gigantic character, and proceeded by slow degrees, and in detached portions, so that the work of improvement was often impeded before the intention of the architect could be fulfilled. These circumstances augment the gratification with which we view the building: it presents a history of Ecclesiastical Architecture, with a rare union of some of its most choice models; but the parent style is still viewed without diminution of its extreme interest.

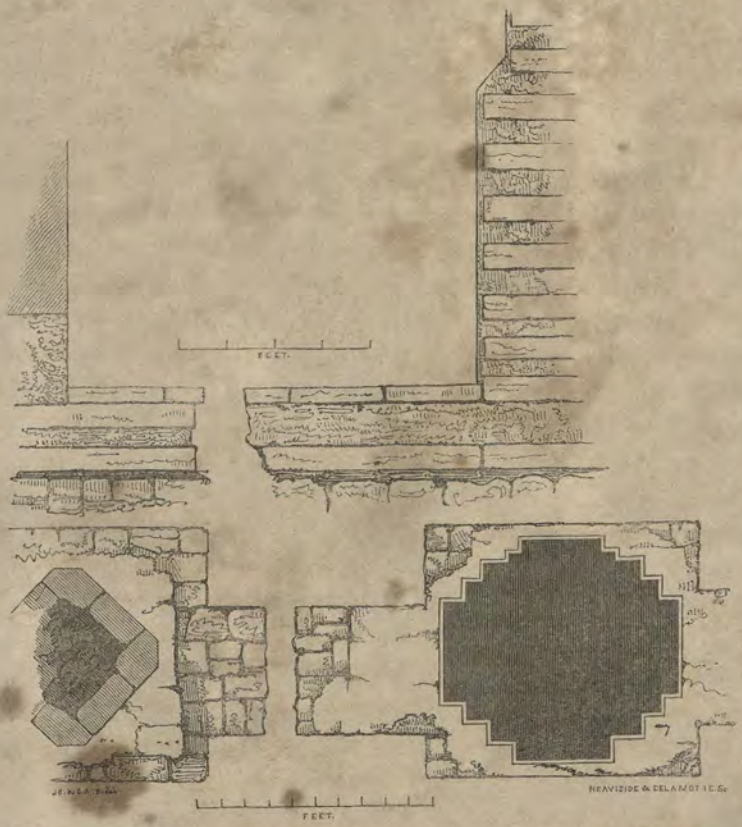
The features of the Norman design are so perfectly plain, that they may be described in a few words: one bay is the counterpart of all the rest, and before the introduction of the pointed architecture, the triple spaces forming the elevation extended in level parallel lines throughout the building: but it will not be so easy to convey an adequate notion of the uncommon grandeur and dignity which appear as the result of the combination of these severely plain forms. The triforium is the middle and least lofty space of the three main horizontal divisions which carry the walls up to their summit; the springing line of the aisle arches, and the string-course at the foot of the clerestory windows, dividing the height into three nearly equal parts.

The width of the principal arches slightly exceeds that of the piers by which they are upheld and separated: those over are less wide in their clear space, and those of the clerestory are very considerably reduced in breadth and increased in altitude, in comparison with the openings which they immediately surmount.

The bulk of the piers of the aisle arches is relieved by the facing piers on the sides and in the reveals, and the retreating character of the rectangular members on the angles. By the union and regular arrangement of all these, the front and soffit have a corresponding width, the plan of the piers being nearly square.

The plinth consists of seven courses of brick upon a layer of cement two inches and three quarters in thickness, under which, and immediately upon the flint wall, was placed a single layer of brick, in order to form a perfectly even surface to receive the work above. The seven courses just named measure nineteen inches and a half in height, the average thickness of the bricks being an inch and a half. The whole of this plinth originally appeared above the pavement, which was laid upon a bed of cement level with that upon which the piers rest.

The similarity between the work just described and that of the hypocaust discovered at Lincoln, and figured



Plan and section of the basement and plinth of the westernmost pier on the north side of the nave.

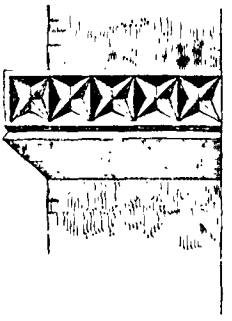
in the "Vetusta Monumenta," vol. i. pl. 57., is very remarkable. Two rows of the dwarf-pillars are circular, the rest square, and the large tiles upon them are placed at a little distance apart. In the upper course they are laid close together, and covered with a thick layer of cement in which the pavement is bedded. A single tile serves for the base of each pillar. That due attention was given to this method of construction at Verulam, will appear obvious upon reference to the preceding figure. Circular pillars were less common than square in Anglo-Roman buildings, a fact which will account for the necessity of increasing that quantity at St. Alban's in order to complete the newels of the stairs.

All the interior arches have impost mouldings, which are intercepted by the pilasters, except in the lower range.

The splay of the clerestory windows, on the inside, admits of broad and lofty arches which have single retreating members, with an impost moulding extending to the piers by which they are separated. The cornice at the foot of this stage is carried round the four great piers at the intersection of the transept with the Choir; and, having a greater substance, forms the impost to receive the springers of the semi-circular arches which sustain the tower. These arches and their supports differ in no respect, as to their retreating surfaces, from those in the Nave; they have no additional members, and are not distinguished by any kind of ornament. The area of these pillars, combined as they are with those of the surrounding arches, and their altitude, present dimensions of extraordinary magnitude, and their perfect simplicity is equally remarkable. The severe reductions they have suffered at the base, have deformed their appearance, but the pressure of the weight of the tower has not occasioned a flaw in any direction, excessively, as its Eastern abutments were lacerated at the period of the alteration of the Sanctuary. The union of this remarkable simplicity

of design with the largest scale of dimensions is without a counterpart in English architecture.

The Norman masons, as we have before seen, were at no pains to give so much finish to their work as would be likely to provoke comparison with the neighbouring mouldings of coated brick; but it is by no means certain that their ultimate intention was not to have improved its appearance, by indenting ornaments on the surface after the stone had been fixed in its position. A single performance of the kind was executed on an impost of one of the arches in the triforium on the North side of the nave, as shown in the annexed figure; but the relief is so slight, and the height so great, that the characteristic ornament of early Norman architecture is scarcely visible from below, and it might have been on this account that it was allowed to remain without repetition.



All the original windows in the aisles were removed in the course of different alterations during the 13th century, and their places supplied by apertures graced with arches, columns, and mouldings, with copious and finely-finished detail. These windows vary in size, and in every instance transgress the limits assigned to the older ones: among the number were many without the distinction of mullions and cusps, in accordance with the lancet style of architecture, but the ornament of tracery was afterwards adapted with equal skill to these as to the still broader arches of the Norman triforium.

There were two doorways in the North aisle of the Nave, separated on the outside by a Norman wall three feet two inches in thickness, and afterwards the boundary of the Cemetery of St. Andrew, the Church having been built at no great distance from the walls of the Abbey. The Eastern doorway is a plain Norman arch of brick,

quite perfect but blocked up; the other, towards the West, forming an entrance to the Church, is still open, and retains its brick arch, but the jambs have been repaired with masonry.

We have now to examine the progress of the various alterations which have obliterated the Norman architecture at the West End, and so much of that on the North and South sides, and have given rise to the introduction of some of the fairest models in the pointed style.

ALTERATION OF THE WEST FRONT.

THE Norman Church did not preserve its primitive character so long as a century from the time of its completion, for, in the reign of King John, the West Front was taken down for the purpose of being rebuilt, and from this period till the final close of the splendours of this wondrous Abbey, may be dated the beginning of those various changes in its architecture effected under the influence of each succeeding style, and which produced the glorious structure now remaining for our admiration and instruction.

It would seem as if the Church reared by Abbot Paul was regarded as having attained the utmost limits of grandeur in all its dimensions, and that an entire re-edification, though it might give scope for the varied ornaments of architecture, could scarcely increase by any augmentation, either of its length or its loftiness, the dignity and magnificence of its proportions.

The destruction of the West End was a bold commencement of innovation upon the Norman structure, and was undertaken by Abbot John de Cella. "He had received from his predecessor, Abbot Warren*, 100 marks, which

* "Abbot Warren, when he perceived that he should soon depart this life, bequeathed one hundred marks to his successor, to renew the front of the Church."

had been assigned and set apart for the work of the Church. He pulled down the wall of the front of our church*, which was compacted of old tiles and indissoluble cement, attending, however, but little to that admonition of which mention is made in the Gospel, that is to say, he who is about to build should compute the cost of those things which are necessary to finish it, lest after he has laid the foundation without being able to complete it, all begin to jest at him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was unable to finish it.'

"He began to bring to the spot timber, and to provide stones not a few, with columns and planks. He assembled a number of chosen masons, of whom Master Hugh Goldclif was the chief, a deceitful but clever workman, and having dug and thrown out the bottom, in a short time the 100 marks, with many more, exclusively of daily allowances, were expended, nor as yet had the wall reached the level of its foundations.

"It happened that by the design of the said Hugh, in addition to the stealth, fraud, impertinence, and, above all, extravagance, before the average of the work had risen to the boarded shed, the Abbot grew tired, weary, and timid, and the work languished. The walls were covered up for the winter, but, in consequence of the tenderness of the stone, were fractured, and from their thinness bulged out and became ruinous, together with their columns, bases, and capitals, and fell with their own weight, so that the wreck of images and flowers became the laughing-stock of beholders. The workmen therefore quitted in despair, nor did any wages reward their labours. Howbeit the Abbot, not dismayed on that account, appointed Brother Gilbert de Eversholt guardian of the work, and contributed towards it a sheaf from every acre of sown land. And this lasted from the time from which he began to give (that is to say,

* "Murum frontis ecclesiæ nostræ . . . . veteribus tegulis et cœmento indissolubili compactum."

the third year of his prelacy) through his whole life, about seventeen years, and in the life of the following Abbot about ten years; neither did that unprosperous work ever appear to increase, nor at last was his heart indulged with the fulfilment of the wish that it might be finished in the time of Abbot John, so that he grieved inconsolably.

"He added therefore many gifts of gold and silver, if perchance they might promote the work, and had it proclaimed throughout the possessions of St. Alban, and the dioceses of many of the Bishops, sending relics, and a certain clerk named Amphibal, whom the Lord, by the intercession of Saints Alban and Amphibal, had raised from the dead, that with the faith of an eye-witness he might bear testimony to the miracles of these saints, he collected not a little money. But that unfortunate work, like the sea, swallowed up all the rivers, nor as yet had a happy advancement begun. Therefore, as the work had gone on fruitlessly in past years, and Brother Gilbert de Eversholt being dead, the custody of the lifeless and languishing work devolved upon Brother Gilbert de Sisseverne, who had charge of the same for about thirty years*; who, having spent upon it the above-named supplies, scarcely in that period added more than two feet to its height.

"With a cheerful countenance but a sad heart, Abbot John betook himself to other works of more propitious prospect. Having neither dismissed nor diminished his forces, he took them off the former employment, as above stated. Having pulled down to the ground the old Refectory, which was ruinous and dark, he commenced a new graceful one, which he was worthy happily to complete during his lifetime, and joyfully to banquet therein with the brethren. Raised therefore to better hopes, he had pulled down from the foundation the ruinous old Dormitory, which was dilapidated by age, with its appendages (namely the house of necessity), and a most

* Circiter triginta annis.

noble new one built in its place and very creditably accomplished.

"For the erection of these two noble edifices, the convent, for the term of fifteen years, set apart their allowance of wine; but because the Abbot abandoned the work of the church, he did not live to witness its completion."

The alteration can be shown to have been far more considerable than is implied by the above record; and in the absence of other evidence it would have been presumptuous to have conjectured that the front of this Church presented a more commanding elevation than those of the Cathedrals of Norwich and Rochester, which do not exceed the breadth of the nave and aisles, and are destitute of unusual boldness of character, or of any striking architectural feature.

But there is no longer any doubt that the original front of St. Alban's Abbey was incomparably more grand in its form and dimensions than the corresponding feature of those noble Norman churches, and its destruction was one of the most severe losses that the fabric has sustained. The spirit of alteration first lighted upon this part of the building, the severely plain forms of which, spread over a broad and lofty group of gabled walls, with towers strictly uniform in their materials and finishings with the rest of the architecture, were, in the advance of taste or fashion, obliged to yield to a style, which, in point of splendour, admitted of no comparison; and certainly, if any design could atone for the sacrifice of the Norman front, it could be no other than its substitute in the exquisite architecture of which the triple porches consist.

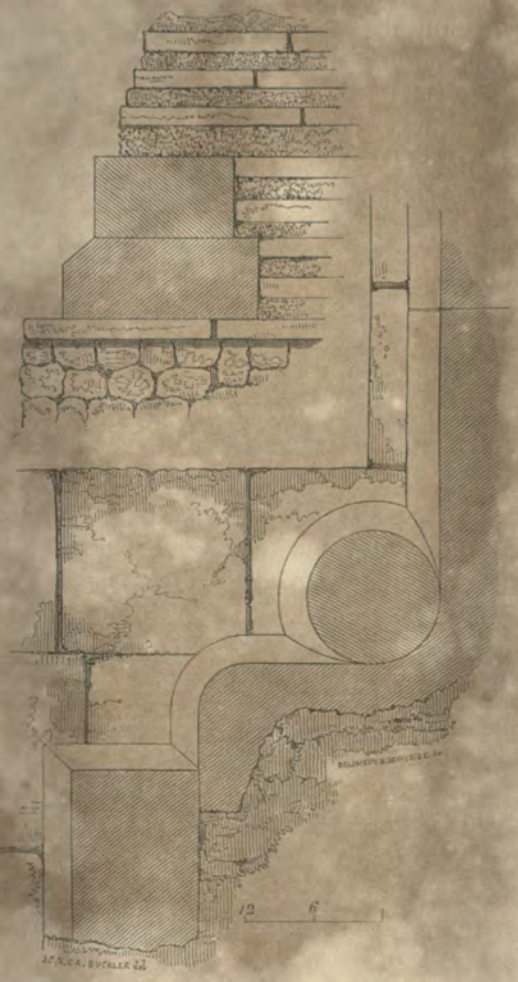
It is obvious that as the aisle arches, with the two stages over, on each side of the Nave, were left standing in complete condition at the time of the demolition of the West Front, to which the alteration was in the first instance limited, the abutment piers would also remain, and that the aspect of the building presented to view in this state was not unlike the engraved section given at page 77. The wall of the new front was carried up in three

divisions between the Norman piers left standing, and joined the sides of the towers, which were on a line with the interior of the aisles. The portions of the original West wall, which formed the abutment piers referred to, were eight feet in thickness, and they remain to this day reaching nearly to the summit of the building, the brick-work being hemmed in on one side by the ashlar of Trumpington's architecture, and on the other by that of the exterior. This curious evidence of the process of alteration was not so fully disclosed to observation until the substitution of the present window for those of the thirteenth century, the spacious interior arches of which embraced the full width of the wall, as the remains of cornices, and the condition of the stonework, plainly show. The triforium was restored, and formed in the deep recesses of these windows, but upon a level considerably lower than those on the sides, and approached by means of the same staircases in the angle turrets. As the entire extent of the Norman foundation remains, the expression of Matthew Paris, that the workmen *dug and threw out the bottom*, refers only to the removal of that portion of it below the ancient level, in conformity with the plan laid down for the new design by John de Cella, who, it should be further observed, planted his work on a line with the interior surface of the brick basement, in which respect it agreed with the superstructure that had been demolished.

The experiment of digging below the raised surface of the soil, has been amply rewarded by the disclosure of the foundations of towers, which were attached to the aisles, and stood slightly in advance of the West Front, the extreme breadth of which was thus extended to 155 feet. Upon the Norman substructure of these once noble features still reposes the basement of the building of the thirteenth century, consisting of the stone seat which extended round the interior of this part of the church, surmounted by the plinths of the clustered columns of the arches which opened the areas of the towers to the aisles, the bases of the columns in the four angles of the tower

being on the level of the lower floor. The Norman wall remains to a greater height on the East side of the Northern tower than in any other part, and exhibits very perfectly the layers of brick and flint, and the compact and secure manner in which the masonry was attached.

A section and plan of the North-east angle of the basement of this tower are here given. The course of brick



Plan and section of the basement of the north-west tower.

immediately under the stonework, which formed the foundation of the structure commenced by John de Cella, is on the same level as that at the base of the West front exhibited in the fig. p. 13. The huge and well constructed Norman walls were not entirely pulled down in order to provide for the alteration, but were ashlared on the inside, at the level of the pavement. On the exterior no casing of stonework was added until the building rose above the ground line. The bases of the pillars, and the stone seat all round, with the traces of a doorway towards the West, is all that was ever finished; and when the design of restoring the towers was finally relinquished, the lofty walls of brickwork were demolished, and their remains exhibit the rude operation that was performed in order to reduce them to the level of the surface.

The wall of the aisle on this side having been rebuilt, and very much lessened in substance, retains no trace of the existence of a tower; but on the South side the wall of the Tower, more bulky than that of the Church, and the angle of the West wall, remain to the level of the parapet of the aisle, though not without a casing of modern brickwork. There is only a slight difference in any instance between the width of the walls and that of their foundations; in some parts the width is the same, and in others a greater breadth was given to the foundation on the inside; but there is considerable and singular irregularity in this part of the work, and its substance rendered any such precaution unnecessary. The towers were planted upon their ample basements in a similar manner, and measured 40 feet square on the outside, presenting a close correspondence with the position of those by which Old St. Paul's Cathedral was flanked.

The lofty and graceful arch which was designed to open the tower to the South aisle is preserved, but the North wall was rebuilt with the materials of the corresponding arch, which was thrown down at the time of the reduction of the West front to its present inelegant figure. The

exquisitely moulded work of the clustered bases remains, but that on the South side is in the best state of preservation; and, by the removal of the ground in which it has so long been buried, exhibits a design of the most superb description—the commencement of a far more elaborate structure than was afterwards erected.

The entire re-edification of the West front, with the towers so grandly commenced in the reign of King John, was not accomplished, the work being checked when it had arrived at about one-third of its height in the West front; and at the time of its revival a few years later, another architect, William de Trumpington, the succeeding Abbot, brought to the task genius formed in a different mould.

ALTERATIONS BY WILLIAM DE TRUMPINGTON.

"Abbot William, lamenting and deploring the front-work of his church, after so sad a ruin, because it prolonged a tedious delay, took it upon his own responsibility to finish it, which he did within a short time, with a roof of well-chosen material, with beams, struts, and rafters, and perfected with most excellent glass windows." He completed a portion of the Nave, a work of great magnificence, together with the front, from the pillars of the porches upwards, but not the towers, which, like those of Westminster Abbey, were left imperfect for ages. The alteration, which included a lower level in the floor at the Western extremity of the Nave, having swept away not only the Norman walls, but also full two feet of the broad basement upon which they rested, has limited the discovery lately made to the bare fact of the former existence of towers in the position already named; and nothing with respect to their design can possibly be gathered from the general form and dimension of the foundations. Slight, however, as are these particulars, they prove valu-

able on account of the evidence they afford of the expansion of the front in conformity with the most magnificent of the three modes of arrangement which distinguish the principal elevation of our larger Norman churches. The western tower in a central position, as seen in Ely Cathedral, and in the Abbey Church at Shrewsbury, may be referred to with those already enumerated. The extended front of St. Alban's Abbey, with its towers, must have been viewed in grand and imposing contrast with the vast length of the Nave, while its altitude afforded a sufficient balance to the more ponderous and lofty lantern tower over the crossing.

But we view in this disposition another feature which must not escape observation, the very ancient distinction commonly given to the most Western bay of the Nave, and which is sometimes so much inclosed as to assume the character of a vestibule, though in other instances in which towers are combined it is seen with considerable abatement of this particular form. It bears a general resemblance to the pronaos of the temples of earlier architecture, and answers to the narthex, or penitents' porch of the primitive Basilican churches.

The Cathedrals of Cologne, Strasbourg, Louvain, Antwerp, and Paris, and the majority of the great continental churches, are complete examples; and although less prevalent and less strongly defined in our own country, the feature was occasionally retained, as abroad, even in the later styles.

Of the splendid conventual churches which yet adorn our land, the Western extremity of the Cathedral of Ely perhaps more fully exemplifies this arrangement than any other. It forms a lofty and solid mass of building, which greatly exceeds in extent the breadth of the nave and its aisles, and rises in due proportion, so as to assume the figure and dignity of a transept on each side of the tower, this being carried up to a most majestic height, and opened to the interior as a lantern; the extremities

have polygonal turrets of considerable bulk, those in front being of larger diameter. This is so interesting a subject in illustration of our present remarks, that we must notice the extraordinary regard paid to its embellishment on the exterior no less than the interior; the walls from the basement to the summit, even to the extreme height of the lantern, are literally covered with arcades, tier above tier, some more deeply recessed than others, with single or intersected arches, pointed or circular, plain or enriched, and receiving ornament in proportion to their elevation. The pronaos was further distinguished by apsidal chapels towards the East, but these have been destroyed, and only small remains are left of the Northern wing of this exceedingly grand and incomparable feature of the Cathedral.*

In point, however, of completeness of character, the pronaos of the grand Norman church at Melbourne, in Derbyshire, must take precedence of every other English example.† That of Ely, just mentioned, bears a general resemblance to the West fronts of the Churches of St. Germain and Nôtre Dame at Tirlemont, in which a lofty tower rises over the centre; but the oblong mass of building which forms the front of Melbourne Church corresponds precisely with the earlier foreign authorities, which are characterised by a jubé over a vaulted Gallilee-porch. The clear breadth of the pronaos is 8 feet 6 inches, its length being subdivided to agree with the Nave and its aisles, with which it communicated by open arches. The great substance of the walls, and the imperfect appearance of their elevation, suggest the notion that towers, if never built, were originally designed; but the upper stage,

* Compare also the Western portion of the Abbey Church of St. Edmund's Bury, with the corresponding Chapels (of St. Faith and of St. Katharine) as given in Yates's History of the same.

† The ground plan of this church, given by Mr. Wilkins in the 13th volume of the Archæologia, is generally correct, but the only external entrance to the pronaos was in the centre of the West front, and it contained only one staircase.

forming a gallery or chamber which opened to the nave, sustained considerable alteration in the 13th century, without receiving any augmentation of its height. The finish of the Norman buttresses at the present termination of the wall is in accordance with the character of the continental examples, in which the square bulk of building presents an abrupt horizontal termination, the towers in many cases springing therefrom, and in the remarkable instance of St. Bartholomew in Liège, actually built within the walls.

We may adduce two other specimens from among familiar parish churches, one at Great Marlow, of Norman antiquity, now no more; the other, the Church of St. Gregory, in Norwich, of the age of King Edward IV. In each case the tower occupies the centre, and a transeptal form is given to the side porches; but in other respects, at least in the latter example, the vestibules are elongations of the aisles, opening to each other and to the church, and with North, South, and West entrances, the last-named covered by a porch, which, with the pronaos, is richly groined in stone.

In the Church of St. Alban it was the intention to have carried a flight of steps across the Nave and aisles, at the limit referred to; and this, with the lateral position of the towers, and a stone groining in the aisles, would have comprehended the chief interior distinction in this venerable example after the violation of its primitive plan.

We may be allowed to devote a little more attention to this feature of the building, in order that we may refer to the testimony it affords as to the interruptions which accompanied the progress of the re-edification of the West front, in the reign of King John. Prosperity did not attend the undertaking; and so fatal to its progress were the various impediments which overtook the work at every step, that, for a time, it ceased altogether, and when resumed the original intention was abandoned, and that of the next Abbot adopted.

But the change was not for the advantage of the design, which possessed matchless grace; and the engrafted work of the thirteenth century, in the reign of King Henry III., loses by the juxtaposition in which it is viewed with the earlier. We observe the lower and the upper half of pillars built at different periods, and groins and arches added to columns and imposts which had been prepared for other forms, and in a more costly material, for it is to be remarked that the whole of the exquisite work which formed the commencement of the West front in King John's time consisted of Purbeck marble; and notwithstanding that the moulded basements of some pillars, others with their slender shafts clustered around the main support, and much work of the most highly finished description was already fixed, yet the succeeding architect felt no more obligation to attend to harmony of material than to unity of design; and he resorted to stone of a far inferior quality to Purbeck, and thenceforth the quarries of Tottenhoe furnished their stores for the embellishment of the church.

The architects of this period indulged in the use, and excelled in the application of Purbeck, which was the best material that could possibly be employed in the construction of designs, of which one of the leading aims was to conceal the actual solidity of the main columns by clustering around them numerous slender shafts. Strength, combined with lightness of character, was an advance in constructive science, pressed forward with the view of giving a pictorial richness of effect, an intricate play of light and shade, and a glowing variety of detail. The union just named was formed and practised with wonderful skill towards the latter end of the twelfth century, the firmness of the pillars being so dexterously masked by the arrangement of the supplementary shafts, that their merely decorative office is at first sight scarcely recognised. John de Cella perhaps carried the invention too far, and reserved so little actual strength for the basement

of his gorgeous front, that the building gave way, as we have seen. Stone of no other quality than Purbeck could have been so lightly knit together, and it may be that the failure in this instance was rather owing to imperfections in the execution of the plan than to miscalculation on the part of the architect.

The supplementary pillars stood in double lines around the middle shaft, one row appearing in the intervals formed by their companions, widely detached from each other and from the solid body which they surrounded, all being tied by a band midway between the capital and base. Accessory pillars of very slender diameter often rise from the floor to the summit, and are held together by mouldings in the different stages, the surmounting capitals affording the strength required in aid of the roof; and the havoc which has been made in these features at the West end, in the work of Trumpington no less than in that of John de Cella, proves beyond doubt that the building suffers from their absence more on the score of beauty than stability. The utmost that could be achieved with Purbeck may be viewed in the side porches, in which single pillars remain five inches in diameter, and thirteen feet in length, with no connecting member besides the capital and base, and apparently giving support to arches of great pressure, which in reality maintain their positions solely by the skill exerted in their construction.

The Western wall and the porches must have been left in a very imperfect condition at the commencement of the thirteenth century; and, except in the centre, the building was not carried up to any considerable or level height. It can easily be seen to what elevation it had attained in different parts, in what respects the design was afterwards advanced, doubtless with the intention of accomplishing the ground plan previously commenced, and in what points it never rose above the level of the floor.

The North and South porches are of King Henry the

Third's age, built by William de Trumpington, upon the basement laid by his predecessor, to whose design it was, thus far, made to conform. In the central porch also, all above the columns, namely, the arches and groins, must be ascribed to Trumpington, who appears to have been under the necessity of altering, if not of destroying, much of the earlier work. The pier of the clustered pillars on each side of the inner portal is a mass of wrought stone-work inserted by him; it encroaches upon the capitals, and its introduction involved the alteration of the Purbeck masonry. The clustered shafts forming the supports of the outer arch were similarly strengthened, and the addition averted for a time the mischief which eventually deprived the Porch of its stately gable, and of all the characteristic ornaments of its exterior design.

The dog-tooth ornament occurs in the North or congregational entrance, which alone possesses this interior distinction; a benatura was subsequently added on the side of the inner doorway. Several Purbeck shafts, which had been provided by John de Cella, were employed in the completion of this part of the building.

The remains of pillars and arches on different parts of the exterior, over the traces of the steep gables of the lateral porches, are vestiges of the work of the thirteenth century, and much more than is now apparent was completed at the same time. The Western buttresses are of this period, and also two blank arches over the middle porch, with convex panels resembling those in the superb but ruinated front of Llandaff Cathedral, to which this central part of the elevation was probably not inferior when its triplet of lofty lancet-windows appeared in their perfection.

The South-western tower, although it had not kept pace with the West front, was so considerably advanced that the work was carried on, and the beautiful arch at its entrance from the aisle, with its clustered pillars and the springers of the groining, were completed.

The purpose hitherto maintained, of perfecting the front as at first proposed, was suddenly resigned, and a total change was made in the plan to the exclusion of the towers, and also of the lower level upon which the whole of the work here described had been commenced, and for a period resumed. This grand plan, however, was abandoned, and the ground again filled up to the floor of the Nave.

These assertions do not rest upon conjecture; it is certain that the alteration just named was executed in the thirteenth century, at which period a final stop was put to the original design.

The beautiful base of the porches, and of the pillars of the tower-arch on the South side, were covered up; and in proof that the first intention of entering the church to the distance of full twenty feet from the West doorways on a floor about 2 feet 6 inches lower than that of the Nave, it will suffice to state the fact that the step of the doorway is seated at the depth just named below the huge foundation wall of the Norman front, which had only been partially removed in order to admit that of the structure designed to succeed it, and still remains within the porch up to the summit of the Purbeck bases, forming a barrier to the entrance, the sill of the doors being so far sunk below its surface. The perfect preservation of the bases of the pillars and seat is owing to the circumstance of their having been covered up very soon after they were fixed: and in further evidence of the state of the work at the time of the return to the original level, it may be remarked that the broad sill of Purbeck marble was not in its place, but only the isolated blocks upon which the central and the side pillars rested.

A difficulty presented itself in the restoration of the Norman level: the pillars on the sides of the Nave were rising upon their bases at the same time that the West front was progressing towards completion, and the meeting of the stone plinths and the more ancient sub-base-

ments indicates the line to which the pavement was then to have been raised; but, upon the determination to abandon the proposed level at the West end, it was found that unless the pavement were gradually sloped to the whole extent of the new work, the height of the Western doors would be too considerably diminished; and whilst the lower part of the porch was buried, the bases of the pillars on the sides of the Nave were left to show the roughly-formed brickwork upon which they stand.

Considering the imperfect state in which Abbot William found this part of the church, the walls broken and uneven, and the ground around overspread with materials — the rough block and the highly-wrought capitals and mouldings promiscuously heaped together, it may be presumed that good use was made of whatever was found suitable for the new erection; and without venturing to account in this manner for the remarkable difference which appears in the design of the bases of the pillars of Trumpington's arcades, we may reasonably infer from the different qualities of the masonry employed, that much of it had been previously provided, and was now for the first time brought into use.

The walls between the porches are of great substance, and repose upon foundations of flint resembling those of the Norman work under ground, with a course of tiles to receive the present stone basement or seat; but it would be hazardous to decide whether these remains are to be regarded as portions of the original fabric, or were provided for the support of the additions made in the thirteenth century. The former is perhaps the more accurate conjecture, as we have observed no instance in any part of the Church, of a foundation built at a subsequent period with *layers* of Roman brick in imitation of those of original workmanship, and it is not improbable that a porch was attached to the central part of the West front.

We are not at liberty on the present occasion to enter

more particularly into a description of this part of the building, which belongs to the history of the pointed architecture of the Abbey Church; but it is so intimately connected with the alteration of the Norman structure, that the foregoing observations could not with propriety have been omitted, and we are aware that very much remains in the design and construction of this particular group of features, to which it would be desirable to direct attention, and to which we may hereafter have an opportunity of giving ample scope, by the complete investigation which the subject merits.

The original defects in the construction of the triple Porches, which had been reared under so many difficulties, were not so completely remedied as to secure their existence in their original form and proportions for more than two centuries. It appears that the entire range of building they formed at the base of the Western façade, inclined outwards to so fearful an extent, that the front of the grand central entrance was taken down, in place of which the present massive wall and arch were set up, as an abutment to the older work, which still leans considerably, but its pressure has been most effectually resisted by the addition so cleverly and so seasonably applied; and although the alteration diminished the beauty of the porch, it saved the roof and the side pillars from any further declension. The aisle porches have been sadly dilapidated, and closed up with a solid wall; and the front elevation of the church, which had been stripped of many other adornments of coeval date, was brought into its present graceless form.

The inglorious destruction of the Norman West front had kept this part of the Church for many years in an unfinished condition, and it never afterwards assumed the grandeur by which the original design was distinguished, although the alteration had been commenced with the view of making the front transcend the rest of the exterior in splendour of architecture, the ancient foundation being

preserved as a basement for the new work. The extent, which embraced the two towers, left nothing to be desired by Abbot John on the score of dimensions; and even the West front of Wells Cathedral might have lost by comparison with that of St. Alban's Abbey, if the design had been completed in accordance with its commencement. The walls of the aisles were carried up by his successor as those of the Norman front had been, in order to receive a window over each of the side doorways, thus raising the parapet nearly to the summit of the centre, which was distinguished by a lofty gable.

A still greater height, it may be presumed, was given to the towers, which were crowned with roofs of steep pyramidal shape, the most ancient form of covering applied to features of this kind, but no longer seen in this country of equal antiquity with many which remain on the Continent. Turrets may have been superadded as ornamental terminations to the broad buttresses on all the prominent angles; and no doubt there were then, as at present, triple doorways. The upper part in the centre of the West front, now engrossed by a single window, had two tiers, the lower being the principal, with which those in the aisles and middle stage of the towers corresponded. That the spirit of the design here described was retained in the later one, which was afterwards dilapidated and pared down to the figure it now presents, is consistent with the evidence, by no means faintly expressed, in the remains of the work of the thirteenth century both on the inside and outside of the present building.

The alterations on the sides of the Nave were undertaken when the work of the West front was resumed in the reign of King Henry III. The Norman walls were not now, as before, wholly demolished: the great substance of these, and of the pillars, suggested the experiment of casing both with masonry; accordingly the upper and middle stages were removed, and with them the arches opening to the aisles, and as much of the spandrels

as was necessary to prepare the way for the new design. The task of reducing the piers to the proper size and shape was also achieved; and clustered columns were formed around them, without infringing by any undue bulk upon the graceful character of the new work. The sacrifice required in order to the introduction of the pointed architecture was so considerable, and the reduction of those portions which were left standing an undertaking of so much labour, as to excite surprise that the example of John de Cella should not have been followed by his successors.

Five bays on the South side, and four on the North, with the side porches, and all the work above the porch in the centre, and over the cornice by which the doors in the aisles are surmounted, were carried on together.

The union cannot be mistaken, no attempt was made to conceal it; the exquisite design first set on foot was departed from, and one more simple, with less numerous columns attached to the piers and walls, substituted.

The North and South walls to the extent referred to, were, as just stated, taken down to the foot of the clerestory; and the piers of the Norman arches below reduced, in order to their being cased, the clerestory being rebuilt with solid material.

The Norman brickwork is still to be seen, uncovered by masonry, at the bases of many of the pillars; and upon the removal of the pavement in several places on both sides, the ancient plinths and the foundation upon which they stand were exposed.

The wall in the spandrels of the arches is of brick, ashlared towards the Nave; and on the summits of the capitals of the early pointed work in the North and South aisles, are to be seen the springers of the arches of the original brick vaulting, hemmed in by the beautiful mouldings of a subsequent period: the Norman arches, of which these are the fragments, extended across the aisles to the wall-piers, and were reduced to their present irregular shape, that they might be made as little unsightly as possible.

The Norman pier on the South side of the Nave, with the ashlaring of William de Trumpington, and Roger de Norton, as seen in the aisle.

The union in the roof of the aisles, of Norman vaulting, pointed groining, and timber frame-work, is productive of singular irregularity, arising from the difference of height and figure. The aisles of the Norman church were not uniformly vaulted, at least the nine bays from the arch of the Transept Westward, on the North side, were not finished with a roof of this kind: the wall was never provided

with pier-shafts, and the buttresses of the clerestory descend through the roof, and rest upon the impost moulding of the arches opening to the Nave and Choir.

Pilaster-buttresses of the clerestory, as seen in the North aisle of the Choir.

Every internal angle of the building has a member standing in advance of the wall, for the support of the springers of the roof: in this instance they have nothing to uphold, and it is clear that the original intention of the builder was abandoned during the progress of the work. The Western part of the aisle was vaulted; the arch which separated it from the timber roof of the Eastern portion remains, with the dressings in stone conferred

upon it at the time at which the former was altered, and in part rebuilt, but a groined roof was not then erected either on this or on the South side, and it is strange that any traces of the earlier building should have been allowed to remain on the summits of the capitals: they serve, however, to explain the process of transformation which changed the solid Norman piers into clustered columns, while the rugged and uncased walls appear, in evidence that the completion of the work was not in accordance with its commencement.

A cluster of slender pillars, with capitals and bases, attached to the wall in the aisle facing the Norman pier, leads to the conclusion that at the commencement of the work a groined roof, for which provision had also been made at the West end, was designed in place of the brick vaulting which had been destroyed; and not being completed, the Norman arch across the aisle was raised to a higher level, and rebuilt as it is now seen.

It may at first sight appear strange, that an equal number of bays on the North side should not have been altered for the sake of producing uniformity; but we imagine that a good reason existed for not transgressing the limit assigned to the new work beyond the third detached pier from the West end, and it may appear in the fact that an altar was attached to the West face of the next pier Eastward, which was enriched with ancient paintings, and subsequently distinguished by an image on a stone bracket which still remains.

A becoming reverence led to its preservation, and stayed the work of demolition, when it had arrived at the position just named. The pillar, to the depth of the facing pier, was left standing to the height of sixteen feet and a half, and here, upon a level bed, was posited a stunted cluster of columns with capitals, as the springer of the new work, the Norman fragment retaining its ancient form. A most curious painting adorned the wall immediately over the image, and other appropriate enrichments, in harmony

with the frescoes with which the whole of the surrounding walls and arches were covered, conferred an appearance and an interest upon this feature, which it no longer possesses. In the absence of these decorations, to which we owe this remarkable contrivance, the abrupt union described seems quite unintelligible, but we may be sure that it was no dissight formerly, whatever may be the light in which it is viewed in these days.

The union of the pointed architecture with the Norman in this position, is too singular to be allowed to pass without some further notice. The wall was severed in a vertical direction from the summit through one of the Norman piers, as just described, without any attempt to form a sightly junction between the brick and stone, to reduce the bulk of one, or enlarge that of the other, or in any respect to harmonise the figure of the supports thus brought together; and there is nothing to show that any further alteration was contemplated in accordance with that on the opposite side, unless we suppose the alteration of the clerestory was remotely considered in conformity with the specimen presented in the adjoining division of the Norman work. This tends rather to show that an entire re-edification was never meditated, but that when the architect of the thirteenth century prepared the way for his design by removing the wall close to the angle of the facing pier, a portion of which was also removed for the sake of completing the jamb of the clerestory window uniformly, he evinced a perfect indifference to a handsome or even a neat union between his own and the older work.

There is far less bulk and appearance of casing in the pillars than in those of Winchester Cathedral; greater dependence could be placed upon the strength of the brick-work, excessively as its substance must have been diminished, than upon that of the rubble-work, which lost perhaps scarcely more than its ashlar. The columns in the Nave of St. Alban's are closely attached to the octagonal piers, which are in immediate contact with the

Norman core, and it was not until the work rose above the arches, that Abbot Trumpington exhibited the characteristic lightness of the style it was his intention to adopt. There was no longer any impediment to detached columns, and with their introduction commenced the sculptural enrichments of the design; of these, however, there was no profusion, a remark which may be most properly applied to the pointed architecture of every part of the main structure, as if the unadorned aspect of the venerable edifice had been so far considered as to restrain the application of the usual variety of embellishment.

While the bays of the Norman building throughout their elevation were distinguished by broad pilasters, those in the pointed style were only faintly defined above the columns of the principal arcade by slender pillars detached from the wall, commenced with the intention of being carried to the springing of the roof, upon the completion of which every division in the triforium would have presented two arches, each subdivided into as many compartments, all rich in mouldings in high relief; but before this graceful arcade was finished, the project of constructing a groined roof was relinquished, the shafts by which its springers were to have been upheld were left incomplete, the distinction of bays disregarded, and windows in an uniform series introduced in the clerestory. It was foreseen that an alteration including a groined roof thus grandly commenced was not likely to be extended through the length of the Nave and Choir, involving the destruction or the entire modification of this portion of the building, and the Abbot therefore resolved upon the abandonment of an idea which in after times might be without an imitator. He had proved that the most beautiful model seldom influenced the taste of the succeeding architect, and well knew that by only partially effecting his design another instance would be added to the irregularities produced by the execution of his improvements.

In the Norman structure the superficies of plain wall must be regarded as one of its distinguishing characteristics, nothing merely ornamental being introduced; the pointed architecture in union with it, by a greater freedom of expansion, left no room for such simplicity, but in this, as in many other most stately examples, the arcades so completely occupy the elevation as to leave no intervals between the cornices or the clustered shafts.

ALTERATIONS BY ROGER DE NORTON.

In the further progress of alteration upon five more bays on the South side by Abbot Roger, in the reign of King Edward I., the aisle was groined in stone, every part of the design being executed in the most highly finished and careful manner.

The success which attended the scheme of removing the upper part of the wall, with the Norman arches opening to the aisles, and of casing the piers by which they were supported, as set on foot by William de Trumpington, was not overlooked by this prelate, who adopted a precisely similar course in carrying on the improvements.

It would be difficult to name, in any church, an elevation which rivals in magnificence that of the ten bays which complete the range on the South side of the Nave, between the West end and St. Cuthbert's screen. There is a general and studied resemblance running through the design, which could only result from the obedience of the architect of the later work to that of the older. The height, length, and various subdivisions are nearly the same in both; but, as if a slight addition to the elevation of two of the stages at the expense of the third would be regarded as an improvement in the lower, and at the same time no material infringement upon the just proportions of the upper tier of arches, the under sides of the string-

courses were raised to the level of the top edge of those to which they were added. The subdivisions of the Norman elevation were treated without any ceremony; the entire height was respected, but the arches of the aisles were carried considerably above the cornice of the triforium, from springers below the Norman impost.

Every arch and window of the Edwardian work presents a general agreement with those of Henry III.'s time, and yet the difference of age cannot be mistaken; it is seen in the greater simplicity and undercutting of the mouldings of the earlier style, and in the matchless ornament of the dog-tooth, standing in juxtaposition with the ball-flower and roset. These are introduced sparingly; and as if imitation in the present instance were indispensable, the same proportion and situation are assigned to the latter ornament as to the former.

The sobriety of this lengthened elevation adds much to the charm which its beauty inspires. The Norman pier between these glorious specimens of pointed architecture, retains both facing pilasters, one ascending to the roof of the Nave, the other giving support to the arch which crosses the aisle, both chamfered, and cased or edged with stone, and begirt with mouldings to complete the links in the architectural chain; the height of the pilasters was increased, and the semicircular arch rebuilt with the groining. One side of the pier was diminished from the top to the bottom to make room for the pillars introduced by the first alteration, and the other side for those of the second: these accessions, while they have changed the form, have at the same time enlarged the bulk of this pier beyond that of any of its massy contemporaries in the Nave. It forms a solid separation, as high as the floor of the upper stage, between these rival examples, on which account distinct entrances to the triforia were rendered necessary from the roof over the aisle. The same remark applies to the opposite side, on account of the termination of the triforium with the Norman wall;

but in the clerestory, in both instances, the passage is continuous.

Plan of the Norman pier on the South side of the Nave, with the ashlaring of William de Trumpington and Roger de Norton.

The exterior of the united designs, as seen in the Southern clerestory, shows no attention on the part of the later architect to produce the same degree of harmony so evident in the interior. It must be admitted that the earlier range of windows, with intermediate blank arches

and detached columns, bears away the palm from those which stand singly, with their clustered pillars and highly relieved arches.

The Norman pilaster, faced with stone-work, forms a no less strong boundary between them on the outside than within; and the pier of the same age near the angle of the West front, though disguised, has not been rebuilt.

The union of the clustered stone pillars with the original brick piers, in the position at which the Choir screen was afterwards fixed, was very dexterously executed, the work being brought to a fair surface with finished masonry.

Between the commencement of the alteration of the West front by John de Cella, and the transmutation of the Easternmost portion on the South side of the Nave, a period of about ninety years elapsed, within which the great changes in its architecture were effected.

We cannot take leave of William de Trumpington's work in the Nave, without observing that this specimen, which forms the most noble of all his architectural productions now extant, was not completed in accordance with the design upon which it had been commenced. Bases and corbels attached to the cornice under the triforium were prepared for slender detached pillars, which were never added: the architect changed his intention before the clerestory was built: the design, at first starting, was no doubt to cover this portion of the Nave with a groined roof of the kind afterwards added by John of Hertford to the Sanctuary, but as this was relinquished, the pillars which were to have upheld the springers of stone were omitted, and the clerestory was completed as it is now seen.

Abbot Roger had the good fortune to be able to accomplish, in the most perfect manner, the task he had undertaken: he groined the South aisle, to the full extent of his work, with ribs of stone springing from clustered shafts attached to the wall, and thereby effectually concealed

from view all traces of the Norman brickwork, which, however, he did not cause to be so entirely hidden below the stone plinth of the columns of the aisle arches as to leave any doubt of the use he made of the ancient piers for the support of the new ones. To avoid the prolongation of the lofty blank wall, as seen in the more Eastern portion of the aisle, he admirably adapted his design by elongating the recesses of the windows, within which the full height from the floor was preserved, in order to carry the openings over the roof of the cloister.

Cusps in the arches of the triforium, shields of arms in the spandrels, and heads forming corbels at the springers of the labels, all in more prominent relief than was consistent with the taste of the architecture of Trumpington, enrich that of Abbot Roger. The display of ornament, sparingly as it is introduced, is greater in the latter than in the former, and certainly the art of the sculptor had arrived at its highest point of perfection when the beautiful busts alluded to were executed.

The gradual development of the successive styles of pointed architecture is interestingly illustrated in the specimens exhibited in this Church during the thirteenth century.

The work of restoration at the West end had scarcely been brought to a close, when that of the Sanctuary and Eastern aisle was begun by John of Hertford, A.D. 1256, under the influence of a taste distinguished by its advance in the diversity of the forms of the design, and richness of mouldings, beyond that acquired by his predecessor, but falling short of the still more gorgeous work executed by Roger de Norton in continuation of the adornment of the Nave.

The modifications with which the architects in the fifteenth century remained satisfied in the portions of the Norman Nave that had been preserved, are of a more simple character than those just described, and were limited to the arches of the triforium, which being ren-

dered inaccessible by the removal of the steep roofs of the aisles, were splayed and converted into windows.

Freedom in the addition of tracery where nothing of the kind was originally intended, is apparent in this Church: great liberty was taken with the Norman windows, and those of the pointed architecture inserted in the Norman walls were not allowed to remain free from this accession, the general forms of which were evidently designed to correspond with those of Abbot Roger's work over the roof of the cloister.

The operations of building and repairing were no doubt in constant progress within the walls of an Abbey so extensive as that of St. Alban: dilapidation, indeed, in some cases seems to have followed the completion of portions of the structures more quickly than could be imagined, considering that the edifices formed on the original plan were built without regard to ornament, and with the single view, it may be supposed, of uniting convenience with stability. The extracts from Matthew Paris, given in the pages of this work, contain references bearing upon the subject of the early alterations alluded to. It would be difficult to conjecture the extent of the *decay*, so often referred to in the Norman buildings, which seems to have required so much of the attention of the munificent Trumpington. Many centuries have passed since his time, and the same walls which were then standing evince no signs of injury from time or weather. It may be that the coating of the brickwork was in a more perishable condition than the main substance of the walls, and that this was sometimes the pretext for partial demolition. The case, however, was very different at the West end of the Nave, and there can be no doubt that the Front, as commenced under the direction of John de Cella, was insecure, either from a miscalculation of the adequacy of the supports for the weight imposed upon them, or owing to the negligence on the part of those who executed the work, and partly fell down, that which was left standing

requiring additional strength before the design could be advanced. But the spirit of alteration promoted by the desire of improvement, at all times exercised a powerful influence. A remarkable instance in confirmation of this assertion will shortly appear in the removal of the work of Richard de Thydenhanger from the summit of the Tower immediately after his death, not on account of its imperfection, but for the sake of giving increased elevation and additional beauty to the exterior of the building, attention being at the same time bestowed upon the interior of the lantern, by the erection of an ornamental timber roof of groined work.

It was not likely that while the Church increased so much in architectural splendour, the buildings of the Abbey should be allowed to retain their primitive character. These required enlargement no less than beauty of design, in order to keep pace with the growing importance of the monastery; as its numbers and opulence were augmented, so a corresponding addition to the variety and magnitude of the house and its offices necessarily followed. Abbot John, in no way discouraged by the failure of the work at the West end of the Church, applied himself with zeal and industry to these improvements, not hesitating to entrust the execution of his designs to the very same hands which had so signally miscarried in the former undertaking: but, alas! of the large halls, refectories, dormitory, and various cloisters, erected or repaired for the accommodation of the inmates and for the hospitable entertainment of strangers, nothing more than the names survive, and we are left to conjecture the relative situations they occupied with respect to the principal quadrangle, of which even the boundary can no longer be precisely defined.

The new *domicilium necessariorum* was among the number of the buildings for which the monastery became indebted to this Abbot, and we may imagine its neatness and good arrangement if we call to mind the extent and

ingenious construction of that erected in the 14th century in New College, Oxford.*

The absence of ornament in the ancient buildings of brick, added to their gloom and want of space, hastened their removal for others of a superior character; and stone and timber were generally employed, the former at least on the exterior of the walls, in the construction of the edifices raised at this period. The strength and durability of the latter has been tested by ages; and its free exposure to the weather, as it came from the hand of the artificer, has proved, in many instances of very ancient fabrics erected wholly of oak timber, its value for the important purposes to which it was applied.

As a specimen of Norman architecture in oak timber, the Refectory of the Priory of Hereford, now forming the palace, should here be noticed, on account of the perfection to which the design has been carried; and as the material employed in its construction has engaged attention in consequence of oak having been used to a considerable extent on the exterior of many of the buildings pertaining to St. Alban's Abbey, we may be permitted to enhance the interest of this part of our subject with a few words upon the Refectory in Hereford. The porch of entrance, one of the original windows, and the full number of arches and columns dividing the immense apartment into three avenues, were remaining until lately. The loss of any fragment of a structure so deeply interesting on account of its remote antiquity, and of the material of which it is

* The interior dimensions of this building are 81 feet, 10 inches, × 16 feet, 2 inches: there are twenty-three inclosures arranged along the centre, each alternate one having the entrance from the opposite side: the height of the framework is 7½ feet: the floor is supported by joists 11 × 8 sustained by ponderous girders of oak, strutted, and resting upon stone corbels, but not inserted in the side walls. The windows of a similar building, as described in "The Antiquities of Durham Abbey," page 78., were filled with beautiful glass; a circumstance which will excite no surprise when it is remembered that this material was produced within the walls of the monastery, and that in ancient times uncoloured glass was very seldom, if ever, used alone.

constructed, is very much to be regretted; but by far the greater portion has survived the lacerations, which have left no traces of the gable walls, and the only bay which has been completely destroyed included the porch on one side, and the window on the other, both having had arches and pillars of oak. The labour with which the detail of the design was executed merits particular attention. Semicircular arches so spacious and lofty, and columns so ponderous, were never perhaps formed in any other material with so few joints, every column having been the bole of a tree of noble growth, every capital and base a huge block of oak wrought into the required shape, and every arch formed of three powerful pieces of timber. The whole of this venerable architecture, after having been for a long period concealed, was brought to light for a time, and again permanently closed up.*

THE TOWER.

"AFTER the death of Richard de Thydenhanger of blessed memory, inasmuch as the tower was unhandsomely roofed, Abbot William had it uncovered, and more becomingly and substantially re-cased on the sides, with the addition of no small quantity of lead. Ornaments were added, that is to say, eight linear ribs extended from the centre of the roof to the wall, as the octagon of the tower might more plainly show, the expenses being defrayed at the persuasion of Master Matthew, then an officer, and keeper of the seal, surnamed of Cambridge, as it was manifest that he was the procurator, prosecutor, and diligent guardian of

* Among the number of banqueting-halls divided by pillars and arches into triple avenues, that of Westminster, as it was built by King William Rufus, far surpassed every other in point of extent; but the one remaining at Winchester, and described in the History of the Royal Palace of Eltham, survives with less injury to its general character than any other of equal antiquity, notwithstanding the maltreatment of modern times.

the undertaking. He altered in like manner the covering which lengthened the cones * on the angles; and the lines aforesaid, which are commonly called aristæ, wonderfully strengthened the tower, and that ornamentally, and besides, more securely kept out the rain; which eight ribs, being first brought together, he lengthened their slender, graceful, and tapering form, to agree with the unseemly wall."

This ancient notice relative to the increased height and ornament given to the Tower by William de Trumpington, places it beyond doubt that considerable alterations were made under his direction, in this feature of the building, and it is equally certain, that to whatever extent these may have been carried, they were in the form of additions to the original design. We have no clue to the extent or exact description of this part of his work, it has disappeared in the course of subsequent alterations, but the record is interesting so far as it shows the progressive and rapid changes which were made for the sake of augmenting the architectural splendour of the church, and at the same time of subduing the austere character of its style by the interpolation or addition of features more aspiring and ornamental than were known to the Normans.

There can be no doubt that the interior of the lantern lost a noble embellishment in the ribbed oak-work with which it was roofed. It would seem from the ancient description, that the octagon was elevated above the summit of the parapet, and based upon the eight ribs, which in a light and graceful form descended to corbels fixed in the angles and between the windows, the main beams serving the double purpose of giving security to the Tower, and support to the structure thus raised upon them. The *octagon* is so particularly mentioned in connection with the groining, that the design as to the union of lantern and roof may be supposed thus far to have resembled the

* *Conos.*

upper part of the central lantern of Ely Cathedral. The addition is commended on account of its ornament, and was in no small degree useful in keeping out the rain, which the unglazed windows of the belfry most inconveniently admitted: its subsequent removal is unaccountable.

The admirable style of pointed architecture which prevailed in the time of this Abbot, leaves us in no doubt of its appearance in the utmost perfection wherever it was introduced by him, and it is unfortunate that so much should have been destroyed, the specimens which remain presenting models so full of beauty and chaste simplicity, that the church was more highly adorned by its presence than it could possibly have been in later times with the most sumptuous display of painted glass inclosed by capacious stone frames, possessing no particular merit either of figure or ornament.

With respect to the Tower as now seen, its stately figure, its symmetry, and handsome design compensate for our regret on account of the absence of the embellishments which once appeared upon its summit. Abbot William removed the Norman turrets and parapet; but the form and elevation given to their substitutes experienced very little regard from his successors, and in the fifteenth century, the octagon and lofty tapering pinnacles erected by him, gave place to a spire of moderate figure, which in the year 1833 was destroyed, leaving the general proportions of the tower and the unity of its original design nearly entire.*

The fate of pinnacles and parapets, at least of those of very early date, is certain: those which have not been

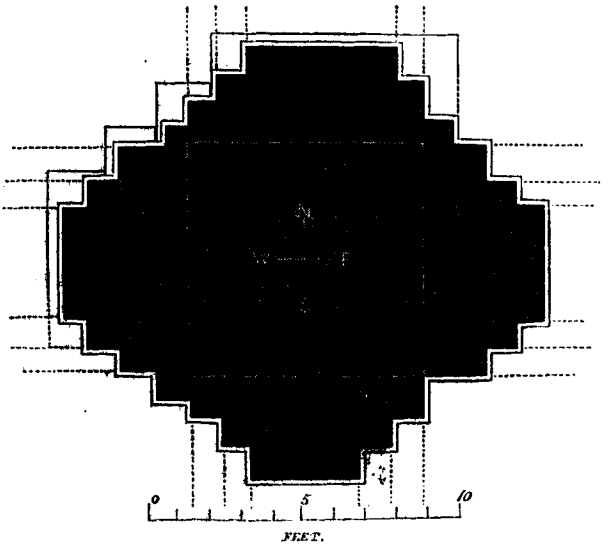
* The greater number of church towers in the county of Hertford are characterised by slender spires constructed of timber and covered with lead, and it is to be regretted that they should ever be removed. It is no argument against these diminutive spires that they are less ancient than the structures which they crown: their antiquity in very many instances is considerable, and the lead they furnish is not worth the risk of the censure incurred by their destruction.

removed for the sake of otherwise enriching the design have been rebuilt on account of decay: the latter we may presume was the case in the present instance. It will readily be conceded by those who have examined this part of the building with attention, that its integrity as to structure and design is complete, and that just as it now appears, so it was left by the Norman builders. We of course only speak of the main walls and of the features which constitute the present design, the supreme finishings having yielded to alteration; and we apprehend that this is the limit which must be assigned as the meaning of the expression in the record above cited, seeing that the fabric of the Tower, inside and out, presents one harmonious aspect, which must be regarded as genuine, agreeing as it assuredly does in materials, construction, and venerable appearance, with the pillars and arches by which it is supported.

The alteration named was, we may believe, influenced by the dilapidated state of the angle-turrets, and instead of the repair of these timeworn ornaments, their removal took place, additions being at the same time made in conformity with the taste of the day, rather than with that of the Norman architecture. Their original figure may readily be supposed to have been circular, like those on the Transepts, with which they probably presented a general correspondence in the rest of their design, with the addition of a conical or steep spiral roof, instead of the abrupt parapet like that with which those remaining are now finished. It should be observed, that the walls of the Tower remain perfectly sound and free from lacerations; the substructure is far too solid and compact, and rests on too sure a foundation to be the occasion of accidents of this kind above; and if we examine them narrowly, with the pillars and arches of the windows and galleries, we shall be convinced that no repairs have ever been made in this part of the edifice, except those of common occurrence,

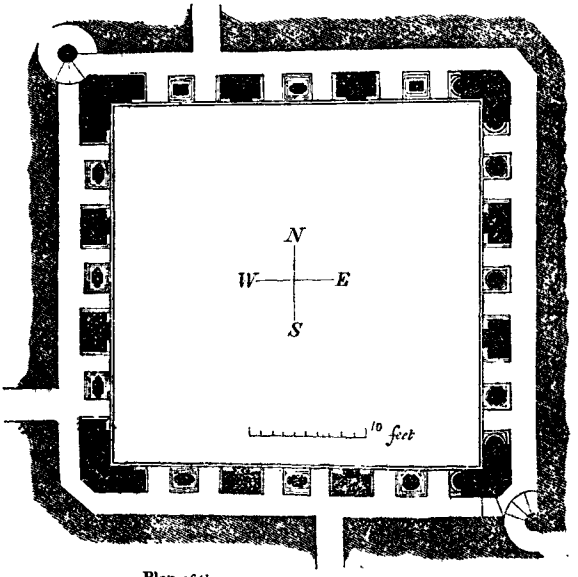
and which were likely to be required in a building incrusted over every part with cement.

The great thickness of the walls of the church rendered a comparatively small increase of bulk necessary, in order to obtain strength adequate to the support of the Tower: this was effected by means of the abutments of the arches on the four sides of each of the Tower piers, which are nearly equal, the measure from East to West being 15 feet 9 inches, and from North to South 14 feet. Although nothing uncommon appears in the manner of grouping into one solid mass the detached piers, in order to withstand the pressure from above, yet such diversity occurs in the form which they present in the larger churches, and so much more regard to symmetry was shown in this instance, that it will be useful to subjoin an enlarged plan of the North-west pier, from which it will be seen that the four great arches span the Choir and Transepts, with as slight an encroachment upon their open space as in any example in the lighter styles of architecture. The intersection of the four main walls of the building determined the square mass of each pier, and with this were embodied



the responds from which the arches spring. It is impossible to view these as accidental proportions, or in any other light than as evidences of forethought and calculation on the part of the Norman builder, who, having prepared a good foundation, was no less certain as to the durable nature of the work raised upon it, or at any loss to obtain strength without excessive bulk.

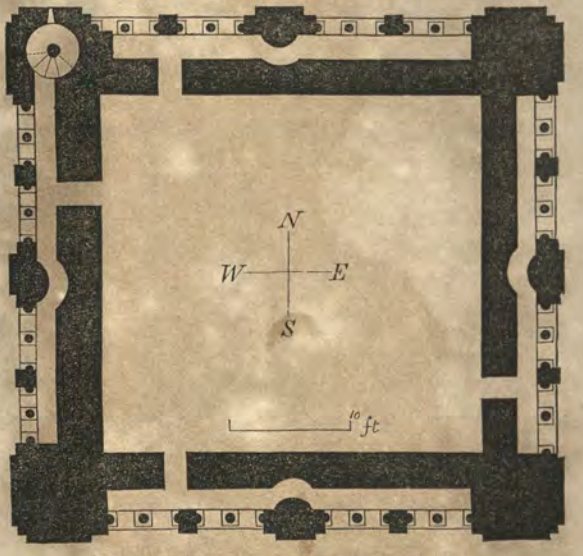
We may repeat, that the only injury which the Norman design of the lantern Tower has sustained, is in the supreme finish, and the terminations of the turrets by which it was surmounted on the angles. This grand structure rises in three stages over the apex of the original roof, and in four on the interior above the arches. The lower stage within, consists of a gallery in the thickness of the wall, and is recessed with three arches on each side, supported upon piers of brick, and subdivided by columns of stone into two smaller arches which are pierced, an arrangement productive of great lightness and beauty of effect in the interior design, and from the distance at which it is generally viewed, exhibits none of those irregularities in the



Plan of the open arcade in the Lantern.

workmanship which are presented upon a near examination, and might be expected from the nature of the materials. The walls of this gallery are pierced on three sides with small doorways opening to the timber work of the roofs; but towards the East there was no such aperture on account of the vaulting of the Sanctuary.

The middle stage above corresponds in design with the one just described; it penetrates the substance of the wall, and presents the open arcade of the gallery towards the exterior. This gallery is unquestionably one of the most singular features in the whole design of the church: the date of its introduction is very remote, and although so rarely seen in the buildings of this country, it is one of common occurrence in the designs of the magnificent and venerable Romanesque churches of the Continent; but in these examples the gallery is usually elevated to the summit of the walls, in order to conceal the domed vault of the apse.*



Plan of the open arcade on the exterior of the Belfry.

* The wall above the windows in the apsidal chancel of Melbourne church was surmounted by a blank arcade, which should be referred to

It forms a distinct passage, 20½ inches wide, and 6 feet 9 inches high, within the thickness of the wall on each side of the Tower, and its arcade has always been open to the weather. All the angles are solid except the North-west, containing the staircase: there are four narrow doorways opening from the galleries to the belfry, which originally included this as well as the stage over. The columns, capitals, and bases are of stone, rude in work-manship and dissimilar in figure and dimensions, the abacus in every instance consisting of a single course of brick finished with an under-slope of cement. The brick is laid on edge in many places in these walls, in order to preserve the level surface: recourse to this contrivance

Capital in the arcade of the exterior Gallery of the Tower.

on account of its close resemblance to the above feature. The church is cruciform, and originally had an apse on the East side of each transept, in addition to that of the chancel; but these established forms of Norman architecture were seldom respected in later times, even in instances wherein the object was not that of gaining space by their removal.

occurs in cases wherein stone or flint was introduced, but fell short of the required thickness. The Roman brick is seen built up in this manner on the exterior of the octagonal turret on the angle of the North Transept, and we particularly notice it here on account of the markings on one of them, made by the workman immediately after the clay had left the mould.

These lines were intended to roughen the surface, in order that the mortar might adhere more firmly to the brick: many fragments have been found thus scored, but these rudely formed indentations were not commonly made.

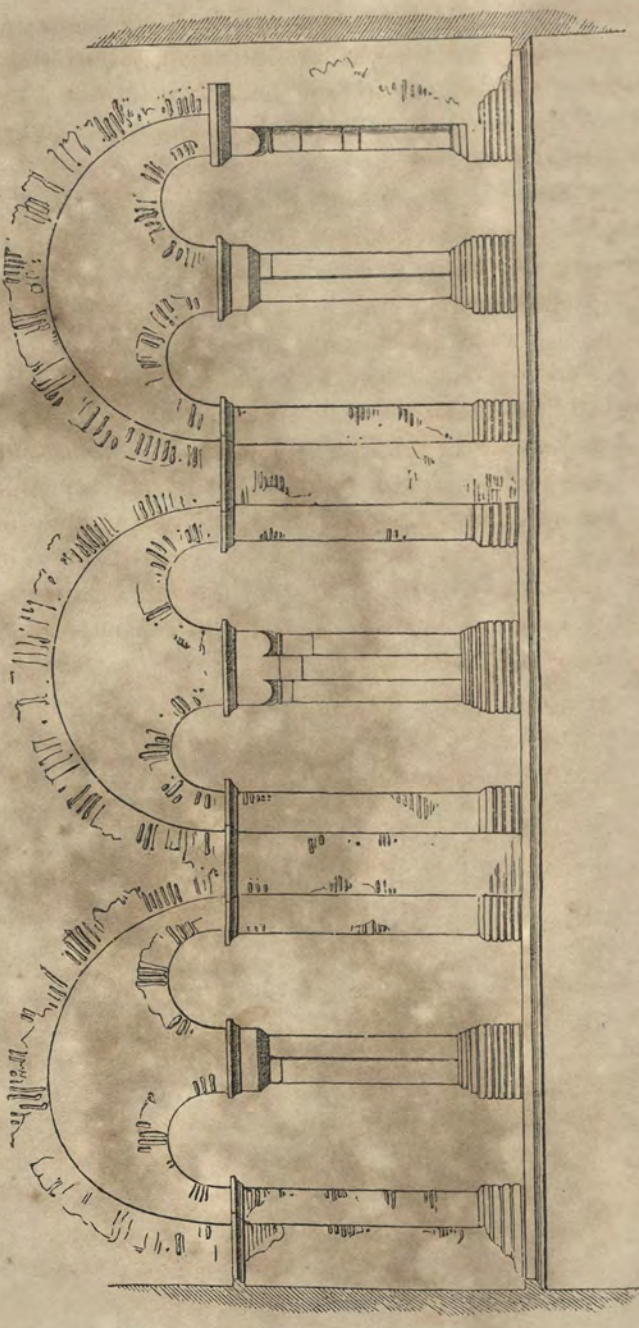
The stage below the outer arcade is occupied by windows, which, on the inside, have great altitude, and illumine the interior most brilliantly.

The upper, or belfry-stage, differs remarkably in the features of its design from the rest, having circular turrets on the angles, and piercings in the windows and in the wall over, unlike any others: the walls are built perpendicularly, as is also the interior surface of those below; but the exterior of these, from their commencement to their union with the belfry-stage, slopes or contracts more rapidly between some of the divisions than others. The buttresses which unite on the angles, and those which form central shafts on the wall between, engross a large portion of the superficies, and denote that strength was the leading consideration in the design. The wall of every stage sets within the one immediately below; but the difference in this respect is more sudden in the belfry, and admits a bolder relief in the circular buttresses and the coupled shafts between the windows; the latter now end abruptly under the cornice of the embattled parapet, but the former, perfectly plain, rise to the modern summit, above which they were finished in accordance with the other turrets. The outer arches of the windows spring

from columns; but the double openings within are formed with piers having impost mouldings of brick, the space between the larger and smaller arches being distinguished by triangular piercings, and the spandrels over by lozenge-shaped apertures.

The foregoing may suffice for a general description of the Tower; but it seems necessary to enter into the subject more minutely, in order to convey a correct notion of the various features which have been enumerated, and the union of brick and stone in the design: there is but a frugal quantity of the latter material; it may be observed, though irregularly introduced, in the four great arches, but the gallery immediately over, so ornamental to the interior, has received the chief embellishment of the kind. The design is regular in the number and order of the arches; but there is a strange diversity in the subordinate pillars, which are single, double, or triple, one block being used if deemed of sufficient strength, and several slips placed close together to answer the purpose of support; a contrivance which seemingly exhausted the quantity of masonry allotted to this portion of the work, before every pier had received its intended share, and obliged a return to the common material.

But as many curious particulars are to be observed in the formation of this arcade, we will examine it in detail, commencing with the North elevation, represented on the following page, which has been selected as perhaps altogether the most curious of the four. The stone was brought from the quarries of Barnack in Northamptonshire, and throughout the Norman portion of the building the masonry is chiefly of the same quality.



Elevation of the open arcade on the North side of the Lantern.

The detached pillars on the North side present this difference, that while the one in the centre consists of three blocks, an oblong square one sided by two of a semi-

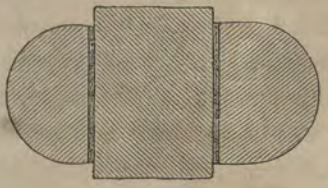


Fig. 1.

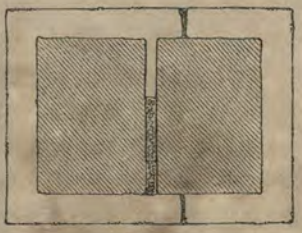
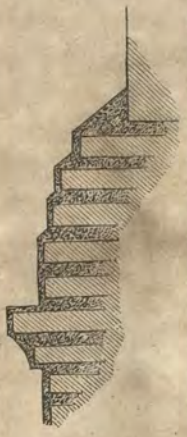


Fig. 2.

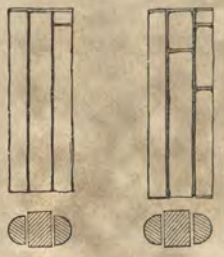
circular shape, the others are rectangular and in couples, jointed in front in order to conceal the appearance of their union from below. The capitals of the former are Norman,

those of the latter are square blocks, with an underslope to suit the size of the supports, and as to workmanship, no doubt of the same age. The piers of the inclosing arches as well as those at the extreme angles are of brick, 20½ inches in depth, the one towards the East having a semi-column of stone with a Norman capital and base, and in this instance the abacus is of the same material, but deeper than the rest, on account of their being formed of two courses of brick, each overlapping the other, and finished with cement, as shown.

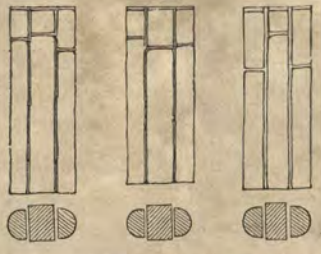
The plinth upon which the stone base is elevated, is formed of four courses of brick; the other plinths vary in height as well as in the number of courses composing the bases, which with the assistance of cement appear in a series of slopes. The capitals, like the bases, differ in height; but the same expedient was adopted, in order to apply the blocks of masonry to their places, and the North elevation shows the manner in which the shorter shafts were pieced to this end. No pains were taken to square the extremities of these pillars; a thick layer of cement answered the purpose, and the masonry thus united is without any other tie than that provided by the capitals and bases.



The columns on the East side are circular, 4 feet 6 inches in length, and 14 inches in diameter. The capitals are Norman, wrought in single blocks to the



Shafts on the South side of the arcade in the Lantern.



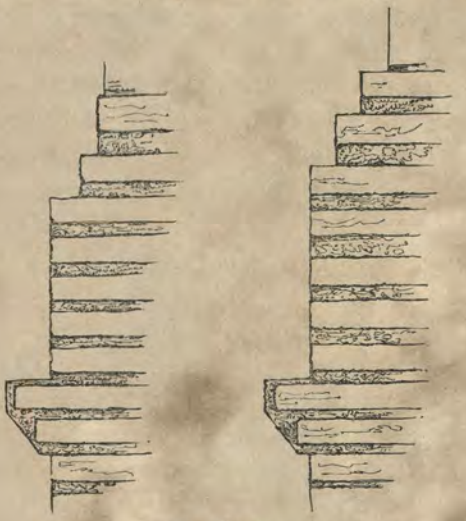
Shafts on the West side of the arcade in the Lantern.

Capital and base of the octagonal pillar on the South side of the arcade, in the Lantern.

same pattern, but differing in size. The bases are of the same age, but with various mouldings, and in every instance raised upon plinths of brickwork.

Two of the detached shafts on the South side correspond with fig. 1. p. 125., and are in single heights or of several pieces. The third had evidently been a misshapen block, which suggested an octagon: to this was given a Norman base, with a substantial intervening layer of concrete mortar. The capital and base are represented on the preceding page.

All the shafts on the West side agree with fig. 1. p. 125., and have capitals of Norman workmanship with an abacus of brick. Their heights are 4 feet 6 inches and 4 feet 9 inches, the plinth being raised to supply the accidental deficiency in the length of the stone.



Brick plinths.

Base. Impost.

The impost and base of the piers are of brick, and formed as here shown. The uncommon rudeness of the whole of the masonry can scarcely be imagined: the greater part of that which forms the pillars seems

to have been set up as it came from the quarry, and no attempt was made to give that which was hewn into the figures of capitals a superior appearance.

The floor of the gallery is level with the cornice which surrounds the interior of the Tower over the four great arches. The height to the vaulting is $8\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and the width 23 inches.

It is more than probable that the blocks of masonry forming the columns, wherever they are found of this plain description, were brought with the brick from Verulam, and not being applicable to the design, were made so with very little labour; the triple piers just referred to, would scarcely have been formed of so many separate stones under different circumstances, and the imperfect shape of these blocks and of others in the Transepts seems to betray the re-application of stonework which had served another purpose in an older building, otherwise we should not observe so superior a finish in some of the capitals, bases, and abacus-mouldings which were wrought for their positions, and probably in stone procured from the same source. It is likewise to be observed, that the capitals do not in all cases fit the columns: they must have been prepared by different hands at different times, and without particular attention to dimensions; but as they were executed so were they joined together.

The pillars had been sorted from a store of masonry — the ruins of Verulam, and the available materials of the Saxon church; and the scale they furnished, though not always regarded in diameter, was observed in altitude, some being considerably larger than others, to correct the want of length in the columns. The marks of the axe and saw are plainly discernible; but it is evident that the use of these implements was restricted to the object of giving only general forms to the uncouth blocks of masonry.

The preceding figures represent the different features described; the gallery is vaulted, and the doors opening to the staircases and to the different roofs of the church

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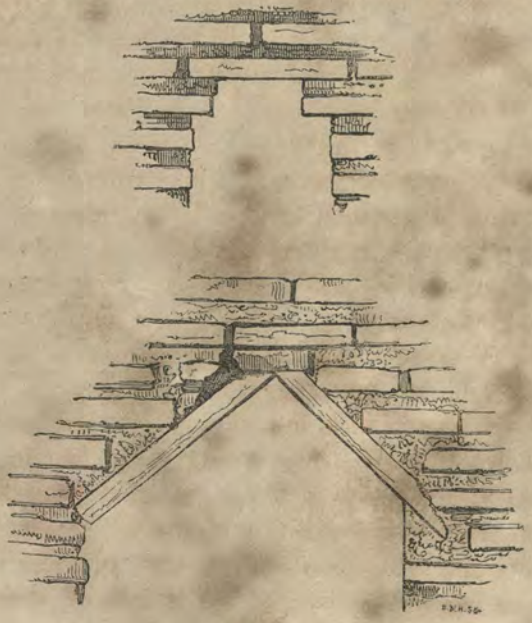
INTERIOR VIEW OF THE BELFRY

are formed of brick, of which the exterior arcade and the interior of the belfry are substantial and interesting specimens, with detail similar to that of other examples shown in the engravings.

The interior of the bell-chamber, never having been covered with cement, exhibits most fully the construction of its walls; the brickwork of which they consist is carried in regular courses through the deep reveals of all the openings to the exterior. The peculiar formation of the interior arches of the windows, and the various ornamental piercings on the sides, are not so easily described as represented with the pencil, and the view in the interior, showing these curious particulars of the Norman brickwork, and at the same time the ancient timber framing by which the spire was supported, may be deemed useful and interesting.

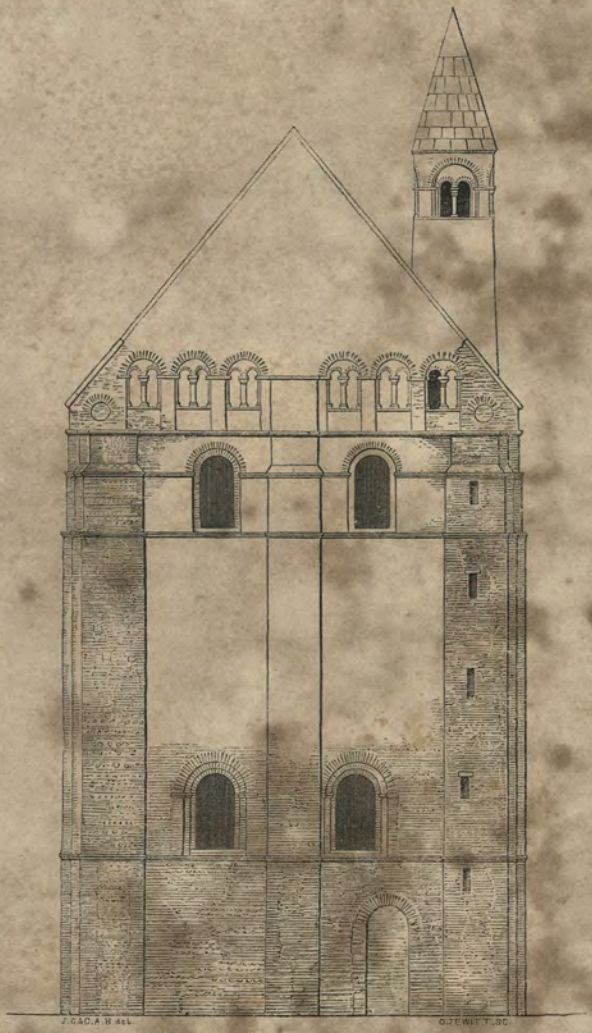
The staircase in the North-west angle of the Tower approached from the clerestory of the Transept, and ascending to the summit, presents in one of its loop-windows



a feature too remarkable to be overlooked. The arch is straight-lined, or gable-shaped, formed of bricks, as shown in the preceding figure. Others are corbelled in order to contract the space to suit the length of the bricks which cover the openings, and in some cases these lintel-bricks are laid diagonally.

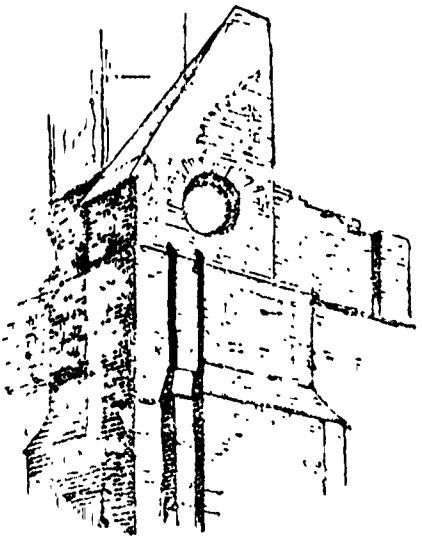
THE TRANSEPTS.

THE noble design which the front of the Transepts presented when the lofty wall was surmounted by a broad and fleet gable spreading over its extreme width, may so far be traced from the remains which have survived the alterations of various periods, that no essential feature would be wanting to its complete restoration. A central pilaster-buttress divides the breadth into two bays, and similar buttresses, with a still broader surface, stand near the angles, and terminate below the gable-springers: the spaces between are only sufficient to admit of a single window in each; these are in two stages, and range with those of the clerestory and aisles, the triforium never having received light from the exterior. The lower part of the gable was enriched with a tier of blank arches, inclosing others with a column in the middle, according to the pattern assigned for imitation by the Norman architect, wherever this kind of embellishment was introduced, which was not departed from for any more ornamental combination. The columns and bases are of stone, and the abacus and impost mouldings of brick; the upper part of the gables has been destroyed, but the springers, with considerable portions of the slopes, remain on the sides, and owe their preservation to the turrets which partly rest upon them. In their complete state they were out-topped by the *cones* of the circular turrets, which were like those on the chancel of the Church of St. Peter in the East, Oxford. The walls of these hand-



ELEVATION OF THE NORTH TRANSEPT OF ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY CHURCH.

TURRET ON THE SOUTH TRANSEPT, WITH THE CONICAL SUMMIT RESTORED



Gable-springer of North Transept.

some finishings of the staircases are slightly higher than they originally were, and are pierced in the upper part with four windows corresponding with the prescribed model before referred to. The upper tier of windows on the sides of the Transepts is uniform in number and arrangement, and to the walls under those on the East side were attached the apsidal chapels. The West side of the South Transept has been altered; but in that of the North Transept the Norman windows appear on a level with those in front, and were repeated with precise uniformity in the aisles of the Nave, one in every Bay: while only portions of these remain, as frames to the present windows of later date, a long range in complete preservation is left in the clerestory over, and on the South side in the three bays of the Choir.

The perfect preservation of the exterior sills of several of the windows in this Transept renders a brief remark upon them necessary. The two towards the North having been walled up very many years, remain as they were

originally constructed, and show a difference for which there is no apparent reason; and unless the steps in which they are formed from the face of the wall to the frame of the glass were once finished, as on the inside, with slopes in cement to prevent the lodgment of water, no means were provided for its escape, although it must be confessed that the weather of many ages has not materially impaired the durability of this part of the work; and the cement in the joints still rivals the brick in successful resistance to its operations.

As the general design of the internal bays of the Transepts differs in no material respect from that of those in the Nave, any particular description of the leading members will be unnecessary; except to remark, that in the lower stage of the front of the South Transept there are no windows corresponding with those which remain in so perfect a condition, in the North Transept: their absence is owing to the conventual buildings which were attached to this part of the church; but there are some features of an ornamental character in these portions of the interior which must not be allowed to pass without especial observation. It will be seen that much care was bestowed upon the design of the Triforium: the inclosing arches agree precisely with those in the Galleries of the Lantern: two appear uniformly in every Bay. The double arches within leave a blank space over; but the effect of this deeply-recessed arcade, which has been interrupted by the introduction of the window in the front of each Transept, must have been far more handsome when complete than it is at present. The columns of these arches are, however, the attractive features of the design: several are circular, and several octagonal; some are plain, and others begirt with mouldings and bands which in no two instances agree, either in combination or position: they all vary in diameter, but some regard has been shown for situation. All the more curious columns have been arranged on the Eastern sides of the Transepts: there are six in the South,

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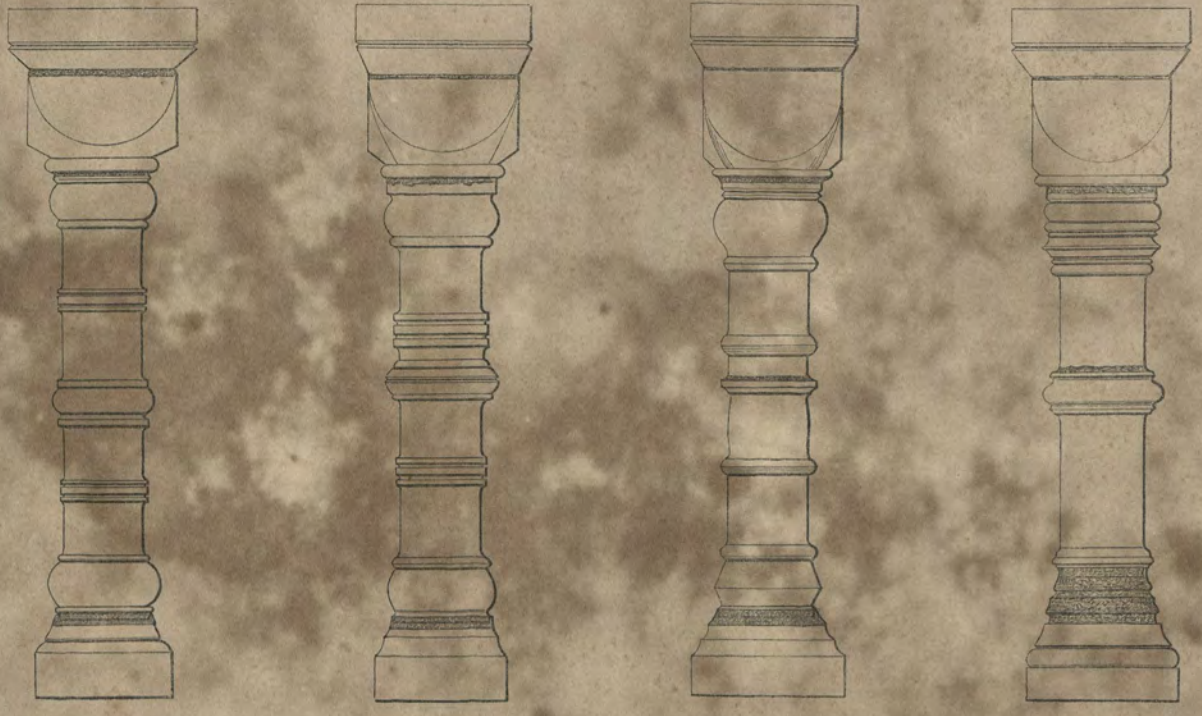
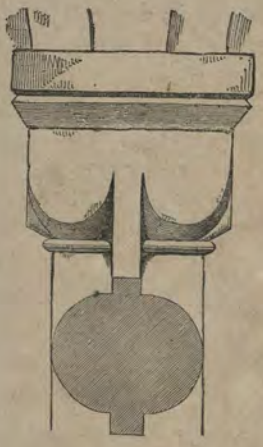


COLUMNS IN THE EASTERN TRIFORIA OF THE TRANSEPTS.

and only two in the North Transept, over the arch of the aisle. In all these bays the central column is plain and cylindrical; in all the others the columns are coupled: those of an octagonal figure are not uniformly placed to agree with the plane of the wall and capital. The capitals of all are of Norman workmanship, simple in form, but not all precisely alike: many are excessively heavy, and some so much taller than others, that we must repeat the remark that they were obviously prepared for columns brought from another building, and were executed with so little regard to the various sizes of their supports that their addition increases the rude and primitive character of these singular relics of antiquity. The bases rest upon plinths of brick, and are of different forms: many are Norman; while of those belonging to the banded pillars, some are of the same date, and others original; but no two are alike; and the mouldings are so closely connected, that it would be difficult to determine the line of separation between the shaft and the base. The pillars in the Gallery of the Tower are evidently rude blocks of promiscuous masonry, which served some inferior purpose in the building whence they were derived, but the balusters just described appear to have been restored to the office for which they were originally prepared, and are complete in shaft, capital, and base, and their appearance is rendered the more singular from the circumstance of their being surmounted by heavy capitals of Norman design, for the twofold purpose of gaining the required length, and of conferring upon them a feature in accordance with the style of the period in which the Church was rebuilt.



Among the many curious particulars presented to view

in these interesting features of the interior, the dexterous application of mouldings in composition, in order to unite the different portions of the masonry in an ornamental manner, will not be regarded as the least remarkable. The work has been so well performed, and has escaped with so little injury, that the material is not likely to be detected except upon close examination.

If some of the semicircular columns are Norman, which is highly probable, the greater number of the circular and octagonal pillars, in addition to those distinguished by bands, are of more remote origin. They are so roughly formed, that they can scarcely be supposed to have occupied a prominent and dignified position until the present one was assigned to them in the Norman Abbey.

Reference to the accompanying figures will be necessary in order to form a correct notion of these remarkable columns. They undoubtedly claim a date anterior to the Conquest, with the architecture of which era they can have no title to kindred. They surpass in multiplicity of bands almost every specimen hitherto observed of the peculiar class of building before referred to; but their affinity to it seems certain, and on this account there can be little temerity in viewing these columns as remnants of the Saxon Church which was superseded by the present structure.

The original conventual entrance to the Church was by a doorway on the West side of the South Transept, without particular distinction, and simply vaulted in the thickness of the wall. It faced the more deeply recessed apse forming the earlier Lady-chapel, to adorn which, and the approach to the Chapel of St. Cuthbert, the South Transept and aisle received, by the munificence of William de Trumpington, many important improvements in a highly-finished style of pointed architecture, well calculated to relieve the plain effect of this part of the Norman building. "He appointed there for the care of the altar and its appurtenances, and for the regulation of the

J.C. & C.A.B. del.

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INTERIOR VIEW OF THE WEST SIDE OF THE SOUTH TRANSEPT OF ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY CHURCH.

service, a discreet monk and keeper, for the more convenient performance of whose duties he chose a suitable place by the altar of St. Blase, in the South wing of our church, and, as the surrounding walls were very sadly battered and deformed by dilapidation, this Abbot restored all the ruinous portions at a proper outlay; and, in addition to this work, had two large glazed windows of wrought stone inserted, that for the finishing of his good work all might be brightened by a proper light, so that the church seemed to be in great part renewed. The execution of this work was mainly directed by Matthew of Cambridge, who, in a short time, completed the task entrusted to him."

The two windows described in the foregoing extract remain; but the assistance rendered by their slender piercings in order to brighten the light in the interior was superseded by the introduction of the great window towards the South.

The annexed view represents nearly the whole of this side of the Transept, including the aperture of the Watch-chamber, and the Norman arch in the clerestory, with the pillar and capital attached to one of the jambs.

The formation of a locker in the Norman pier of the arch opening from the Transept into the South aisle of the Sanctuary, was among the number of the improvements effected at this period. It consists of a simple recess with a trefoil-shaped arch, edged with mouldings.

Of the ambry constructed by Abbot Simon no traces exist; but the following notice of this subject is too interesting to be omitted. "After he had happily assumed the pastoral care he ceased not to transcribe and provide without blemish the best books, and authentic and expounded volumes, as well of the New as of the Old Testament (than which we have not seen handsomer). But he who desires to see these books will be able to find them in the painted almery which is in the church against

the tomb of Roger the Hermit*, where they are kept (which he commanded to be made for this special purpose), and the same Abbot left them there that any lover of the Scriptures might refer to them."

"Of the beautiful image of the Blessed Virgin, painted by Walter de Colchester in the time of the aforesaid Abbot, and of the wax taper burning before the same at certain stated times.

"Furthermore, it is added, to the praises of the same Abbot William, that he presented to our church a most elegant image of the Blessed Virgin, which the oft-mentioned Master Walter de Colchester carved with the most consummate skill, and had it consecrated by Bishop John before named; but the figure which was there previously where he handsomely placed the new one, he set up conspicuously over the altar in the place where the Mass of the Blessed Mary is daily celebrated to note, and the wax taper, which we have been accustomed to encircle with flowers, he appointed to be lighted before the famous image of the Blessed Virgin on the days and nights of the principal feasts, and in the procession which is made in commemoration of the same.

"Abbot William also wonderfully beautified the Church with a certain covering, (which is commonly called Labreschura, or ceiling,) with which he concealed the row of timbers above the famous image of the Blessed Virgin, lest the antiquity of the rafters or beams should offend the eyes of beholders: for a similar reason he also whitened the walls of a great part of the church, which the long-continued filth of dust had disfigured; so that if he had

* Gilbert, Bishop of Limerick, in Ireland, dedicated the church of St. Stephen in the town of St. Alban, "in which Roger the Hermit was ordained subdeacon, and he blessed the great cross which is set up in the southern part of the monastery."

completed what he began, by a pleasing change he would have renewed the time-worn church.

"This Abbot William, also, as he removed the ancient image of the Blessed Virgin, substituted a new one, and safely set it up in another situation, so he raised aloft the displaced old beam which was put over the high altar (which one Adam the Cellarer had done) in the Southern part of the church, near the famous image, to the great adornment of the church: on which beam, also, is figured a series of twelve Patriarchs and the twelve Apostles, and in the midst the Majesty, with the Church and Synagogue. In like manner the ancient rood, which he heretofore raised in the middle of the church, and the former figure of the Blessed Virgin which stood over the altar of St. Blase, being substituted by new ones, he had placed in the Northern part of our church for the edification of the laity, and of all who came thither, and the comfort of seculars; nor did he seem in any measure to mar the good works which he had done.

"He also completed the stonework and glazing in the windows, which are in the spacious wall above the place where lies the great ordinal, where the novices chant the matins and hours according to custom, as well as of many other windows in the North and South aisles of the church, with the assistance of the keeper of the shrine of St. Amphibal; so that the church being illumined by the advantage of additional light, seemed as though rebuilt."

The *spacious wall* referred to at the close of the preceding extracts could be no other than that of the South Transept; which, as before observed, was blank in the lower part, on account of the buildings which were joined to it on the exterior. The windows with which it was surmounted in the 13th century were brought down to the foot of the triforium stage; and we may readily imagine their character, with detached columns, in order to preserve the uninterrupted course of the lower gallery:

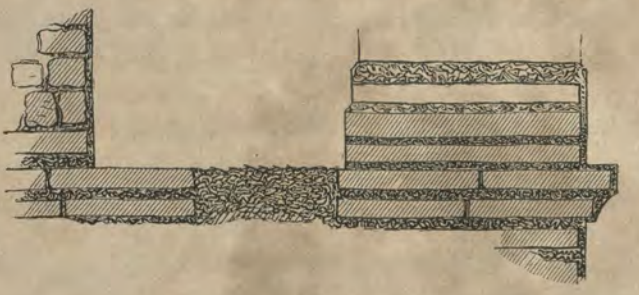
but the light thus provided was not deemed sufficient at a later period, and the entire height and breadth of the wall within the same limits was displaced for the sake of gaining a broader surface of glass.

Communication with the different galleries in the upper part of the church by means of staircases, if limited, was no doubt sufficient; but since the destruction of that at the West end, the approach to the higher stages, and to the roof in some directions, is rendered intricate and tedious.

The North-western Tower contained the original staircase, and an opening still remaining in the basement indicates that the same position was retained in the re-edification intended by Abbot John de Cella; but the design was changed under the direction of Abbot Trumpington, who commenced a stone staircase at the West end, on each side of the Nave, upon the level of the floor of the Triforium: the newel and steps were carried up to the clerestory, and then discontinued, although the circular shaft was formed to the top of the walls.

The use of the staircase in the angle of the South Transept was not limited to the church, although its only entrance was by an internal doorway. In the thickness of the wall through which it passes we observe a course of brickwork laid herring-bone fashion, and there are specimens of the same kind of work where the wall is uncovered in the galleries of the clerestory, in the opposite Transept. The first Norman doorway at which we arrive in ascending led to the room over the passage which separated the Chapter-house from the South Transept: it is two feet in width, with plain jambs and a semicircular arch; and is now walled up, as is also the door a few steps higher, which formed the entrance to a second room over the same passage. The lower of the two rooms just named led to the passage through the roof of the cloister, adjoining the wall of the Transept, as an approach to the watch-chamber: the line of the pent roof is marked on

the wall by a deep indent, which still retains the ancient lead flashing. The third and fourth doorways, of similar size and plain figure, lead to the Triforium; the fifth and sixth to the gallery of the clerestory; and the uppermost to the exterior of the roof. The openings in these narrow galleries had no other defence than that afforded by a curb on the outer margin, consisting of two courses of brick, as shown in the subjoined section of the triforium of the Transepts; the floor is in some places wholly laid with large tiles, and in others only partly so. By the



alteration of the front of the Transepts in the thirteenth century, the communication between the upper galleries on the sides of the clerestory was destroyed, in order to obtain a lofty elevation for the lancet windows which occupied the full height from the Triforium to the gable: to supply the loss thus occasioned a staircase was formed in the Eastern angle of each Transept, and surmounted by an octagonal turret. The steps commencing at the Triforium, with the newel, are of stone, and lead to a steep ascent formed at the same time in the thickness of the wall, and conducting to the gallery of the clerestory, and thence to the circular staircase in the South-east angle of the Tower.

The passage is narrow, but direct, and is formed without recourse to the ingenious contrivance of lapping the steps, as seen in the approach to the elegant lantern-turret of the ancient Church of the Grey Friars at Lynn Regis. The

base of one of the pillars of the Norman Triforium now forms the stepping-stone at the foot of Abbot Trumpington's staircase in the South Transept.

The staircase in the North Transept presents nothing particularly worthy of remark: in both Transepts it was found necessary to encroach upon the uniformity of the interior by a ponderous bulk for the enclosure of the spacious circumference of the shafts. Light is sparingly admitted through the deep apertures pierced in the outer wall; and as the loops are only on one side of the turret in each instance, they rise in a line one above another from the bottom to the top of the staircase.

The lobby in front of the entrance to the stair in the North Transept is vaulted, and has had an outer doorway 4 feet 8 inches wide, with jambs and arch of brick, now nearly buried by the ground on the outside. The doorways leading to the staircases are of stone, and perfectly plain, the only difference between them being an impost moulding in the reveal of the Northern one. In constructing the interior of the shafts of these stairs to their extreme summits, bricks of small dimensions, or large ones reduced to proper lengths, were uniformly used, in order to complete the circular line of the figure with greater exactness. The workmanship is neat and regular, and the wall has always been left without a covering of cement.

It would be difficult to account for the addition of a strong wall on the outside of the South Transept, and another to the South aisle of the Sanctuary, as the commencement of the new work after the extinction of the Norman chapels. It is obvious that portions within the present recesses were never completed. The original openings to the Transepts were blocked up, leaving doorways of ordinary dimensions to the Sacristy, which was groined in stone, and entered by two lofty pointed arches in the new wall. The foundation of the outer wall towards the South remains.

ELEVATION OF ONE OF THE BAYS ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE CHOIR.

The rooms over, for the use of the Sacrist, were carried nearly to the height of the clerestory windows; their vestiges may be recognised under the assumed figure of buttresses. The stone staircase of communication with the Sacristy was not entirely removed; the arched recess, with four of the steps, has been brought to light at the base of a buttress,—the shape given to a portion of the East wall attached to the church.

The Norman Church, in the reign of King Henry III., presented a scene of dilapidation and of industry unparalleled since the time of its completion.

The efforts which were made at this period to embellish its aspect embraced a wide range: one-third of the length of the Nave, including the West front, was roofless, and in ruins; a still larger portion of the aisles was reduced to a similar condition; and the fronts of the Transepts, from the gallery-stage upwards, had yielded their solid walls and their grave design, in order that the more attractive forms of early pointed architecture might grace these prominent positions.

The Choir and Sanctuary remained inviolate during the progress of these widely extended improvements, encompassed as they were by dilapidations, and the tumult inseparable from employment of the kind; and, we may be sure, were secured from the interruptions which must otherwise have occurred to the regular performance of the Choir duties.

The new work may be supposed to have been prepared and made fit for its destination without, and afterwards brought to the church to be built up; and it was not until all the improvements here enumerated were finished, and order restored on all sides, that the Sanctuary itself was, for the first time after its completion by the Normans, invaded by the blows of the axes and hammers of the workmen.

But the Choir escaped for a time quite untouched, and

was never altered in the design of the fabric, as the three bays Westward of the tower on each side still clearly demonstrate, although improvement was carried forward on the South side of the Nave to the exact point of its union with the Choir, the boundary being defined by St. Cuthbert's Screen.

In addition to the three complete bays just named, a portion of the wall of the fourth, in the clerestory, was left standing, and the later work attached to it.

Very venerable authority may be adduced for the custom of paring away piers, pillars, and columns, for the sake of gaining space in the interior of churches, or for the erection of altars, screens, stalls, and monuments.

The ancients can scarcely be said to have endangered the stability, how much soever they may sometimes have impaired the beauty of their buildings by this operation; it was often rudely performed, no attempt being made to give a finished appearance to the injured member.

St. Alban's Abbey has suffered in this manner at the hands of the ancients to a great extent; scarcely one of the main pilasters has escaped mutilation a considerable way up in its height: in some instances they have been almost wholly removed, and in others the angles of the entire mass have been pared away, to the great disfigurement of the design. It would seem as if the architect of a subsequent period entertained very little deference for the production of his predecessors, and was not at all solicitous to conceal his indifference to the task of skilfully uniting his own work with that of an earlier age. This unceremonious process was accompanied by another, adopted to conceal either wholly or in part the characteristic features of the older style. The substance of many of the Norman piers was at different times diminished for the purpose of being incased with masonry, and brought into a less bulky or more ornamental form.

Numerous were the means devised to remove or rather to lighten the severe and ponderous aspect of the original

structure; but it was rendered more striking by the contrast of so many highly embellished additions, and it now stands out conspicuous for its magnitude, and will always receive a large share of admiration.

Its brick walls, denuded on the outside, and with jagged edges and an uneven surface on the inside, offer no attraction except to those who, overlooking these deformities conferred by age, can duly appreciate the symmetry and proportion, no less exactly maintained in this early example than in more highly finished specimens in the Norman style.

In the Transepts all the pilasters have been removed from the lower part of the walls, on account of the side altars, and in the Nave and aisles scarcely one remains entire.

The engrafted architecture of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries shows plainly the date of these mutilations, which were performed in the most ordinary manner for the sake of obtaining a broad and even surface of wall, which, in times past, glowed with the splendours of painting and gilding.

By the same process, many of the arches were made wider; but we may be sure that the greater deformities, observable on many of the angles of the piers are of more modern date, particularly those in the Choir: it would be useless to dwell upon these; but it will be interesting to refer to the alterations of antiquity.

The most remarkable occurs in the eighth pillar from the West end, on the North side of the Nave, the same in which the stone staircase is constructed in the upper part. The broad members in the front, and in one reveal, have been formed into segments of circles, and the intermediate angles sloped

away,—a rude resemblance of the clustered columns opposite, and at the West end: but the attempt was not sufficiently encouraging to be persisted in, and the mutilated pillar remains as it was left by the workmen. The adjoining pier was reduced for the sake of the altar, which stood at the Northern extremity of St. Cuthbert's Screen.

A singular and perhaps hazardous alteration was made in the fifteenth century, in the Norman pier at the angle of the aisle of the Choir, in the South Transept, by the excavation of the solid mass of brickwork for the purpose of forming a watch-chamber about ten feet above the ground, approached, as already observed, by a gallery over the cloisters, and having a window of two compartments on the West side of the Transept, facing the arch opening to the aisle of the Sanctuary. The door of entrance, on a level with the roof of the cloisters, is still discernible, and also a small square aperture pierced through the splayed jamb of one of the windows on the West side of the Transept, both of which have been walled up to the springer. These two windows, inserted by Abbot Trumpington for the improvement of the Lady-chapel on the opposite side, appeared over the roof of the cloisters: they were of limited dimensions outside, but amplified within at the expense of the Norman Triforium, into which the arches have been thrust, causing the removal of the central column in each bay, and the substitution of others of a lighter character than the Norman, and, what is very singular, of more ancient aspect than the windows themselves, for the sake of which they were introduced.

The window in the West front of the Nave, and the North and South windows of the Transepts, were inserted in the fifteenth century for the increase of the brilliancy of the interior, through the medium of a larger surface of painted glass. To these were sacrificed the beautiful designs reared in the reign of king Henry the Third, together with the Norman gables of the Transepts: the

wall between the angles in each instance was destroyed, and rebuilt with about half its substance, the space being given to the interior.

It has been a difficult task to resist the temptation of enlarging upon the merits of the splendid exhibition of pointed architecture, as its specimens, side by side, or intricately combined with the Norman, present themselves to view, challenging admiration as some of the fairest remains in existence, and such in truth they are. It is of the most exquisitely refined description from one extreme of the building to the other, as if nothing short of perfection could be admitted into the design of this favoured church. The eye moves interestingly from one feature to another, in the vast range of architecture, for the production of which wealth * as well as art was requisite, without lighting upon any that mars the rest by inferiority. It could not be otherwise, since the work of renovation steadily advanced from the commencement of the reign of King John to the end of that of King Edward II., after which period, no considerable alterations of the structure were made, and within which time the genius and refined taste of the architects who were employed seems to have been illimitable.

MONUMENTS.

THE Eastern part of the Church is adorned with two sepulchral chantries of very distinguished character: that of Abbot Wheathamstead on the South side, and that of Abbot Ramryge on the North side of the Sanctuary. The monument of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, stands on

* The great abbey of St. Alban's in Hertfordshire, if the old lands were united together, is worth at this day, in all rents, profits, and revenues, about two hundred thousand pounds a year, according to the improved rents at this day.—*Steven's addition to Dugdale's Monasticon*, vol. i. p. 265.

the South side of the Feretory, opposite to the watching-loft, which contained in the lower part almeries for the reliquaries, and presses for the sacred vestments.* The arrangement is strikingly grand: all are raised within the great arches, and present designs of equal splendour in both aspects: the canopy of Ramryge's is the most commanding, the sculpture of the Duke of Gloucester's the most masterly: they are without either tombs or effigies; but among the ornaments are interspersed so many armorial and emblematic devices that their appropriation cannot possibly be mistaken. The memorial of Ramryge is an engraved slab of Purbeck marble, which almost covered the floor of his chapel, and now lies in the South aisle of the Sanctuary, near the door of the Feretory, by the irreverent removal to which position it has sustained very serious injuries. The arms of the Abbot, with their supporters, are still discernible, and also the marginal inscription which perpetuates his particular devotion to the Most Holy Trinity.

Abbot Wheathamstead, who conferred so many benefits upon his church, bestowed no excessive cost in the adornment of his chantry, which, however, as a work of art, is worthy to perpetuate the memory of so able and generous a patron of architecture. The parapet is strengthened on the inner side with blocks of stone, placed at regular intervals, and as if a store of old material were always at hand, one of the fragments, which forms an efficient bond, presents a handsomely carved specimen of the Norman zig-zag ornament.

The Duke of Gloucester's Chantry, which was served by two priests, stood with respect to his monument, precisely like that of his Royal Father, King Henry IV.,

* The grand watching-chamber in the priory church of St. Frideswyde, Oxford, is a most interesting example: the basement is a handsome monument of stone formerly distinguished by brasses with three sedilia projecting towards the north: the upper stage, forming the loft, is of wood, richly carved and handsomely canopied.

attached to the North aisle of the chapel of the Holy Trinity in Canterbury Cathedral; and occupied the full extent of the wall between two of the buttresses on the South side. Its clear interior space is proved by the foundations to have been about 15 feet × 8 feet. It was a most exquisite little structure, groined in stone, in three divisions, and richly adorned with painting. The interior had been desecrated, and exposed to the injuries of the idle and the sacrilegious, previously to its almost total destruction.* Its East end abutted against the Norman wall which separated the court of the Chapter-house from the ground occupied by buildings on the other side of this boundary. The foundation of the part adjoining the aisle is only just below the surface of the ground, and presents the distinguishing courses of brick on its upper surface. The Altar was placed within an arch, its broad concave moulding having no other ornament than a cluster of five roses of the most delicate workmanship, immediately above the plinth moulding, and over this, in the remaining jamb, is a small square cavity or ambry: a stone seat formed in the recesses between the pillars remains. The Altar stood upon a raised pace of concrete, and a grave was made in the floor of the lower part of the Chantry, inclosed by a wall 12 inches in thickness: the inside was found to be neatly finished with

* There is a striking difference between the markings upon the stone-work just referred to, and those of antiquity so frequently to be seen on the pillars of our venerable churches: both must be regarded as the work of idle hands: the former are prominent dilapidations,—the signs of deliberate mischief; the latter almost excuse, by the pious tendency of the objects represented, the genius evinced in the designs, and the neatness with which the lines and punctures are executed, the reproach which attaches to heedless defacements of any kind. It is very singular that the ancient devices alluded to, and so commonly found engraven upon the surface of the stone pillars in the interior of churches, should so long have escaped observation. The indentations are slight, and generally below the level of the seats, and the figures often so well imagined as to be worthy of preservation. Cyphers occasionally appear; but the favourite objects were the cross, the triangle, and the circle, those upon which more time was bestowed, being complicated in an ingenious manner.

plaster, no interment having ever taken place. There was no entrance to this Chantry except from the aisle of the Church, on which side the wall or screen was pierced with three compartments, two forming windows, which were unglazed and strongly barred with iron stanchions; the third, towards the West end, contained the doorway, the position of which appears to have suggested the present unseemly external entrance to the Church, for the sake of which this elegant structure was barbarously sacrificed in the 17th century.

The Chantry stood directly facing the Tomb, and was an inevitable appendage, as a private altar in the Feretory, if admissible, would have been inaccessible, and also intercepted the shrine of St. Alban, which was finally exposed to view from no other position, thus rendering the aisle so constantly the scene of devotion and resort, as to be called the "ambulatory." The design of the Tomb was so skilfully contrived as to offer no obstruction to the view into the Feretory. The triple arches of its sides are without intermediate supports; yet science was exerted to uphold with perfect safety the lofty stone canopy upon a groined roof and pendant arches. The opening between the side piers was sufficiently broad to admit a full prospect of the martyr's shrine, and, for protection and security, a screen of iron net-work, arranged in squares within a strong frame, was permanently fixed in front, on a moulded base of oak elevated upon a plinth and step of Purbeck marble.

The side of the Church between this Chantry and the Sacristy attached to the Transept, has undergone considerable alteration. A recess of a square figure with chamfered edges is still visible on the exterior of the wall, and the masonry and brickwork of the lower part of this and also of the adjoining bay are so very promiscuous and modern in point of construction, that there can exist no doubt as to the injury which has been inflicted upon this part of the building.

There cannot be any misapprehension as to the situation

of the *Chapel* of William Wallingford, in the South aisle, between the Monuments of Abbot Wheathamstead and the Duke of Gloucester, in the place now occupied by a mass of modern brickwork adjoining the blank portion of the side screen of the Feretory. In this position his Tomb was contiguous to the magnificent High Altar Screen which he reared*, and the state of the wall renders the idea most probable that the recumbent effigy was surmounted by an open canopy of stone-work, which may have given rise to its designation.

It is singular that no particularly distinguished stone monuments of early date remain; no doubt several perished at the spoliation of the Eastern aisle, or Ante-Chapel to the Lady-Chapel, but perhaps there never were many, and that those of brass, inlaid in the floor, were more generally adopted.

The Chapter-House sheltered the dust and the monuments of many of the Abbots, among whom were here interred Paul of Caen, John de Cella, William de Trumpington, and John of Hertford, in the hope that they might be piously remembered in the commemoration of the faithful departed, made at the conclusion of the Offices performed in the Chapter.†

Abbot Robert‡ was buried " at the feet of Abbot Paul,

* Bishop Fox, in like manner, erected his exquisite Chantry in immediate contact with the corresponding screen raised by him in his own Cathedral: the Western extremity was combined with the High Altar Screen, and the Eastern made to range with that of the Feretory, by reason of the thickness of which a space remained behind the reredos, and was fitted with ambries for the chalice, vestments and missal pertaining to the altar.

† Sanderson, speaking of the monks of Durham, says, " They also went to the Chapter-house every day between eight and nine o'clock, where all the bishops in the old time were buried, and there prayed for all their benefactors, and those who had bestowed any thing upon this church."—*Rites of Durham Abbey*, p. 94.

‡ This Abbot obtained the restoration of the ancient dignities of his Church from Pope Adrian IV., a native of the little village of Abbots Langley, by name Nicholas Brekespere, who in his early years had sought the religious habit in the monastery of St. Alban. He was, however, destined for a more exalted station, his petition being rejected

in the Chapter-House, which he had handsomely built from the foundations, and is distinguished in this Church as the first who was vested in pontificals, (as his image on his marble sarcophagus testifies.)" The character of this monument may be seen in Salisbury Cathedral, in the memorial of Bishop Roger, who is mentioned as having assisted at the solemn dedication of the Norman Church of St. Alban. It is a most venerable and interesting specimen of sculpture in marble, the effigy of the Prelate in full pontificals, represented in low relief on the coffin-lid, raised only a few inches above the floor.

The Cloisters were paved with similar records, but all have perished with the buildings; and of the sculptured crosses and canopied figures in brass with which the floor of the Church was overspread, the remains are now very scanty, though sufficient to bear evidence as to the elaborate nature of many of the designs.

A single specimen, of rare beauty, has been spared; but nearly all the stones have been robbed of the metal they contained; and, as if enough had not been done towards their injury in bygone days, by the extermination of the names and effigies of the illustrious dead whose memories they perpetuated, it is the common practice at the present time still further to deface the brassless stones, by inscribing upon them the names of obscure individuals, who could have no right to violate a memorial, which, although despoiled of its distinctions, still pertains to another.

on the ground that he was not as yet sufficiently learned. Upon this refusal Nicholas went to Paris, where by his application he surpassed in learning his fellow-students. He was a Canon Regular in the Church of St. Rufus near Valentia, and became Abbot, was elected Cardinal, and at length elevated to the chair of St. Peter.

Alexander III. confirmed to the Abbot and Chapter the privilege bestowed on their Church by his predecessor, which had given rise to a lengthened suit between the Convent and the Diocesan, the Bishop of Lincoln. The dispute terminated in March, A. D. 1163, when St. Alban's became an exempt monastery, and on the Easter Day ensuing, the Abbot, wearing the mitre, with the ring, gloves, sandals, and other ornaments pertaining to Mass, went in procession to celebrate at the High Altar.

The cusped arch of a deeply recessed Tomb in the wall of the South aisle of the Choir, and of the age of King Henry III., remains; it forms part of the work of Abbot Trumpington; but its owner is no longer commemorated, and it has subsequently been made to shelter some architectural spoils which have been heaped together in an unmeaning form.

One Purbeck stone in the floor of the Sanctuary, which may with safety be assigned to John of Berkhamstead, whose mitred effigy in brass it originally presented, deserves to be noticed chiefly on account of the inscription around the verge: it is a very fine specimen, and is, we believe, for the first time accurately transcribed. The constant chafing to which it is subjected is fast effacing the Lombardic letters, which still retain traces of the cement with which they were inlaid.

✠LE:ABBE:IOHAN:GIST:ICI:
DEV:DE:SA:ALME:EIT:MERCI:WS:
KE:PAR:ICI:PASSEZ:PATER:E:AVE:
PVR:LALME:PRIEZ:E:TOVZ:KE:PVR:
LALME:PRIVNT:DEV:KARAVNTE:ANS:
E:KARAVNTE:IOVRS:DE:PARDVN:
AVERVNT

ROOFS.

THE characteristic roof in an aspiring gable has long ceased to form a feature of the exterior design: its absence cannot but be viewed as a great diminution of the noble and appropriate character of a church of remote antiquity: and the building has suffered more in general appearance from the loss of the steep Roof than the Tower can be said to have gained in point of effect by the ample height

which was given to it on its four sides by the acquisition of a basement stage. The springers of lofty gables attached to the Turrets yet remain on the Transepts, and the corresponding form is still distinctly discernible on the sides of the Tower. It seems most probable that the exterior covering was carried over the summit of the walls in the form of eaves, as a more sure means of throwing off the water, which descended to the roof below, and was thence precipitated to the ground.

We are informed of Ralph de Gobion, that "he constructed the Abbots' Chambers adjoining the Church, of most solid work, and had covered with oak shingles * a house exceedingly convenient for those who sought to comply with an unavoidable necessity of nature;" and there can be little doubt that the roof of the Church was also originally overlaid with a similar material, since it appears that Robert de Gorham, the succeeding Abbot, when he held the Office of Secretary, covered the greater part of the Church with lead, and at the same time decently whitened the interior and exterior, and repaired what was decayed by age.

The ancient material of riven oak may have been generally superseded by lead at an early period; but it was never quite discarded as a covering for the exterior of buildings, and certainly possessed the qualities both of durability and lightness, and was accordingly frequently used in after ages as a casing for spires built of timber.

It was calculated to serve for ages as an effectual covering for the roof of the Church, and was so commonly used, and so generally resorted to upon the re-edification of the buildings of the Monastery at different periods. that its value as a defence against the weather was abundantly proved; and it seems probable that the original casing of shingle remained till the thirteenth century, by which time it had fallen into decay, and its removal became expedient.

* Quercinis scindulis.

Lightness was an advantage of some consideration; but as the strength of the framework by which it was supported depended more upon the quantity of the material employed than upon the science exercised in its construction, the substitution of lead for oak was not likely to overweight the steeply pitched rafters in the absence of injury through age and decay.

The timber framing of the Roofs was originally left open to the interior, and consisted of plain and substantial woodwork, without any pretension to ornament. It appears first to have needed reparation in the time of Abbot Ralph, who is justly censured by Matthew Paris for having suffered the exquisite shrine, the work of his predecessor, to be despoiled, and assigned a portion of the proceeds to the repair of the roof of the Church. The succeeding restoration was made by Abbot Trumpington. "In his time the Roofs of both wings of the Church, which, before, being consumed by decay, and worm-eaten, admitted much rain, were strengthened with the best oak, braced and bonded with small timbers: the roof of the Tower, also, which showed great contrivance, was of the best material, well framed, constructed, and raised much higher than the old one, which threatened ruin; and all these, at a great cost, were covered with lead: they were accomplished by the diligence and industry of Richard de Thydenhanger, a monk of our convent, and Camerarius, without failure or diminution of his office; all which things were ascribed to the Abbot; for he is the doer, by whose authority anything is known to be done." *

The tiebeam was the main feature and support of these high-pitched roofs; and as very few of the larger spans in

* "In the time of this Abbot William, the church was struck by lightning in the higher roof, beyond the Treasury, and the lead being penetrated and melted, a portion of the woodwork was consumed; but fortunately there stood near at hand a vat, so placed as to receive the water as it trickled through a certain chink, by means of which the fire, which endangered the entire church, was extinguished."—MATTHEW PARIS.

Anglo-Norman churches were arched and vaulted in stone throughout, this mode of construction led in after times to flat ceilings of slight framework panelled in oak, which, perhaps, from their first introduction, were embellished with paintings. This was the case in the Nave and Transepts of the present Church; but the Sanctuary was covered with a vaulting of brick as a more becoming distinction; and subsequently, when alterations rapidly succeeded each other, and in their course completely changed the aspect of this part of the interior from the stern character in which it at first appeared, to the elaborate elegance wherewith it is now arrayed, a groined roof was erected, commenced in stone, but completed in wood, and the junction concealed by a group of shields; in consequence of which the lofty flying buttresses were left unfinished, their resistance not being necessary in the absence of a severe thrust upon the upper walls.

The proportions of this gracefully pointed roof are arresting, and the general effect conferred upon it by painting and gilding, chaste and appropriate.

The uniform level of the ceiling no longer remains: in the South Transept it retains its original height on the summit of a cornice ranging with that immediately over the arches on the inside of the lantern. In the North Transept it has been raised; but in the instance of the Nave some of the pilasters are so much taller than others as to render it difficult to decide whether the walls were increased in altitude in the thirteenth century, or at a still earlier period.

The completeness of the design of the upper part of the East end, finished with a horizontal parapet between two octagonal turrets which rise from its angles, plainly shows that the steep exterior roof of the Sanctuary was removed in the thirteenth century.

There is nothing to prove that at the time of the alteration of the fronts of the Transepts by William de Trumpington in the early part of the same century, the steep

form of the original roof had been changed; on the contrary, as the lofty gable remained a characteristic feature of the early pointed architecture, its preservation is very likely to have been secured; but not so in the fifteenth century, when the graceful lancet windows were removed, in order to admit those which have ever since impaired the dignity and the beauty of the building. One staircase turret on the North side of the Nave has been destroyed, and the termination of the parapets betrays the work of an age not far removed from our own. That on the South aisle of the Sanctuary is not original, but it consists of a series of brick courses, each overlapping the other, and is just such an one as would be suggested to the artisan by the material, and may preserve a semblance of the kind of finish formerly to be seen on all sides of the Norman edifice.

The springers of the gables of the Transepts are nearly allied to the common kind of construction just described; but the terminations of all the pilaster-buttresses were removed with the brickwork over; their relief from the walls is slighter than that of the buttresses on the sides of the Nave and Choir, which have been reduced to the same condition, although they present no similitude with regard to breadth.

The apex of the Roofs of the apsidal Chapels ranged with that of the Roofs of the aisles, immediately under the cornice of the Clerestory, and the sides of their fleet slopes remain strongly marked on the Transepts, and prove that the walls corresponded in height with each other, and with those of the aisles.

The substitution of the present depressed form of roof, with gutters in place of the steep pitch, which by overreaching the walls more effectually secured them from the mischief which operates in secret upon the timber-work, together with the destruction of the ancient means of communication with this part of the exterior, particularly in the Nave, induced those who made the alteration in

the fifteenth century to carry a way across each angle at the base of the Tower by means of arches; a parapet was now for the first time added to the walls, and the Norman cornice and the buttresses were dismembered, leaving the latter in their present imperfect state.

The care bestowed in the enrichment of the pointed architecture on the exterior of the building, was not inferior to that in any part of the interior; and it is to be regretted that the material has proved too frail to retain all the merit of the workmanship which once heightened the beauty of the design.

It is remarkable how little was ever attempted with the view of changing the aspect of the Norman building, as to the unbroken parallel lines presented by the termination of its walls, by the introduction of turrets or pinnacles, and that when parapets were raised along the sides of the Nave and Transepts, the introduction of features to vary the simplicity just named as characteristic of the earlier design, formed no part of the improvement. The diversity in the form of the building at the East end arises from its ground-plan rather than from any ornamental figure in the parapets, which were raised so as almost wholly to conceal the roof, the depressed pitch of which rendered gables unnecessary.

CLOISTERS.

The great Quadrangle, about 150 feet square, bordered on its sides with several of the principal buildings of the Monastery, having towards the North the Nave of the Church, on the East side the Transept, and Chapter-House, and on the South and West sides the Refectory, Dormitory, and other considerable apartments, formed the centre of a grand and well-arranged system of conventual architecture, thus bringing together the entrances to the different buildings, securing their privacy, and affording

a secluded and convenient space for light, air, or recreation: the particular appropriation of the garth, however, like that of the Cloisters, was various, according to the discipline of the Order.

This court in the present instance, and, as at Fountains, Kirkstall, and other abbeys of early foundation, was quite uninclosed up to the walls of the surrounding buildings; and the addition of claustral avenues, still leaving the middle area open, if not the improvement of an age most probably subsequent to the abolition of Anglo-Norman architecture, was one not generally admitted in the designs of this period.

The advantage of shelter over the doors of those buildings of the Monastery connected with the Church was, however, soon felt, and provided for; and it followed that an entire range of roofing all round the court would secure the means of communication in all seasons, no less than the convenience of a dry passage to every part of the interior within the walls which embraced it.

The perfect cloister was arrived at in this country by slow degrees: the first step towards it in the present instance was made by Abbot Robert, who, in the twelfth century, erected one along the East side, from the passage between the Transept and Chapter-House to the South side of the court: the hitherto open space between this and the wall of the Church, Abbot Trumpington filled in with a covered way, formed of sound oak timber, roofed with shingles of the same, of which the following is the ancient account:—

"He also constructed several cloisters,—namely, one between the Chapter-House and the Chapel of St. Cuthbert, lest passers-by should be incommoded by the pouring down of the eaves'-droppings: another also, of three sides, from the kitchen to the entrance of the regular cloister, which he assigned to the custody of the Coquinarius: that which also extends on the other side from the aforesaid entrance of the monks' cloister to the door of the

Strangers' Hall, which is latterly accustomed to be for guests of the Order*, he assigned to the care of the Guest-master: but the other side of the said cloister, to wit the third from the aforesaid entrance to that by which the way opens to the Sartory, he assigned to the care of the Camerarius. Also another cloister, of four sides, by which the way leads to the Infirmary, which he committed to the custody of the Infirmarer. All these he firmly and soundly constructed of oak timber, with beams and rafters, and had covered with oak shingle. And he fenced in the cloister of three sides, (which extends from the kitchen to the door against the Sartory,) it being inclosed with a partition of screenwork, lest to the space contained in the middle (that is to say, the little shrubbery,) free access should be open to all: he also appointed that the shrubbery should belong to the Guest-master."

We are not without examples of wooden cloisters of the age and character described, and may imagine that the last-named instance at St. Alban's, trellised so as to exclude passengers from intruding into the central inclosure, resembled the venerable little cloister with uprights and arches of timber, the remains of which still appear on the North side of St. George's Chapel at Windsor.

Abbot Roger, who had so greatly adorned the interior of his Church, built a cloister against the South wall of the Nave, so large a portion of which he almost rebuilt, in a superb style of architecture: but magnificently as he carried out this part of his own work, he did not deem it necessary to remove that of his predecessor, which had as yet received no injury from age, and Trumpington's Cloister was allowed to remain until the fourteenth century, in the reign of King Edward III., when the place was supplied by a fine building of stone, although not equal

* *Nigri ordinis.*

to that of Abbot Roger, to the arches, groins, and pillars of which it was most cleverly joined. At this time the Norman doorway in the side of the Transept, which hitherto formed the conventual entrance to the Church, was closed up, and a canopied niche placed in the wall near the more stately doorway, which opened directly from the Cloister into the South aisle of the Choir.*

Abbot Roger's Cloister appears also to have extended along the West side of the Quadrangle; but nothing more of his work is left than that which could not be easily severed from the wall of the Church; and the same remark applies to the later portion attached to the side of the Transept.

In order to prepare the Norman walls to receive the new stone-work, Abbot Roger filled up the spaces between the pilaster-buttresses, and in this manner obtained the means of forming the bays and recessing the compartments, without any additional thickness to the wall.

The unrivalled elegance of the design baffles any attempt at description, and the hand which performed the work with such extraordinary delicacy and beauty had undoubtedly attained its utmost skill.

MONASTERY.

Until the time of Abbot John de Cella, the early monastic buildings seem to have remained nearly as they had been left by Abbot Paul and his immediate successors; but the Refectory and Dormitory were then replaced by more graceful and commodious structures. In the time of Abbot Trumpington, the new Dormitory, which he

* In Christ Church, Canterbury, the original access from the cloisters was by a doorway on the West side of the North Transept; but the position of this, from feelings of veneration, was never changed, it being the entrance by which St. Thomas approached the scene of his martyrdom.

had lately furnished with bedsteads of oak, proved so inadequate to the requirements of the convent, that resort was made, as already shown, to the extraordinary expedient of supplying the want of accommodation by the addition of a chamber over the Chapel of St. Cuthbert: yet this can scarcely be regarded as a solitary instance of so uncommon an appropriation of a portion of the interior of the Church. Blomfield in his account of Wymondham Abbey, which was at first a cell to St. Alban's, states that the monks' lodgings, *over the South aisle*, till the Dissolution, were joined to the South side of the Church.*

Several of the more important monastic buildings formed the Western boundary of the Cloisters, and were attached to the wall of the South aisle; and a most singularly constructed passage in connexion with these, a portion of the work of Abbot Roger, was contrived in the wall, having a direct way from the cloister to the aisle, and another, at the West end, which led by a stair to the Dormitory on the upper floor, in the same manner as in the corresponding situation in the Abbey of Fountains, wherein this part of the arrangement still remains entire.

* History of Norfolk, vol. i. p. 733. Compare also the notice of the choristers' lodging in the collegiate church at Stratford-Super-Avon, "Ralph Collingwode, doctor likewise in divinity, and dean of Lichfield, instituted to the honour of Almighty God, the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin, and St. Thomas the Martyr, by the consent of Sylvester Gyles, then bishop of Worcester, four children choristers to be daily assistant in the celebration of divine service in that church, as also nominated and admitted by the warden for the time being: which choristers, by his said ordination, should always come by two and two together into the quire to mattens and vespers, on such days as the same were to be sung there, according to the ordinale Sarum. . . As also that they should have one bedchamber *in the church*, whereunto they were to repair in winter time at eight of the clock, and in summer at nine: in which lodging to be two beds, wherein they were to sleep by couples: and that before they did put off their clothes, they should all say the prayer of De Profundis with a loud voyce, with the prayers and orisons of the faithful: and afterwards say thus, 'God have mercy of the soule of Rauf Colyngwode our Founder, and Master Thomas Balshall, a special benefactor to the same.'"—DUGDALE'S *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, p. 521.

The lobby extends longitudinally in the thickness of the wall, and is in length 12 feet 8½ inches, in width 32 inches, and in height 8 feet 6 inches: the roof is an arch of stone with ribs, having a slight difference at the East end, which forms a recess 6 feet 3 inches in height, 29 inches in depth, from the angle of the cloister door, and 43 inches from that communicating with the aisle. If we might hazard a conjecture as to the purpose of this recess, we should suggest that it was designed for the introduction of a confessional, a seat of oak being placed beneath the arch at the East end. Besides the regular confessions in obedience to the statutes, there were occasions on which the tribunal would be required by members of the community on their way to the celebration of the sacred mysteries, and it was equally serviceable to those of the laity who chose to avail themselves of it.

Some idea of the well-finished character of the domestic architecture of the Abbey may be gathered from the following extracts relative to the stately buildings raised at different times:—"Abbot Geoffrey erected a spacious and noble Hall, with a double roof *, for the honourable reception of guests, near which he built a very handsome bedchamber, which we have been accustomed to call the Queen's Bedchamber, because it was appropriated to the use of the Queen, besides whom it was not lawful for any woman to be entertained in this Monastery. And he constructed another building similar to that Hall, with a Chapel towards the East, namely, the Infirmary, in which Infirmary and Chapel he commanded (as formerly) that silence should be strictly observed."

Abbot Robert "built the Chapter House and Royal Parlour, with the Chapel of St. Nicholas, and the entire portion of the Cloister in front of the said Chapter House, and the building which contains the Lavatory †, and the long Stable; and he appointed that a lamp should burn in

* Cum duplici tecto. † Lavatorii Domus.

the Stable to give light at night. He also built a granary and larder with two rooms over."*

John of Hertford "built a most noble Hall for Strangers, to which were attached numerous bedrooms. A Hall most splendidly painted, with closets and chimney, portal and under-hall (for it is double and with a crypt,) is called the Royal Palace. A very handsome portal adjoins the entrance, which is called the porch or oriel †, and also many beautiful chambers with their closets and chimneys, for the honourable reception of guests. The Hall which formerly stood in the same place was dilapidated, the walls being thrust out and time-worn, dark and unsightly, covered and patched above with shingles and tiles: but the new Hall, of which we are now speaking, with its chapels and appendages, he had well covered with lead. Moreover, he had it, together with the Bedchamber at the side, very handsomely painted and beautifully decorated by the hand of Master Richard the Monk, our best artist. Also the said Abbot constructed a notable house of considerable extent and of stone, covered with tiles, with three chimneys, opposite the great gate: by the sight and appearance of which the whole Monastery is adorned. This building having a double floor, the upper part is very aptly appropriated to the principal servants of the Abbot, and the lower part to the Larder."

Reference has already been made to the Chapter-House built by Robert de Gorham, the first mitred Abbot, of which nothing more than an insignificant portion of the North wall remains. It was situated on the East side of the Cloisters, and separated from the Transept by an enclosed thoroughfare, as a means of communication between the quadrangle and the court towards the East. These are almost the only surviving relics above ground of the Abbey buildings, and owe their preservation to their situation, and the convenient place they afforded for

* Duo Solaria. † Porticus vel oriolum.

the shelter of useless materials. The Chapter-House generally occupied this position with respect to the Church, and the covered passage by which they are parted is the usual feature in the arrangement. But there is, perhaps, no other example remaining, in which the interior design of the latter is so elaborate as the one under notice. It is arched over in a plain semicircular form with brick, springing from a cornice, beneath which the side walls are faced with an arcade of intersected Norman arches, thickly set with moulded bands, and enriched with highly sculptured capitals. The doorway at each end has been walled up, and a side opening pierced into the Transept: the clear dimensions of the passage are 29 feet 6 inches in length×9 feet 11 inches in width.

The foundations of the Chapter-House, of the Cloister, and of the walls of the buildings on the East side of the Quadrangle, have been uprooted within the last thirty years. A few detached fragments of walls are still to be seen rising above the surface of the uneven ground which yet shelters the basements of many of the traces of the Monastery.

The total disappearance of the enormous accumulation of materials consequent upon the demolition of the whole of the Abbey buildings, is a fact equally remarkable and unaccountable, observing as we do in so many other instances the use that was eagerly made of similar productions of spoliation, almost every house and wall in the neighbourhood of once flourishing Monasteries presenting indubitable evidence of the depredation that ceased not to be committed. Nothing of the kind so glaringly conspicuous throughout Walsingham, Castle-acre, or Bermondsey, is to be seen at St. Alban's, and except some sculptured fragments which have been disinterred from a meadow at Sopwell, and are now preserved by the care of the owner of Oaklands, no detached relics showing the beautiful workmanship of capitals, bases, mouldings and groins are to be met with.

The precinct, which comprehended about 40 acres, was nearly square: three of its sides are precisely defined, the North and East by the High Street and Holywell Hill, the South by the river, and the West by the road leading to the Abbey mill at the South-west angle.

The North-west angle, within which was formed a spacious court, entered from the West by a gateway, and presenting towards the East the front of the Church and the boundary of the Cemetery of St. Andrew*, and towards the North a range of buildings with the great inner gateway in the centre still standing, is the only portion of the ancient boundary that can no longer be distinguished. It was destroyed before the year 1634, when a map of the Town was taken, which, though not very detailed, is sufficiently accurate with respect to the buildings to supply some useful though slight information relative to the subject of inquiry.

* Oct. 11. 1729. "They write from St. Alban's, that some workmen in digging a foundation of a house in the abbey orchard, discovered the remains of an old Romish chapel, from whence they took up three figures in brass of most exquisite workmanship, viz.: a crucifix, an image of our Saviour about the length of a small child, and a Saint with the bowels issuing from the body and twisting round a small pillar, supposed to have lain there several hundred years: they were carried to the Crown Inn, where great numbers of people resort daily to see them." —*Collection for Herts at Oaklands.*

This notice refers to the Chapel of St. Andrew, which eventually became parochial. It was customary to erect a Chapel or Church in the immediate vicinity of conventual establishments, as well for the use of the servants employed within the precincts, as of strangers. In many instances these buildings remain, while the monasteries upon which they were dependent have perished, as at Oseney Abbey, St. John's, Colchester, and the Priory of St. Pancras, at Lewes.

It will perhaps be almost superfluous to remark that the figure of the *Saint* represented St. Amphibal, whose martyrdom so soon succeeded that of his distinguished disciple, and respecting whom the following curious particular is registered:

"289. Amphibolus Martyr primus Civitatis Scholarium Cantebrigiæ Rector.

Hoc Anno S. Albanus Angliæ Prothomartyr, ejus Universitatis in Artibus Magister, persecutione Dioclesiana Martyrio coronatur."

Catalogus Summorum Cancellariorum Almæ Universitatis Cantabrigiæ.—PARKER'S *History of Cambridge*, 1622, p. 188.

The existing gateway, formerly leading to a quadrangle about 400 feet square, encompassed with buildings which, on the East side, were joined to the angle of the Church, was faced by another gateway opening to the Abbey. The boundary of this Court is lost by the destruction of "the King's Stables" and of all the other structures arranged on its four sides, except the great gateway, which presents a most stately pile of building: its height and magnitude are unusually great: an arch, with a postern, leads to the interior: the roof is groined in stone, and on the sides are doorways which formed the approaches to the staircases and to the different apartments: these are very numerous, and the principal chamber in the centre, over the archway, spacious: the ceilings have beams of oak supported upon stone corbels, and many of the fireplaces are ancient. But the most remarkable portions of this building are its groined avenues, two on each side of the archway, incorporated with the present edifice: one of those on the West side is of the age of the thirteenth century, and extremely elegant. The wooden gates have been removed, but the fragments are still preserved.

The Tower gateway on the North side of the precinct stood nearly opposite the Queen Eleanor Cross, and Campanile or Belfry in the market-place, now the site of the house built by Edward Strong, the mason of St. Paul's Cathedral. The old drawing merely indicates the form of this building, which was lofty, and of breadth sufficient to admit a spacious archway with apartments over: the crypt or underground room was partly destroyed when the house was built, but considerable fragments of the ponderous walls remain, with a large and deeply recessed locker on the South side. The architecture of this gateway was of early date, and its fabric was substantially repaired by Abbot Wheathamstead.

Many buildings in the occupation of the Abbey stood

in its immediate vicinity; the Grange and the Mill* were ranged towards the West, and extended over a considerable surface, and large tracts of land, including the orchards, pasturage, and fish-pools, stretched along the Southern side, supplying by their various stores the constant demands of hospitality, and contributing in no small degree to the splendid character of the domain.

The public way from the street quite across the Eastern part of the Church to the ground overspread with the ruins of the Monastery, was not perpetrated until after the plan referred to was taken. It appears that the ancient gateway was demolished to make room for the house just named; and an open archway was constructed within its walls, to preserve the approach to the orchard or meadow which gave access to the school held in the Lady-Chapel; and to obtain perfect freedom of communication the public passage through the Eastern aisle was made, and has ever since been allowed to continue.

The wall of the precinct, which bounded the streets on one side, had been entirely removed in the 16th century, and tenements built along the line of a more lowly description than those by which, in the course of years, they have been superseded.

It must be regarded as singularly unfortunate that the Abbey Church, the glory of the place, should be so hidden from view that even the summit of its lofty tower cannot be seen above the houses in any of the streets; and it is only at a distance, and on approaching the different entrances to the town, that this grand monument of antiquity rises in stately proportions over the mean objects by which it is so completely environed.

The storm which gathered around the ancient Religious

* The mill of Reading Abbey, which has never ceased to be used, is, perhaps, the most ancient and curious building of the kind now existing in England. It is of Norman architecture, richly embellished, and so well adapted to its purpose, and substantially built, as to remain without material alteration of its internal arrangement.

institutions of the kingdom, visiting them alike with unrelenting fury, hovered over the Abbey of St. Alban, and at length burst upon it on the 5th of December, 1539, summarily closing its illustrious history by the seizure of its revenues, the spoliation of its possessions, the ejection of the inmates, the ruination of their habitations, and the desecration of their magnificent Church.

The Monastic buildings, wrested by violence from their lawful tenants, were unscrupulously transferred to one of the obsequious courtiers who in those days of rapine could share in the enjoyment of the ill-gotten fruits of impiety, rapacity, and sacrilege.

The destructive propensity of the men who acquired such property was a recommendatory qualification, and we have many infallible proofs of the alacrity with which they pursued their mischievous avocation.

At the close of his toil the owner of the site of St. Alban's Abbey had nothing left but heaps of ruins and an unavailable plot of ground, which has ever since remained unoccupied; but a veil of beautiful verdure has overspread the ground, as if to conceal from view the last traces of barbarism.

The marvel is, that the fabric of the Church should have escaped dilapidation, and that in its entire condition it was not deemed too large a compensation for the Church of St. Andrew, which had been wantonly demolished; but as they who disposed of the property were not the rightful owners, and its abundance on all hands led to prodigality, there was no inducement to seek an equitable barter, and certainly no desire to incur trouble and expense, in a case wherein both might be so plausibly avoided.

If, in addition to the valuable notices preserved to us of the different leading members which composed the vast range of the conventual buildings, the positions had fortunately been assigned to the noble apartments which are merely known by name, the interest would have been

considerably increased; but in this, as in other instances, the venerable chronicler touched briefly upon the subjects he had occasion to notice, at the same time referring those who desired to be more fully informed to the buildings themselves.

His description of the different cloisters leaves no doubt as to the space occupied by the more important buildings; and, by the careful study of his writings, and of other extant authorities, it would not be difficult to arrive at a correct notion of the ancient plan. Matthew Paris had no presentiment of the ruin which eventually lighted upon the structures, whose erection or adornment he witnessed with so much satisfaction; and it was no doubt sufficient for his purpose to enumerate the various apartments which augmented the grandeur, extent, and convenience of the Abbey.

The troubles which befel the Church in the sixteenth century being foreseen, the treasure, the possession of which had for ages rendered the Abbey illustrious, was conveyed for security to Rome, and subsequently consigned to the care of the Theresian convent at Cologne, in whose church of St. Mauritius in that city may still be visited the Shrine of St. Alban of England. The coffer wherein are contained the relics stands at the East end of the South aisle: it is of black marble, elevated upon a pedestal of the same, and surmounted by a figure of the holy martyr, who is distinguished by the cross and palm, and the sword: beneath is inscribed—

RELIQVIARIVM · S · ALBANI · M ·

THE END.

LONDON:
SPOTTISWOODE and SHAW,
New-street-Square.