

# British Cathedrals

ONE HUNDRED  
ILLUSTRATIONS

WITH AN  
INTRODUCTION

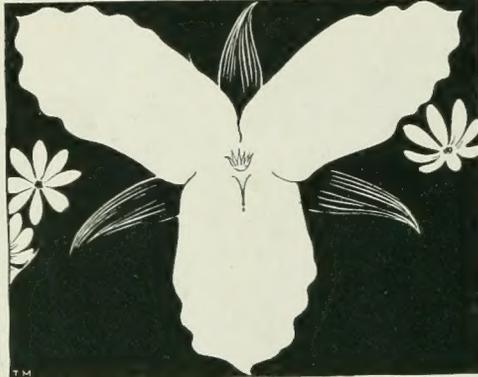
BY

JOHN WARRACK



*Christchurch Priory, Hants  
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## BRITISH CATHEDRALS

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THE CATHEDRALS  
AND OTHER CHURCHES  
OF GREAT BRITAIN

ONE HUNDRED ILLUSTRATIONS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

JOHN WARRACK

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## PREFACE

**T**HE aim of this book is not to give information about the cathedrals, but to present them as in themselves things of picturesque interest. In our day it is but too easy to pick up scraps of unsystematised information; and ninety-nine persons may be seen scrambling round the cathedrals, mere preoccupied slaves of their guide-book, for every one who is content to give up his eyes and understanding to the buildings themselves, and to that story of human effort and development which is inscribed on their walls. What is attempted, therefore, in the pages that follow, is to interest readers in the cathedrals as things of inherent beauty, and to give some rough sketch of the times and the social conditions that gave them birth. For it is only when they are appreciated as products of human thought and aspiration—thought and aspiration which kept changing their colour and shifting their direction with the passing of the centuries—that these churches, in their deeper significance, can be properly understood.

We shall of course find that, in the use and the fostering of whatever natural instinct we may have for the beauty of the ancient churches, we have need of a more or less detailed knowledge of architecture and of history—particularly the history of the arts and the social life of the Middle Ages. A list of some books on such subjects is accordingly subjoined.

The illustrations include all the cathedrals<sup>1</sup> of England and Wales, besides buildings of such outstanding interest as Westminster Abbey, Beverley Minster, St George's Chapel, Windsor, and many other notable churches in England and Scotland; and an effort has been made to choose the most attractive and characteristic parts and aspects of each building represented.

The photographs are by Messrs Wilson Brothers, Aberdeen, with the exception of that of the monument in Southwark Cathedral, which is by Messrs Valentine & Sons, Dundee; that of St Giles', Edinburgh, by Mr F. C. Inglis; and that of Christchurch Priory (on the cover) from a private negative.

J. W.

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EDINBURGH.

<sup>1</sup> The only sees not represented are those of Liverpool and Birmingham, whose present housing is only provisional.

## BOOKS RECOMMENDED

ENGLISH CATHEDRALS ILLUSTRATED (Newnes), by MR FRANCIS BOND. An excellent portable handbook to the architecture of the cathedrals.

CONSTRUCTION. This article, in the fourth volume of VIOLLET-LE-DUC'S *Dictionnaire Raisonné de l'Architecture*, is the best account of the development of construction.

CATHEDRAL BUILDERS IN ENGLAND (Seeley), by MR EDWARD S. PRIOR, is an admirable chronological and historical account of the building of the cathedrals, and may be supplemented by the same writer's *HISTORY OF GOTHIC ART IN ENGLAND* (Bell).

MEDIÆVAL ART (Duckworth), by PROF. LETHABY, is a fine appreciation of the Gothic spirit—particularly the chapters on Romance Art, and on Gothic Characteristics.

LA CATHEDRALE (P.-V. Stock, Paris). M. HUYSMANS' work is a unique interpretation of the Gothic cathedral as represented by Chartres.

SCENES AND CHARACTERS OF THE MIDDLE AGES (Virtue), by the REV. E. L. CUTTS.

WINDOWS (Batsford), by MR LEWIS F. DAY, is the best book on stained glass.

STAINED GLASS TOURS IN ENGLAND (Lane), by MR C. H. SHERRILL, is arranged specially for motorists, but is less interesting than the same writer's book on French Glass.

Green's *SHORT HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE* and Mr Gardiner's *STUDENT'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND* are perhaps the best for reference in this connection.

“L’archéologie et l’architecture nous ont révélé l’organisme, le corps des cathédrales ; qui nous en dira l’âme ?”

**I**N the very word “Cathedral” there is music and a suggestion of mediæval colour ; and “abbey” and “minster” have for our ears something of the same picturesque quality. No doubt this is largely due to the associations that cluster round such words, and to the pictures they call up of soaring columns and lofty arches losing themselves in the dim vaulting overhead, and of wide shadowy spaces, touched at times to glory by fitful shafts of many-coloured light. Thus their very names, and the visions that they present to us, send us to these ancient buildings with a certain eager expectancy,—sometimes with a too importunate demand for a response to a mood of superficial emotion. And it is little wonder if we often find ourselves disappointed, and come away feeling rather sadly that the cathedrals cannot yield us the enchantment for which we had hoped.

Sometimes this may be the fault of the churches themselves, which differ widely in quality and include terrestrial bodies as well as bodies celestial. Even the finest have lost much of their former glory. Little remains to us of the rich garnishing that beautified the interiors in early times,—the frescoes and tapestries, the vessels of gold, the statuary of wood, of bronze and silver, and of alabaster. Comparatively little, too, has come down to us of the sumptuous stained glass ; and what there is is often a mere patchwork of fragments. But worse than all is the smothering of the ancient fabric under the false classicism of a later epoch, or the bastard Gothic of misguided restorers. The stately beauty of these churches has been mauled and trampled on by the pedant and the Philistine, and their peace outraged by the benefactions of the pious but uninstructed donor. In place of the encrusted jewelry which the monks set in their windows in the thirteenth century, or the exquisite stained glass of the fifteenth century craftsmen, we find a thin, tawdry and disreputable product with the horrid savour of Düsseldorf, or of the Great Exhibition of 1851.

We are apt, too, to be set out of tune for the cathedrals by the hurry of modern life and the sordid conditions of modern travel. Instead of approaching a cathedral town by the great highroads, as the pilgrims of five hundred years ago drew near to Canterbury or

Walsingham, Beverley or Lincoln, we submit to be jolted and jarred by a railway train, which, with laborious care, seeks out an ignominious course round the backs of the breweries and among the grimy factories and tenements. These indignities, along with the choking fumes of the tunnel, the scramble for our luggage, and the sense of another train to be caught perhaps next day, hardly tend to the quietude of mind with which we ought to approach the cathedral.

Apart, however, from such distractions, which we cannot hope altogether to escape, it must be realised that what the cathedrals have to offer us is too subtle and too complex to be appreciated in a flying visit. Beauty such as theirs is a vagrant and wayward thing that will not be seized by violence nor wrested in haste. He who would learn their charm must seek to gain from the quiet cathedral towns something of their sober and untroubled tranquillity, of their patient and measured calm; and in his own spirit he must apply the lesson of the relation between the little market-place, where a few homely traders raise their rustic voices in the buying and selling of their merchandise, and the still immensity of the cathedral at whose very feet it lies. Forgetting, as far as he may, the stress and clamour of modern life, he must be content to bring to the cathedral the offering of a disengaged and expectant, yet not impatient, mind, and to wait quietly for whatever of its mysterious magic may be revealed to him. Churches, like other works of art, have for each of us their golden hour, when the charm which may hitherto have eluded us becomes profound and appealing. These hours of understanding and insight cannot be forestalled. The spell of these pillared aisles is not to be snatched with untimely hand. But for those who wait for it, the beauty that dwells there will surely wait. Is our time so pledged and parcelled to worthier uses that an hour's dreaming in the spangled dusk of some quiet minster is an hour misspent? Let us wait, then, or loiter round the aisles; or let us go, and come again. And as we wander through the winding streets where the timbered gables lean to meet each other overhead, let us cast back our mind to the time, perhaps seven hundred years ago, when the dwellers in that little community dreamed their great dream of a splendid and stately house of God in their midst, and, giving of their substance, and harnessing their bodies to bring stone and timber, and to drive the windlasses that should set the stones in their place, did each one his part in making the dream come true. Let us remember too the hazards of fire and of war, the beautifyings and the destroyings, the proud solemnities and exaltations, and the austere purgings and downthrowings; and, remembering, we shall no longer wonder if a fabric into which these ages of aspiration and

change and conflict are woven should not straightway yield its secret to the wayfarer of a day.

Let it be remembered that beauty is not a thing fixed and absolute, as plain to one man as to his fellow. Like truth, it is there only for those who can see it, and its discovery is at once the proof and the reward of a certain fineness of vision, of an ordered logic of apprehension. Yet the beauty of the churches is too rich and manifold to elude for long the eye of the true pilgrim. It may be that, leaving the streets of the town, you take your way among the green lanes and foaming orchards that encircle it, and from some gentle slope you look back and see the towering shape of the great church "like a ship for ever a-sail in the distance, with the passing light or shadow upon its grey, weather-beaten surfaces." And the first glance sets things in a new scale. The import of the cathedral, as a stretching out of human hands towards things divine, becomes plain to you. You realise the miracle of its first conception as a tormenting and disquieting vision in the brain of its founder, giving him no rest till he had dazzled his fellows with the glory of the imagination that haunted him. You picture the contagion spreading among the monks and the rude settlers and tradesmen, till an exaltation possessed the community, and the cathedral arose, soaring skyward, to stand through the ages as the visible sign and outcome of a faith greater than that which moves mountains.

It is good that our sense of the beauty of the cathedrals should be founded on, and coloured by, some picture in our minds of how it was that they came to be. Their interest is not all on the surface. If their loveliness is often manifest and immediate, it is also complex and inexhaustible. The story of the building of these churches, in their sequence and development, is the story of our forefathers' aspiration to enshrine, in a framework of fitting and solemn beauty, the spiritual mysteries by which they felt themselves to be surrounded; and of their resolve to set the infinite in visible relation to their daily life. It is the story of their discovery of stone as a noble and abiding material; of their tenacious grappling with the problems of building and of their wringing from the conflict new discoveries of beauty. It is the story, too, of their development in the ministrant arts of sculpture, wood-carving and stained glass, and of the rise of the mediæval guilds of skilled craftsmen. In a word, the beauty of these churches goes deeper than the mere sensuous enchantment of the moment; for it has its roots in the spiritual needs of man, in the history of our civilisation, in the static necessities of construction and in the spirit which came to flower in the evolution of the Gothic arts. These are studies not only interesting in themselves, but indeed imperative for

those who would see something more than the surface glamour of the churches. When we understand what manner of men our forefathers were, how they lived, what were their hardships and limitations, and what their thoughts, their capacities and their aspirations, we shall then find that what at first fascinates us simply as noble design, or as furnishing exquisite detail, may be read at last as a fabric of rich significance, yielding up beauties whose mere existence had been hitherto undreamed of.

Such glimpses, then, of the romance of the cathedral-building age have their value in opening our eyes to the beauty of the churches themselves. For their charm is something far beyond the interest of mere antiquity, though the mellowness of age is an element of their attraction for us. "Is not old wine wholesomest, old pippins toothsomest, old wood burns brightest, old linen wash whitest?" This quality is enough in itself to draw antiquarian enthusiasts to the cathedrals. An old writer describes to us "One that hath that unnatural disease to be enamoured of old age, and loves all things as Dutchmen doe cheese, the better for being mouldy and worm-eaten. . . . He will go you forty miles to see a saint's well or a ruined abbey." But there is more than archæology in the ancient churches; passion and aspiration are built into their walls. They are, it is true, the work of men of old time, but it is a thing of greater price that the best of them are the work, not of this man or that, but of whole communities stung with a sense of the unseen and with a common inspiration to lay hold on that vision and figure it for ever in imperishable stone.

Nor is it enough to say that their interest for us is a question of history—at least of history in an abstract or academic sense. Yet it is profoundly true that they do stand to us for history, crystallised into forms of exquisite intrinsic beauty; for history, broken up, as light is into its prismatic constituents, into a multitude of aspects of human art and human knowledge; for history, showing us man in his romantic moments and at his highest levels of feeling, whether in the heat of creative invention or in relation to the eternal mysteries of life and of death. In this sense the cathedrals draw us on, step by step, to a knowledge of the spiritual development of man, which is the inmost soul of history. The constant lover and student of the precious things bequeathed to us by ancient art soon acquires an instinct for "period." He comes to have a subtle sense of the qualities and characteristics of the products of different artistic epochs, and with a certain amount of experience he will be able to place within twenty years or so a panel of tapestry, a stained glass window or a carved figure of a saint. This instinct he is always uncon-

sciously correcting and refining. If his experience has been among the arts of England and France, he will find his knowledge misleads him when he goes to Italy. This piece of carved woodwork, which he unhesitatingly attributes to the early part of the sixteenth century, turns out to be of considerably earlier date. The contradiction of his experience puzzles him, till he reflects that the classical influences which only reached France after the unsuccessful invasions of Italy by Charles VIII. and Francis I. took effect in Italy itself long before. His personal observation has driven him to history, to find there its explanation and corroboration. This is a common experience. The study of an art leads you on to a knowledge of the social conditions of many countries and many epochs. You come to see for yourself what changes in the life of the people gave rise to such and such new lines of artistic development. Like the astronomer who announced the existence and position of the planet Neptune, not from actual observation, but from its effect in disturbing the motion of Uranus, so you could have told without the history book that there must have been events to account for the Spanish influence in English literature, or in English costume, in the sixteenth century, and for the Dutch influence at the close of the seventeenth. From your delightful wanderings among old churches and châteaux, from your hours in the picture-galleries, and from your raking of the old furniture and curiosity shops, you have gained a vision of the unfolding of history and an understanding of how the spirit of man answered to the changing conditions of the centuries. And wherever you go among the beautiful objects that earlier ages have handed down to us, you go, not as a stranger, but as one among familiar things, enriching your knowledge and gaining sureness of instinct in relating whatever may be shown you to the influences and the era which produced it.

There were churches in England, and churches built in stone, before 1066. One of these early churches, that of Earl's Barton, is here illustrated, and in it may be traced the survival of the earlier tradition of building in wood, and also the influence of Romanesque ideas. But it is after the Conquest, and as a direct result of it, that the great church-building movement began. There is, in the château of Falaise, some twenty miles south of the Norman coast, a little chamber, or rather a rude stone cell, for it is hardly more than six feet every way, where William of Normandy was born. Here, high in the ancient fortress, which crowns a sheer cliff at whose base the sun-bleached red roofs of the little town are set among thickly clustering foliage, we are at the very fountainhead not only of English architecture but of English character and English civilisation. For it was

the child to whom Arlette here gave birth who was to graft on the Saxon stock the Norman qualities of pride and confidence, and the genius of adaptability. It was he who was to organise our civilisation on a feudal basis; and he who was to introduce the majestic Norman conception of Romanesque ecclesiastical architecture to England.

With the splendid local quarries to draw on, William had already shown his love of building by erecting the two great Abbeys of Caen. Enriched by his victories, and conscious as he was of the missionary aspect of his conquest of England, and, further, quick to see the advantage of utilising the enormous power and influence of the Benedictines, he inaugurated in England an era of church-building. In course of time, to fortify himself against a conquered but still hostile population, and to establish a network of strong centres of Norman influence, he replaced the Saxon bishops by Normans, in many cases by men of his own blood, to whose control he entrusted the old Benedictine foundations. This conjunction of monk and bishop at once gives a distinctive character to the English cathedrals. In France the cathedrals, or bishop's churches, are distinct from the monastic churches. But with us the monastic origin of the cathedrals is reflected in the plan of the building. The monks, as separated from the world, had to be provided with a choir altogether apart from the people's choir; and the result of this is an elongation of plan which is characteristic of the English cathedral. Further, the English cathedral, starting from pre-existing monastic buildings, and from the consideration of monastic requirements, and developing by degrees towards a different conception, cannot be expected to have the large simplicity of design that strikes us in the French cathedrals, most of the finest of which were erected about the beginning of the thirteenth century, and which, though they sometimes embodied relics of earlier churches, were seldom hampered by these in such a way as to disturb the unity of their effect. But what the English cathedrals lose in fluency and directness of design they gain in a kind of variegated and haphazard picturesqueness. If the whole is less commanding, the parts are more interesting. Moreover, while the French cathedrals are generally closely beset by surrounding houses, only the *parvis* being secured as an open space from which the western façade can be adequately seen, many of the English cathedrals have gained from their monastic origin a setting of the most charming kind—a green turfed close, round which are clustered the houses of the clergy. And it is easy to trace the effect of this open setting on the picturesqueness of the design, which has had to be made interesting from all points of view.

Our early Anglo-Norman cathedrals have certain characteristics

which strike the eye at once, and which tell us something of the age in which they were built. The massive construction, the mere quantity of the masonry, bears witness to the ample resources of the Benedictines and to their command of unskilled labour, but it also reminds us that these were days when there was no exact knowledge of strains and stresses, and when the builders, for want of this knowledge, sought safety in the accumulation of material. These narrow naves recall the fact that their width was limited by the length of the timber with which they were roofed. The small, round-topped windows are not evidence of any preference for a low and mysterious illumination, but take us back to the days when window glass was unknown, and when oiled linen was stretched across the openings to keep out the wind and the rain.

Such characteristics, and the limitations on which they are founded, formed the starting point for the rise of Gothic architecture. Its development is a progress in the elimination of redundant material. It is a search for a system of roofing less perishable than wood, more stable than the earlier efforts with stone. It is a slow discovery of the anatomy of construction, and a gradual mastery of the expressive use of structural forms. It is an advance from dark and sombre to clearly lit interiors. We can trace in it the emergence from an epoch of war to one of peace and security; and the transference of architecture from monastic control into the charge of skilled craftsmen and the citizens.

It was in the latter part of the twelfth century that the breaking away from the Romanesque tradition began to manifest itself. No doubt the workmen who had now for some generations been trained under the Benedictine monks had begun to acquire some specialised skill, and to discover improvements on the old cumbrous methods. As the cost of the stone must have mounted to large sums, owing to the material having, in many cases, to be shipped from Caen and then, it might be, carried for considerable distances overland, any economy in the quantity required in building would be of immediate value. Especially would such economy appeal to the reformed orders, who had by now begun to build. Thus the experience and inventive resource of the workmen began to have an increasing importance, and an era of gradual improvement in the status of the craftsman thus set in. As time went on his influence in the carrying out of the work became more and more commanding, and a time came when the plan of the building, embodying the requirements of the clergy, was handed to the master mason, and the whole executive part of the work was, under ecclesiastical control and supervision, his affair.

The advance in the position of the craftsmen led of course to the better organising of the trade guilds. These had originated after the Conquest, as mere citizen guilds for mutual protection and insurance against the incursions of the Danes and the feudal exactions of the Normans. From this they became merchant guilds, supplying the germ of our system of municipal government; and when, in time, the more influential members began to devote themselves to banking and other higher branches of commerce, the tradesmen formed guilds of their own. These laid down regulations for the proper training of apprentices and insisted on a high standard of workmanship; and they concerned themselves also with the general interests of their trade. They thus formed an organisation for the transmission of the skill and special knowledge which their members had acquired, and they set a standard of sound work and fair dealing which has honourably distinguished us among the nations even to our own day.

The debt of Gothic architecture to the guilds is a heavy one, though where precisely it begins and ends it is not easy to determine. Whether they were in such close touch with similar guilds throughout Europe as to draw on their traditions and acquire their methods; whether, as some have argued, they derived the pointed arch from Byzantine sources by such indirect channels, or whether, as seems more probable, they arrived at it as a natural solution of the problem of vaulting, are questions that need not be discussed here. The main point is that Gothic architecture owes its origin to a reaction against the domination of monastic influence. It is the expression of a gradual and conscious democratic awakening. Labour, which had hitherto been an almost passive tool in the hands of the monks, was reaching towards freedom and independence. Building was no longer a servile taskwork imposed from without in order to the perpetuation of the monkish tradition, but the discovery of a man's own capacities, and a matching of his mind against the problems of construction and design.

But besides this economic change there was an intellectual and spiritual awakening due to other causes. The coming of the Dominican and Franciscan Friars to England, and their work as preachers, as pioneers of education, and as helpers of the diseased and distressed, could not but have a far-reaching influence on the townsmen among whom they laboured. Not the least part, perhaps, of the effect they produced in moulding the characters of those whom they thus influenced may have been due to the purity of their devotion, in these early days, to a romantic ideal. To the townsmen, just awakened to a sense of their own powers and responsibilities, and just becoming conscious of a richer and more personal view of life,

the contact with these enthusiasts and their allegiance to the call of the divine, must have had a quickening and inspiring force. As the friars found, in their work of healing the sick and relieving the poor, a life which satisfied their aspirations, so many of the citizens began to realise that their work too might be dignified and transmuted by the influence of like ideals. Thus there was an awakening of interest in religion, along with a general advance in craftsmanship; and the bishops, noting these movements, were able to take advantage of them and use them in the erection of churches in which the monastic requirements began to give place to a provision for the needs of the people.

Another factor, and one of a more concrete and technical kind, which has to be taken into account in picturing the Gothic development, is the introduction of window glazing. But for this it is impossible that windows should have developed either in size or in beauty of form as they did. Once they had found the means of securing the openings against rain and wind without shutting out the light also, the early builders started to improve the illumination by enlarging the windows. Had window glass not sprung from the art of the jeweller and been associated from its beginning with mosaic effects of colour; or had the Cistercian ban on colour, which was part of their reaction against the architectural luxury of the Cluniacs, become universal, it may well be doubted whether window tracery would ever have become so highly organised an art. But as rich colour was an element in the early glass, windows at once became lodestars for the eye, and the development of beauty of silhouette in the skeleton of supporting stone was only a matter of time. It may be noted too that the glorious windows which beautify our churches and flood them with an "incense of colour" are the offspring of the temperate illumination of northern climes. In Italy the glare of light through large glazed windows would be intolerable. On the south side of the nave in the cathedral of Orvieto we find small, high-set windows, fitted not with glass but with alabaster, which, like a clouded and milky parchment, mitigates the fierceness of the Italian sun.

Windows of the early thirteenth century medallion type may be seen at Canterbury,<sup>1</sup> Lincoln and elsewhere, though its full glory cannot be realised without visiting the cathedrals of Chartres, Bourges or Le Mans. It is so exquisite and so characteristic a product of the age in which our finest cathedrals were built, that some attempt must be made to describe its qualities and its special significance.

The characteristic colour effect of this early glass is an angry,

<sup>1</sup> See illustration of the tomb of Henry IV.

smouldering blaze of violet, made up of the clash of infinitely varied red and blue. The component pieces are seldom more than four or five inches across, and the windows owe their jewelled brilliance to the fact that the pieces are not flat, but irregular nuggets and splinters which scatter the sparkling rays at all angles. Sometimes we find a window which has the effect of black and gold; another perhaps is black and rose-colour; while still others incline in their total effect to a silvery green. But through all, there is the magic of an indescribable, many-hued iridescence, and a shimmering radiance of broken and disquieted colour.

But besides this beauty of colour and the suppressed passion of the troubled illumination, there is a quality even more elusive which, while it cannot but be felt as a mysterious element in the emotional effect of these windows, is very difficult even to suggest. M. Huysmans, who has done more than any other writer to translate into words the glamour of the mediæval churches, associates this quality with an eastern influence. He finds in the windows a resemblance to the carpets which the crusaders brought with them from the Levant. These panels of stained glass, he says, are "diaphanous carpets, bouquets exhaling the odours of sandalwood and pepper, embalming the subtle spices of the Magian Kings; they are a perfumed bloom of colours gathered—at what price of blood!—in the plains of Palestine, which the west, which brought them thence, offers to the Madonna beneath these colder skies, in memory of the sunny lands where she had lived, and where her Son had chosen to be born." This is a beautiful imaginative interpretation of the oriental quality of the windows, and the resemblance to Persian carpets is one that many have recognised. Yet perhaps the quality is to be traced rather to the eastern origin of stained glass itself, which carries us back to the ancient Egyptian and Phœnician civilisations. We are to conceive it, in its beginnings, not as an attempt at glazing, but as a lapidary art, a setting of gems, or pieces of gem-like glass, in plaster, or in a filigree frame-work of soft metal. And we can understand how these jewelled grilles, set at window openings to show the colours by transmitted light, developed into the Arab lattice-work of which these early stained glass windows have so striking a suggestion.

Yet at the time in which these first cathedral windows were introduced, they were probably, like the sculpture, designed rather as testimonies to the faith than as conscious decoration. Round one or other of the medallioned windows a priest would collect a little flock of simple and unlettered folk, and would expound to them the parables and lessons there visibly bodied forth. The windows that remain to us enable us to hear, in imagination, the tones of the priest

and to put together again the elements of his sermon. The expositions we thus read in the windows have a strange mediæval quality, and the most homely turns of expression in the sacred narrative are interpreted as profoundly symbolical. Here, for instance, is a thirteenth century window which is an exposition of the story of the Good Samaritan; a glance at its medallions and their manner of illustrating the story may perhaps do as much as anything can to transport us back across the centuries and give us a place among that group of humble citizens and countrymen who listen to the teaching of the priest. The medallion at the top of the window represents the words "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho," and it is the going down, the declension, the falling away from higher things to lower ones, from the sacred city to the accursed city of Jericho, that is the burden of the priest's sermon. He shows us the wayfarer, how he already bears a burden which is his sin, and how the door of the city has already closed against him. That door, he tells us, can never be reopened. Yet see, there is another door, higher up and only to be reached by a toilsome path; and over this narrow door he shows us a cross. For it is only by the way of the cross that the sinner can return. Then, passing to the lower medallions, he shows us the man fallen among thieves. It is the going down that has brought him into these troubles; the thieves are his own passions, stripping him of the raiment of his innocence; and here, in the next picture, they have enslaved him and now turn upon him to wound him and leave him for dead. The Priest and the Levite pass, typifying systems and religions which have no power to heal such wounds as these. But in the panel at the base of the window he shows us Him who bore the despised name of Samaritan, and who was moved with compassion. He it is who binds the sinner's wounds, pouring in oil and wine—holy unction and the eucharistic wine; and brings him to the inn, which is the Holy Church, ever open to receive those burdened and contrite souls whom the Good Samaritan commits to its keeping.

The priest then points out to us the half medallions arranged down the side of the window, which represent the Creation, the Fall, the expulsion from Paradise, the worship of the Golden Calf; all illustrating the falling away of man. They culminate in representations of the Crucifixion and the Flagellation, which border on, and intermingle with, the central medallion at the foot showing the rescue by the Good Samaritan. Our priest speaks of the Crucifixion, and then bids us look up to the open gate of the Cross in the first picture. He tells us of the Flagellation, and points us back to the panel where the wayfarer is shown wounded and beaten by thieves. If the Good

Samaritan has brought us back in safety to the sacred city, it is because He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ; because He was bruised for our iniquities, and by His stripes we are healed.

Let us note one other splendid feature of these windows. The age which gave birth to them is the supreme epoch of church-building not because there was no further development in architecture, in wood-carving, in stained glass or in sculpture, but because at that period all these arts were merely functions of the one great art of church-building. The stained glass seems part of the very organism of the cathedral. It is there because the windows must be glazed, and because the glazing supplies an opportunity of teaching the unlearned the doctrines of the church. It is *not* there merely because coloured windows are a handsome and proper accessory in church furniture ; nor is it supplied by pre-occupied specialists at a distance as a part of their trade routine. These windows were made, as perhaps the Psalms were written, by devout men who used the best skill they had to meet the bare needs of some meagre and homely flock of God's people, and who, in doing so, drew on their own deepest experience, yet hardly dreamed that what they had wrought was a precious thing whose appeal was universal and eternal.

The latter half of the thirteenth century, then, is a point at which the ripe perfection of church-building, as an organic art, has been reached ; a moment of poise before the wave which has gathered and risen to its fulness begins to waver and outrun its equilibrium. And as the beauty of the balanced wall of water only gives place to another beauty of lace-like foam, tossed and shattered into a thousand flying fragments and a floating haze that gleams with rainbow brightness, so the church-building movement, in its culmination, undergoes a disintegration into a host of exquisite subsidiary arts, which, developing henceforth as separate industries, and nurtured and handed on from master to apprentice by the organisation of the guilds, only reached their full expression in the fifteenth century.

But ere we pass from the great epoch of the mother-art, let us linger for a moment to realise something of the significance of the early cathedrals. Let us recall the rude civilisation amid which those stately fabrics of enduring beauty arose. Let us picture the men of those days in their own humble dwellings of wood and mud and thatch. Only a century earlier, the Assize of Clarendon had provided that the houses of certain offenders were to be carried without the town and burnt ! Yet from the plain littered with such hovels there sprang nave and towers of a vastness and a loveliness that can never be outdone. Make what allowances you will for the architectural traditions of which the Benedictines were the custodians, for

the contributions of the reformed orders, and especially for that pinning down to structural verity which was the outcome of the austere Cistercian view; take into your reckoning the intellectual enrichment that must have followed from the Crusades, and the contact they brought about with the splendours of the glittering east, the imports of rich embroideries and cloths of silver and of gold, and the vision of

“Dusk faces in white silken turbans wreath’d,”

and, when all is weighed and allowed for, the cathedrals remain in their immemorial beauty, riddles that cannot be read, mysteries that cannot be unsealed. They answer to many needs and to many moods, but perhaps when all is said they can give us nothing better than just a sense of the marvel by which human hands and finite brains compassed a result that seems in its nature superhuman and infinite. Our forefathers, doubting nothing, faced the building of these churches as a sublime adventure; and aiming far beyond, and without regard to, the scope of human limitation, they did a work greater than we can understand, and captured within their walls of stone and mortar something of eternity itself.

The century that followed was one in which men’s ideals took a different colour and setting. The age of faith was followed by the age of chivalry. No doubt chivalry was at base an expression, in terms of an elaborate symbolism, of a religious conception of life. To Edward the First himself, as to thousands of his subjects, it was an inspiration to an elevated standard of thought and action. But the lofty conception of life which it expressed was only too apt to be lost sight of in the picturesqueness of the enshrining symbolism. The moral ideal it proposed was suffered to degenerate into a merely aristocratic ideal, and the outcome was a line of social cleavage that had sooner or later to bring its just reaction. The age became one of pageantry and display. Even the Church reflected these tendencies. Its ceremonies became more ostentatious and spectacular; its grave ecclesiastics became pretentious nobles. The architecture of the period is commonly known as “Decorated,” and there is surely something ominous in the name. It suggests that the time had come when the noble beauty of expressive structure was no longer enough, but elegance must needs be added by way of surface enrichment and, as it were, by afterthought. And so far as this is true, the seeds of decay were indeed already present. The force of the spiritual impulse which built the great churches had begun to exhaust itself. The crafts had become more specialised and more detached and isolated from one another. And yet, what an argosy of

beauty was gathered into the churches through the pomp and *étalage* of the nobles, and the growing accomplishment of the craftsmen! The cusped and pinnacled chantries, the watching lofts and minstrels' galleries, and the proud scutcheons blazoned with the ordinaries and charges of heraldry, whether carved in wood or stone, or set flaming in the leaded windows,—all these we owe to that era of arrogant splendour.

Yet this is the age also that gave us Exeter cathedral, the nave of York, the tower of Lincoln and other triumphs of noble construction. The art of vaulting was becoming more thoroughly understood, windows were developing both in size and in the richness of their tracery, and buttresses were assuming a new importance, both structurally and as a means to decorative effect. With the advance of civilisation, and the increasing complexity of the economic situation, men were gaining in ingenuity and *finesse*, but at some loss of simple, straightforward force. There was a decline, too, in religious intensity; no longer was there the same seizing at every opportunity of setting forth the faith. The sense of the glory of God tended to be displaced by a somewhat vain-glorious flaunting of the glory of man.

It was upon this epoch of prosperity and luxury that the Black Death fell like the blow of an avenging Heaven. Breaking out in the far east, where forty millions are said to have perished, the plague spread westward from port to port. It appeared at last in Dorsetshire in 1348, and overran England like a destroying fire. The mortality was appalling. In some of the towns three fourths of the population perished. In Norwich alone it is said that there were sixty thousand victims. Work of all kinds came to a standstill, harvests rotted in the fields, and the burial of the dead was a task almost beyond the powers of the living. It is not surprising that the supply of labour was entirely inadequate to meet the demand for it. Wages rose to an abnormal level. The employers, scandalised by demands which transcended all experience, and which seemed to them beyond all reason, secured the passing of the Statute of Labourers, which fixed standard rates of wages. Thus was established the conflict between the interests of Capital and Labour, a conflict which has ever since been a powerful but disquieting influence in our social and political development. For our present purpose it is enough to note the antagonism as it affected church-building and the arts associated with it. In place of a brotherhood of men co-operating in common sympathy in the production of a noble work, we have henceforward the evolution of a system of contract and the inevitable effects of the separation and delimitation of

the spheres of interest of the various workers. The movement towards specialisation was thus further accentuated, and while, as has been indicated, there was a decline in the organic unity of church-building, the separate crafts began to be conscious of their own intrinsic possibilities, and to reach towards a higher standard of artistic expression.

The ravages of the Black Death naturally led to an improvement in the social importance of the labourers, and still more of the skilled workmen, who survived its outbreaks. The Statute of Labourers was powerless to override the natural working of economic law, and skilled workmen found their services eagerly competed for. Local employment was often less attractive than work at a distance, for which high wages were offered, and a man of special skill and experience who was thus drawn to another part of the country was received and treated with a respect and consideration which he had not hitherto been able to exact. He was in a position to assert his independence and impose his methods and ideas, and was thus an agent in the diffusion of styles and traditions that had till then been of merely local influence.

The fifteenth century is the outcome of the tendencies which manifested themselves in the fourteenth, and is the epoch in which the burgesses and craftsmen appear as a dominating influence. It is to be remembered that the monasteries had suffered severely from the plagues, and indeed they never recovered the position they thus lost. The strength and resources of the aristocracy, too, were drained by the Hundred Years' War, and during that time and, later, when the Barons were preoccupied with the Wars of the Roses, the merchants and tradesmen were industriously following their callings and steadily gaining wealth and experience of affairs. The growing importance of the citizens is clearly reflected in the church architecture of the period. The plan is governed by the desire to provide suitable accommodation for the people. The cruciform tradition gives way to the democratic conception of a Parish Church partaking of the nature of a Town Hall. The churches were, in a word, built by the people and for the people; indeed they were freely used for the secular purposes of the community. In them the leading citizens gathered to discuss local affairs; within their precincts the sick and the dying were laid; and they were even made use of as warehouses for the storage of grain.

At first sight it may appear strange that the perpendicular style, which we are apt to associate with such magnificent buildings as Henry VII.'s Chapel at Westminster, St George's Chapel, Windsor,

and King's College Chapel, Cambridge, should be the style employed by the burghers. But we must recollect that these are but the outstanding and most ornate examples of a style which is exemplified in hundreds of simple and unpretending country churches. Indeed we may look upon it as a matter of business sense and convenience that the citizens should cultivate a style which could be carried out by country workmen, and finished with a timber roofing, so as to come within the reach of communities that were not wealthy, but merely prosperous and well-to-do; but which was also capable of rich and splendid treatment and could be crowned with the most sumptuous fan vaulting, as in the chapels we have just named. But besides this, the perpendicular lines and mullions were both more economical and more practical than the florid tracery of the preceding epoch, and these are qualities which would recommend themselves to the shrewd merchants and tradesmen. The style was also suitable for non-ecclesiastical building. Already, with the increased wealth and higher standard of comfort in the towns, architecture was being turned to domestic uses. More settled times were rendering obsolete the old idea of defence, and this change, along with the desire for privacy and comfort, led to the evolution of the manor house. Castles and chapels were built, and to this period also we owe many of the finest of the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge.

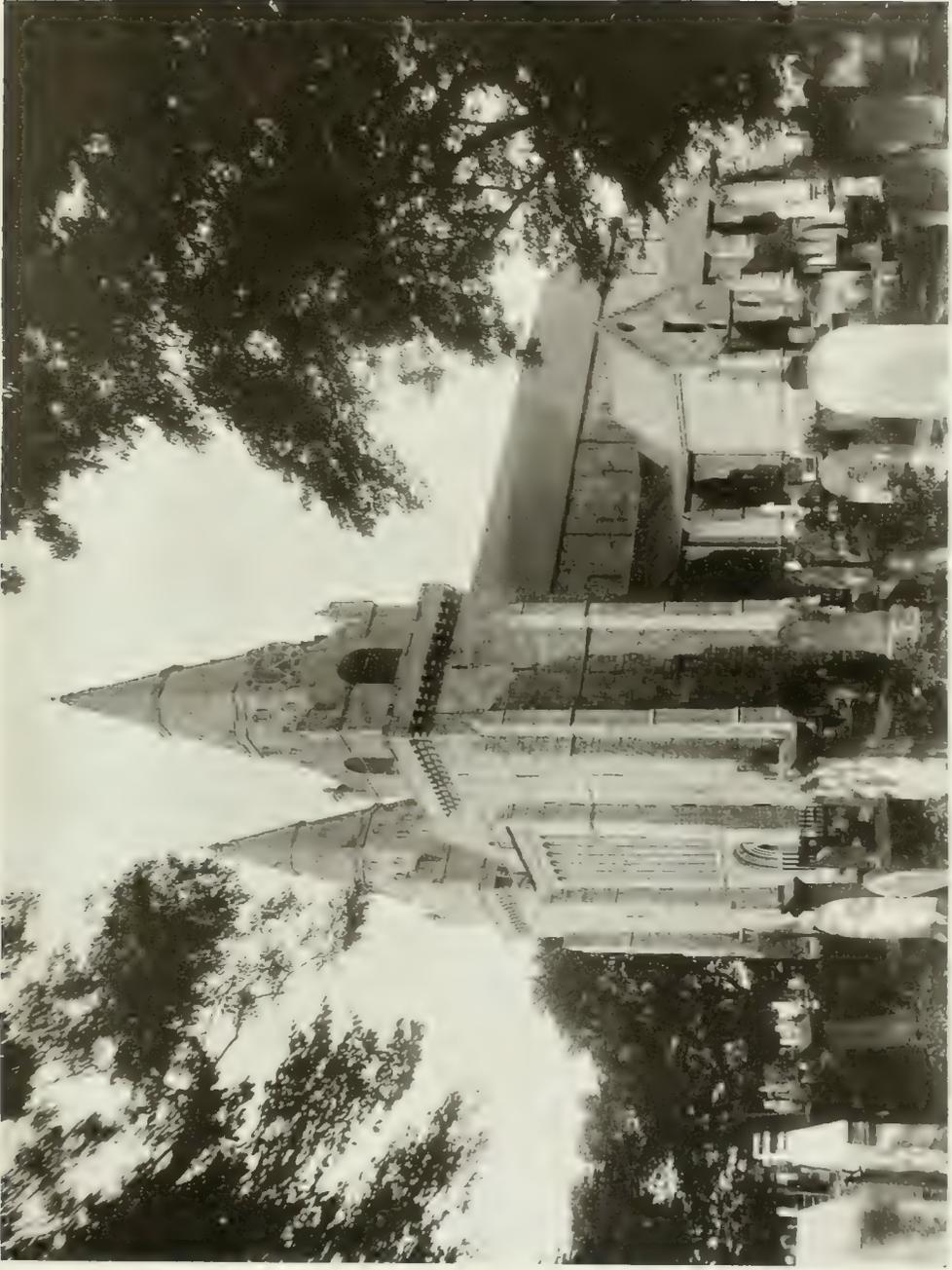
Thus we reach the time when architecture is no longer the story of cathedral building. Here a tower might be added to an existing cathedral, there a nave might be vaulted, but the stream had been turned into other channels than that of cathedral architecture. In the hands of the masons the perpendicular style ceased to develop, just because it had enough elasticity within itself to meet varying circumstances. And now that the operations of building, instead of being carried on by a host of fellow-workers in close day-to-day touch with one another, were divided among a number of separate trades, some on the spot and some at a distance, there was safety in adhering to a tradition familiar to all. Thus the style held its own until, in Tudor times, it began to be overlaid with ornament and detail of a kind not organically related to it, but reflecting the influence of the Renaissance. The end was near, and Gothic architecture was gradually shouldered out by an alien art founded on the classical tradition of Italy.

Had the diffusion of learning depended, as it had hitherto done, on books written by hand, the course of architectural history might have been modified. But even in the fourteenth century paper had begun to be used instead of parchment. Chaucer mentions it twice,

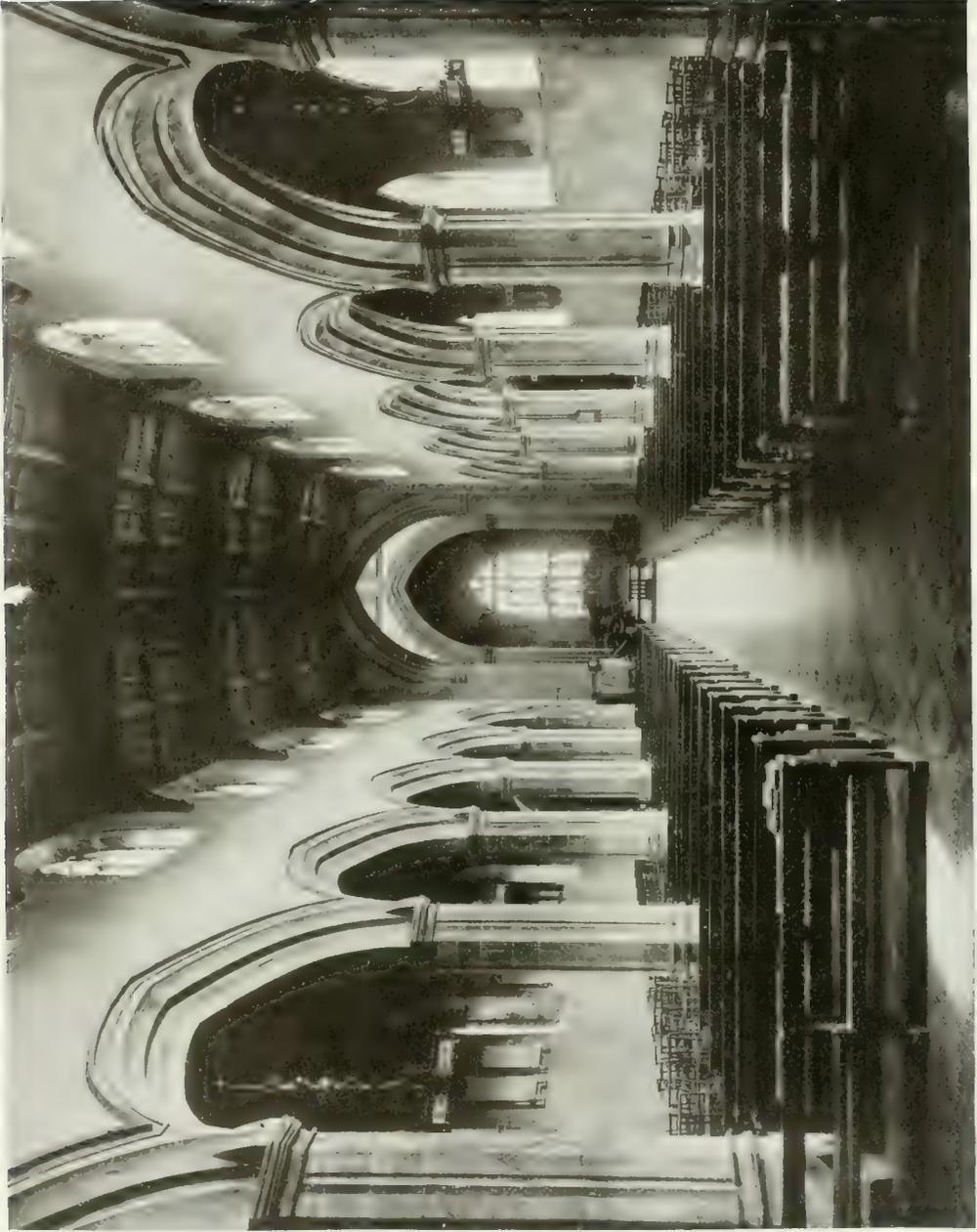
and the reference in the Cooke's Tale seems to show that it was used before 1390 even for so formal a document as an indenture. Its increasing use during the fifteenth century prepared the way for Caxton's introduction of printing in the last quarter of that century, and thus contributed to the spread of the new knowledge, not merely among scholars dwelling apart in cloistral seclusion, but as an influence reaching out into every department of human thought and action. The Greek and Latin authors were soon within the reach of all educated men, and, in the new interest in science, philosophy and criticism, the glories of Gothic art came to be looked upon as barbarous and uncouth, and so passed into a long period of eclipse. Evelyn, the diarist, contemptuously dismisses certain cathedrals as "only Gothic." Pepys, who had an eye for the picturesque, visited Rochester Cathedral but "had no mind to stay there, but rather to our inne, the White Hart, where we drank." Passing through Canterbury, "I saw the minster and the remains of Becket's tomb. . . A good handsome wench I kissed, the first that I have seen a great while." Yet Salisbury he finds "most admirable." Addison sees in Gothic architecture "all the extravagances of an irregular fancy." Others condemn it, and particularly the ritualistic furnishings, from the ultra-Protestant point of view. Joseph Taylor, a London barrister, who describes a visit to Durham Cathedral in 1705, tells us of "seaven Copes of Velvet and Silk, most curiously wrought, and expressing the severall historys of the Bible, all in needle-work; which," he genially adds, "I could not forbear calling Rich Raggs of the Whore of Babylon."

The new standards of taste introduced by the Renaissance, and the iconoclastic rigours that followed the Reformation, explain why so little of the varied handiwork of the fifteenth century, that meridian of Gothic craftsmanship, is now to be found in our cathedrals. In those days the adornment of the church was a task in which all men took a pride. Each gave what he could, and the interiors were thus enriched with carved choir stalls, stained glass windows, tapestries, lamps and chalices of chased silver, vestments and altar-cloths of needle-work, and gilded and illuminated Missals. Nowadays no price is too high to pay for such products of fifteenth century craftsmanship, and happy indeed is the collector whose *flair* for Gothic has unearthed, in some unlikely corner, a piece of work of the latteners, the luminers, the orfevers, the tapisers, the verrouers or the ymagers of that golden epoch. Would that even a single cathedral interior remained to us in its full beauty of mediæval furnishing and decoration, and that we were not driven to museums and other secular collections to realise the exquisite and gracious charm of the native Gothic handicrafts!

Yet the cathedrals, even as they stand to-day, have enough inherent beauty to reveal, to those who haunt their precincts, a noble and solemn harmony that cannot be found elsewhere. They speak to us of the men of long vanished generations, and tell us of their lives and of their faith, so much simpler and more exalted than our own. Knowing something of how the cathedrals came to be, we can spend a quiet hour reading that story of effort and achievement which our forerunners unwittingly graved into their handiwork. And at times it will be delight enough merely to let the eye lose itself among the dim perspectives of the arched and pillared nave; to make out the rudely sculptured face of monk or minstrel peering forth from the mysterious shadows of the vaulting; or to watch the tintured rays from the southern windows fall dustily across the aisle, and lie, like a handful of scattered jewels, on the quiet of some fretted tomb.



• ABERDEEN. ST. MACHAR'S CATHEDRAL.



*BANGOR CATHEDRAL*  
*Nave, looking East*



*BEVERLEY MINSTER*

*West Front*



*BEVERLEY MINSTER*

*Nave, looking East*



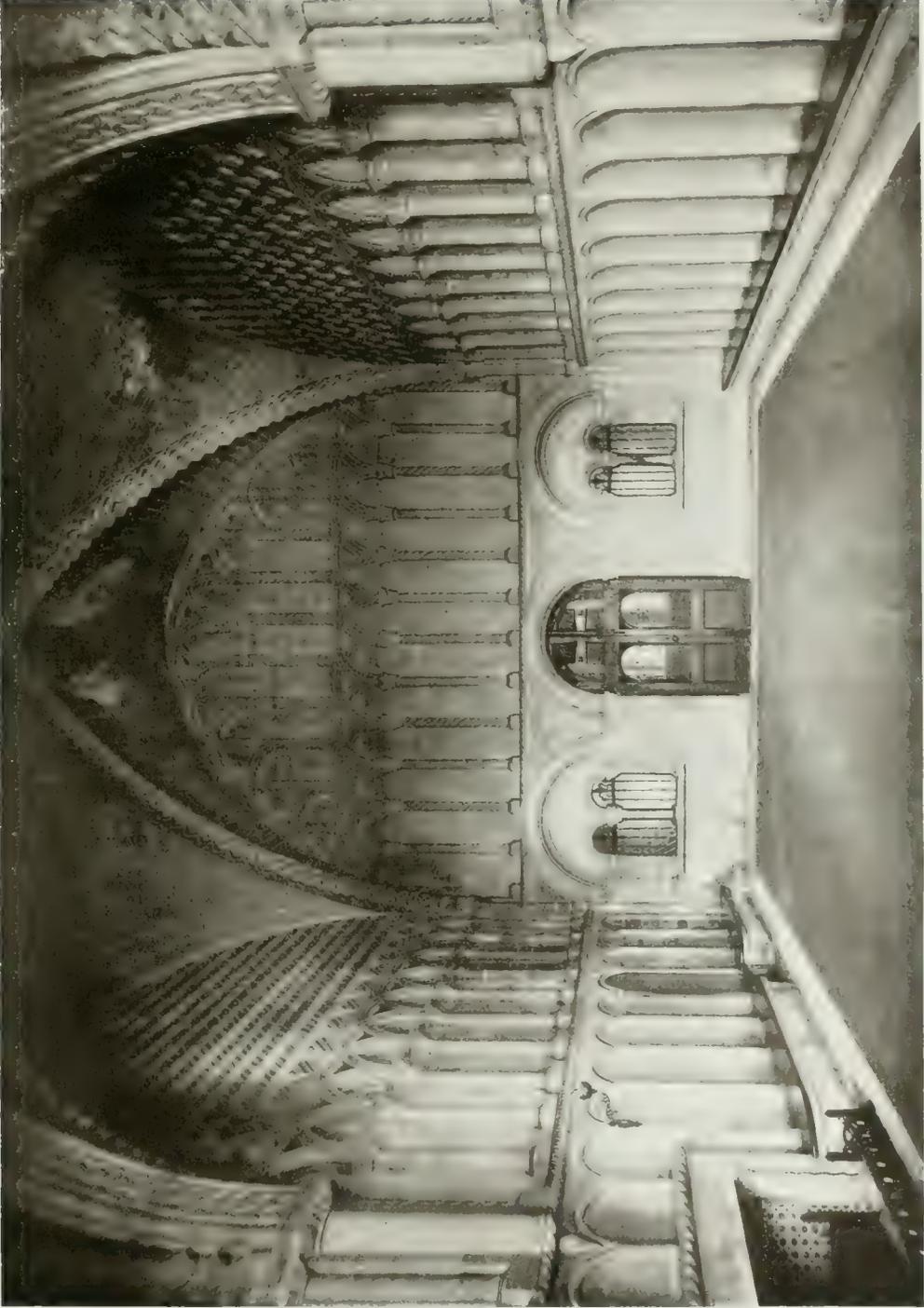
*BEVERLEY MINSTER*

*The Percy Shrine*

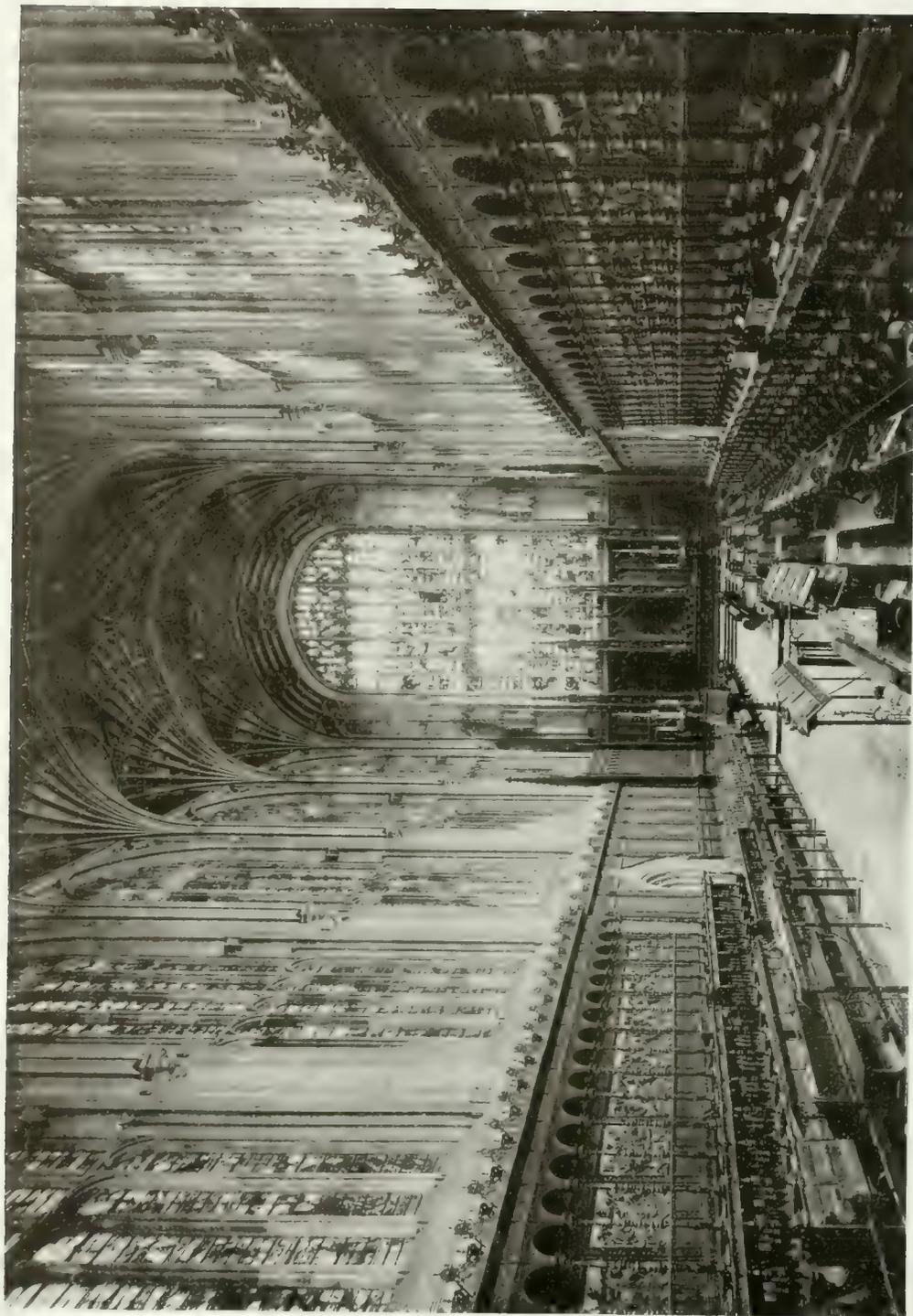


*BOSTON. ST BOTOLPH'S*

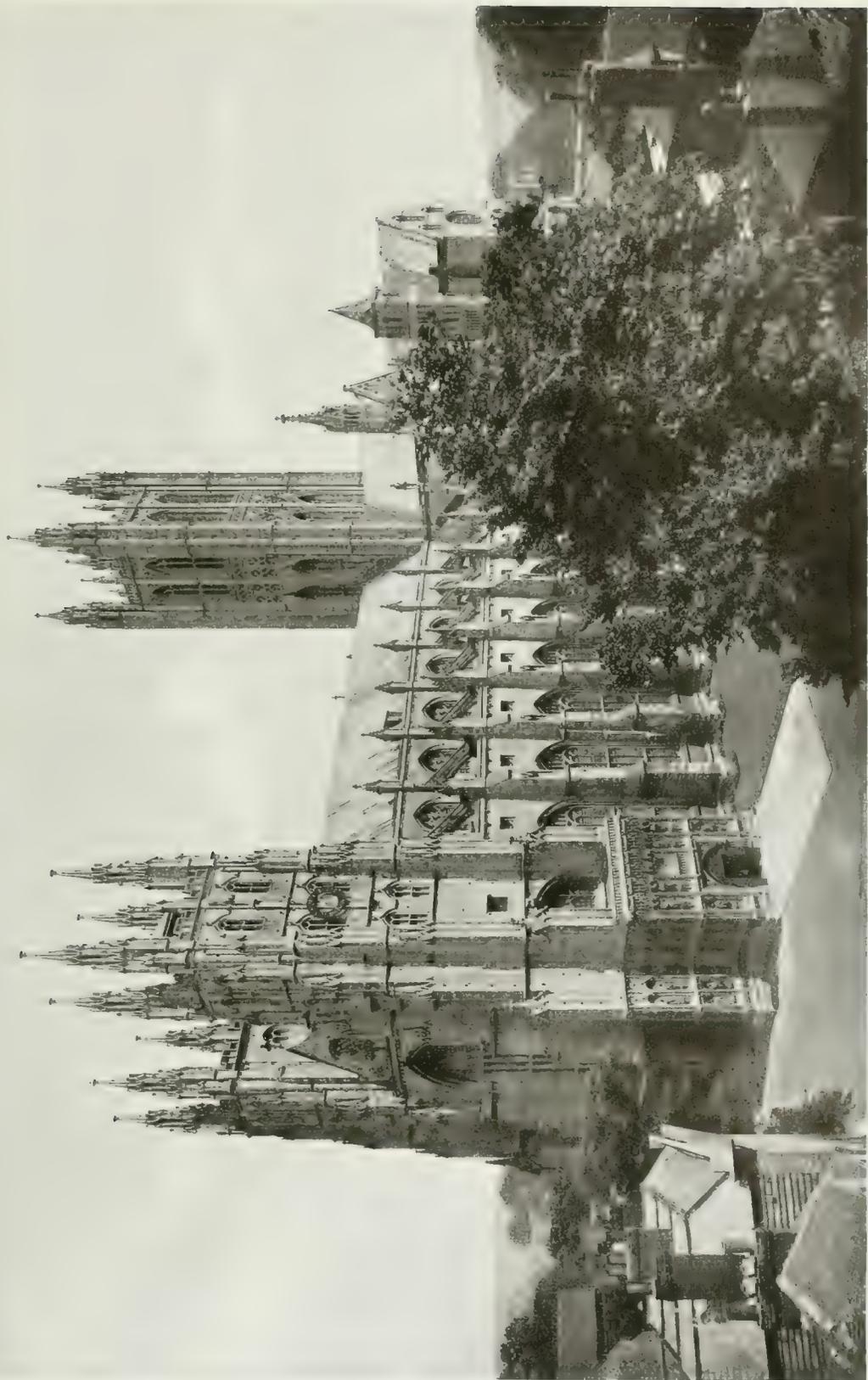
*"Boston Stump"*



BRISTOL CATHEDRAL  
*The Chapter Room*



CAMBRIDGE  
*Chapel of King's College*



CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

*View from Gateway*



CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

*Nave, looking East*



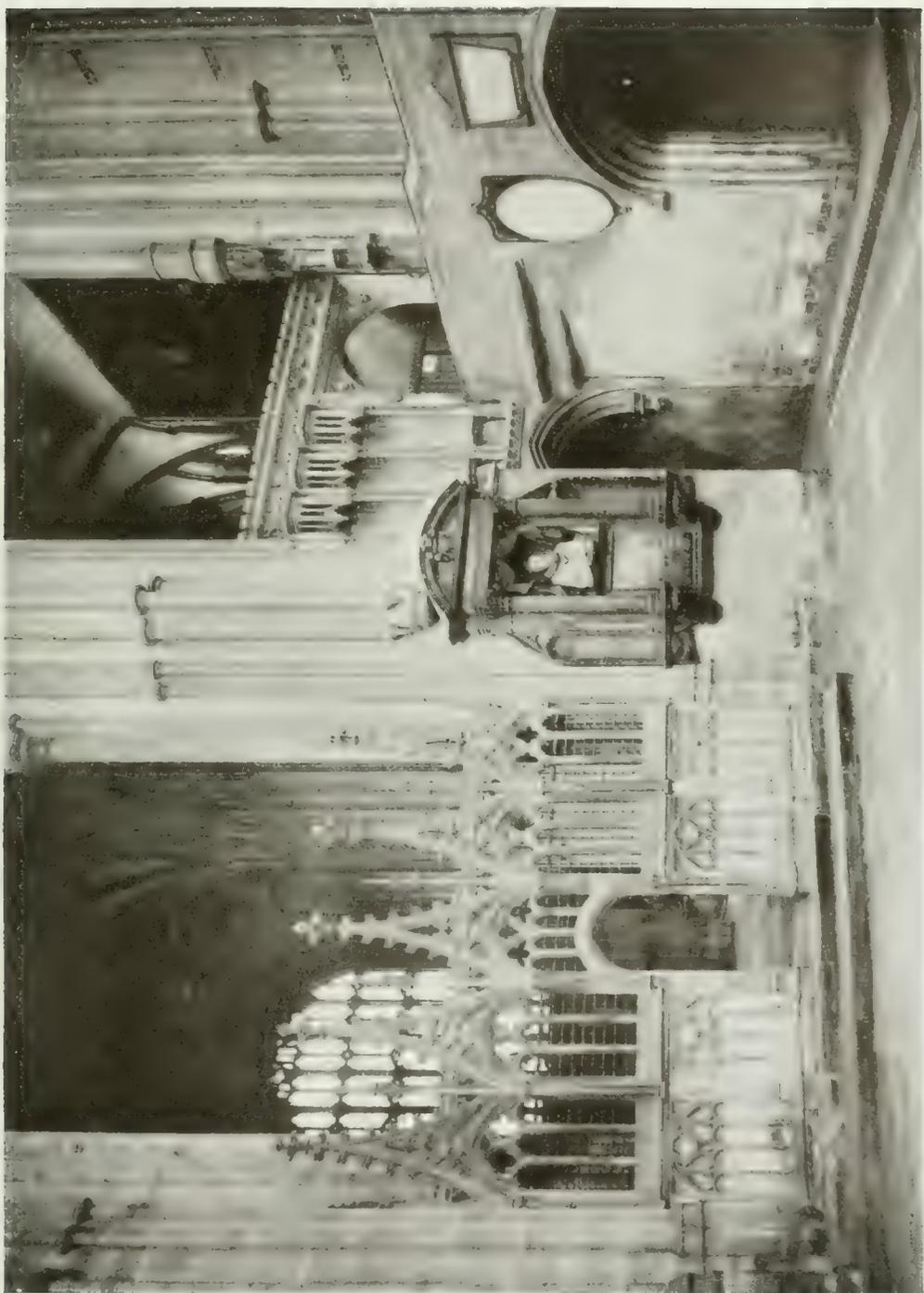
CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

*The Choir*



*CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL*

*Tomb of Henry IV*



CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

*Transcript of Martyrdom*



CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

*The Baptistery*

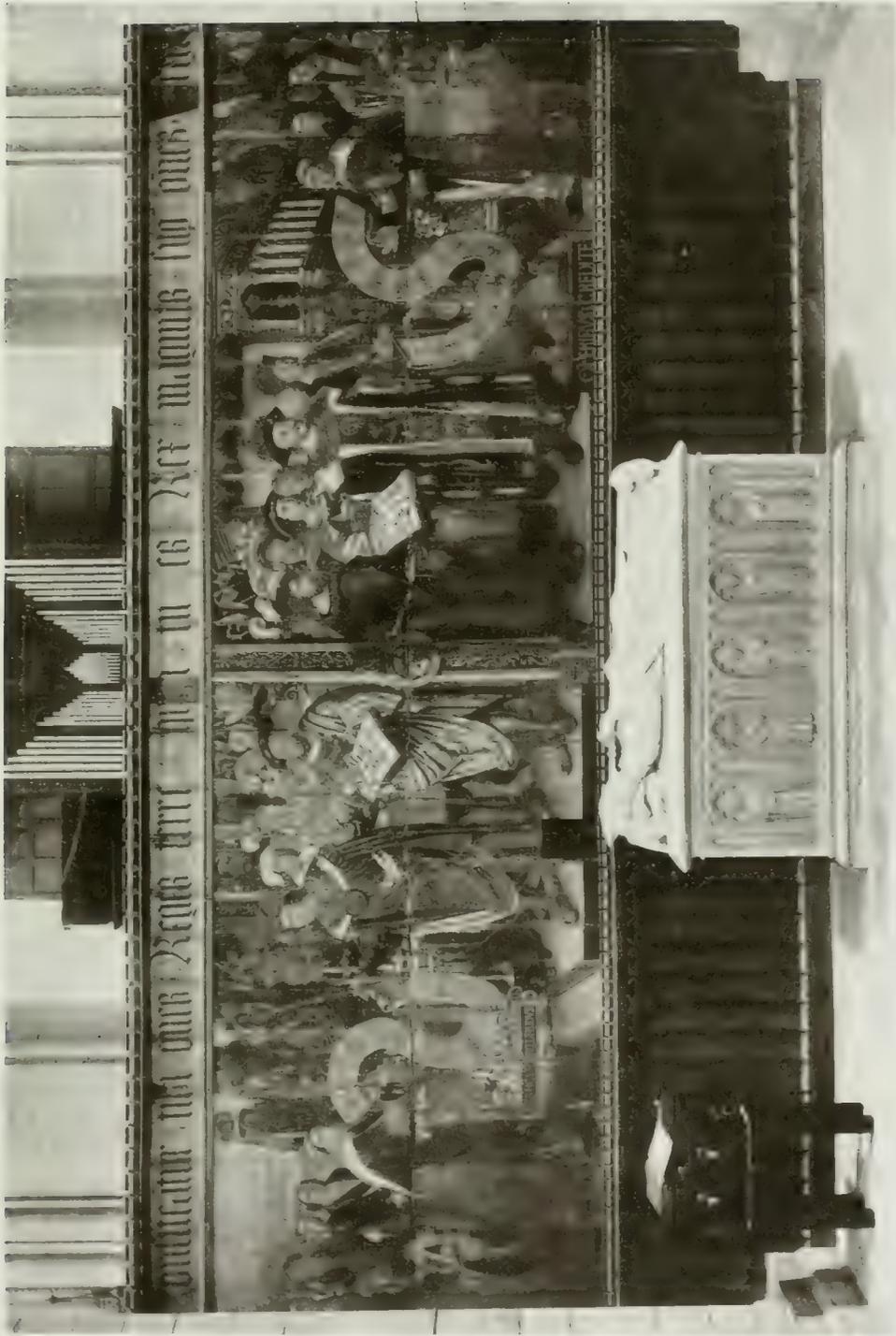


*CARLISLE CATHEDRAL*

*Arches in Nave*



CHESTER CATHEDRAL  
*The Choir*



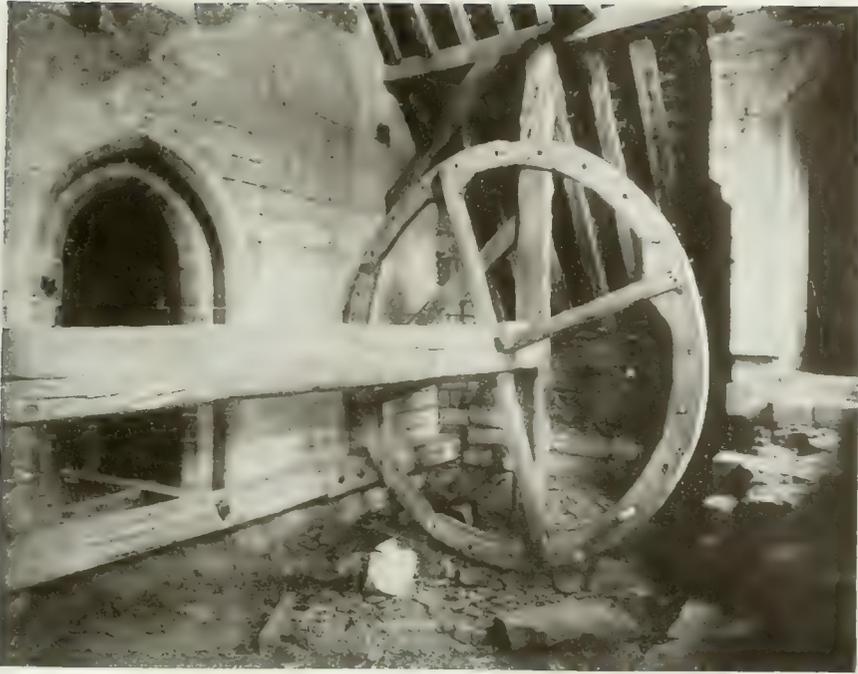
CHESTER CATHEDRAL

*Paintings in South Transept*



COVENTRY

*St Michael's Church*



*WINDLASS USED IN BUILDING PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL*



*DUNFERMLINE ABBEY*

*West End and Towers*



DURHAM CATHEDRAL

*View, with Town*



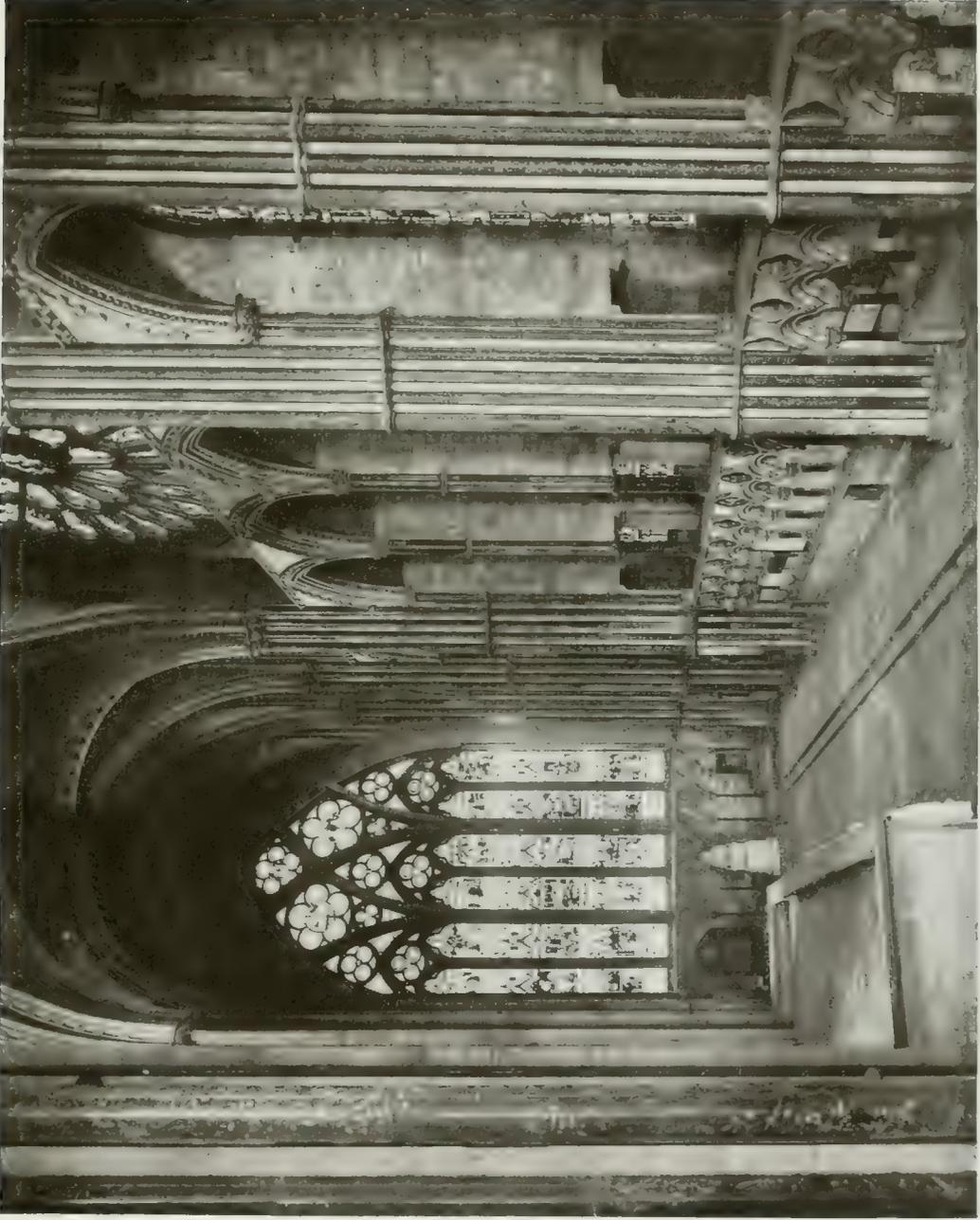
DURHAM CATHEDRAL

*From North-West*



*DURHAM CATHEDRAL*

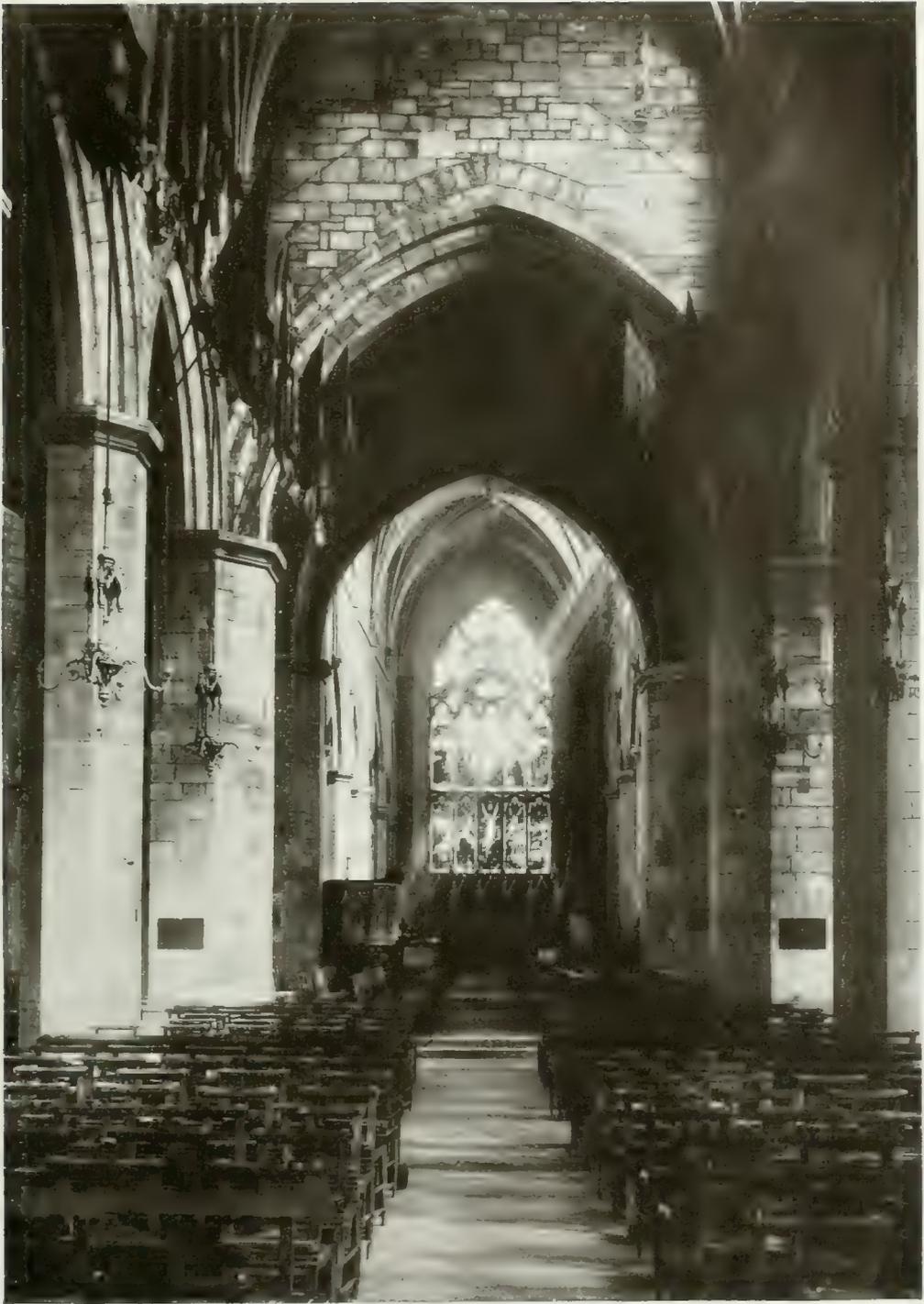
*North Side of Nave*



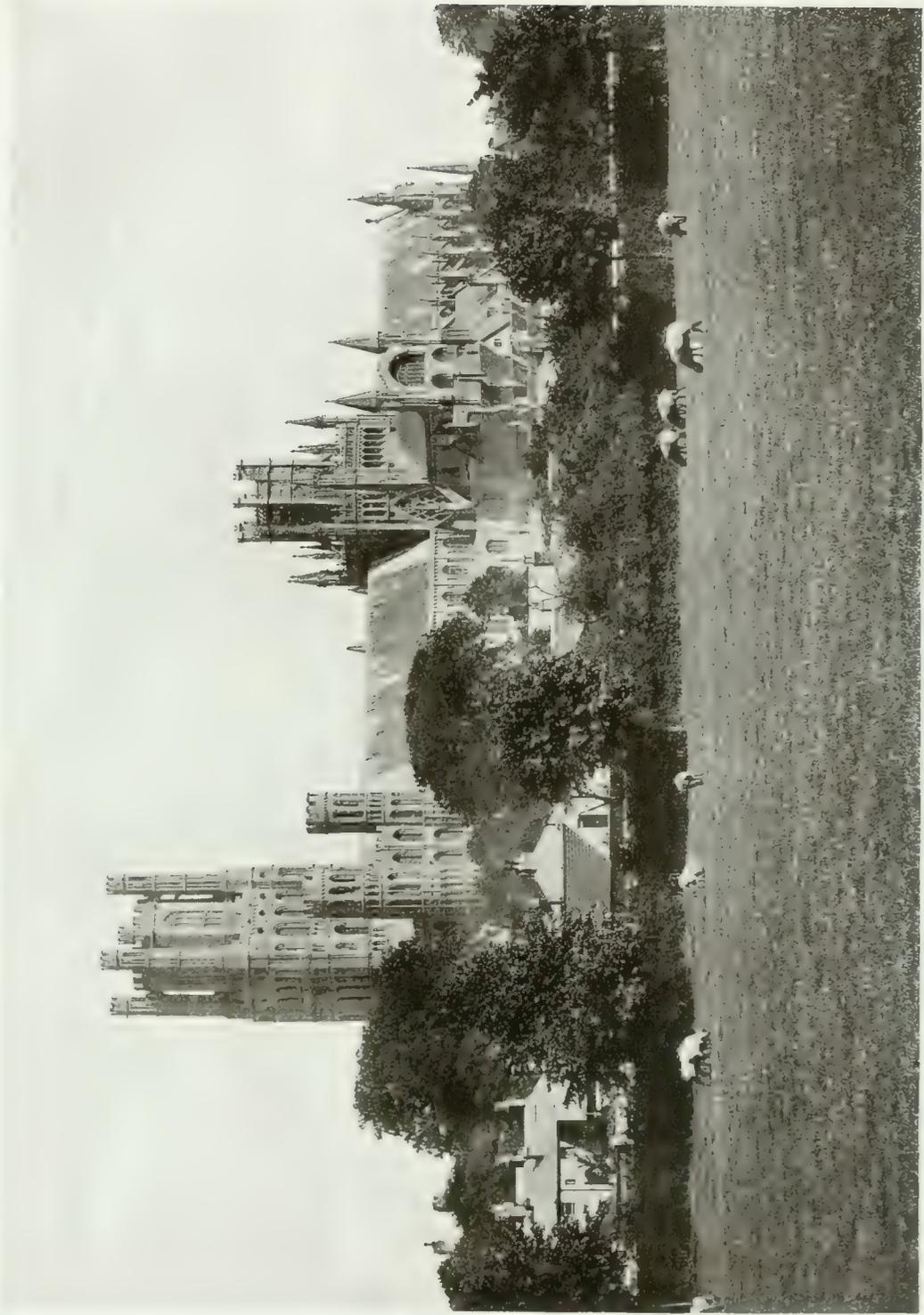
DURHAM CATHEDRAL  
*Chapel of Nine Altars*



*EARL'S BARTON*



*EDINBURGH. ST GILES CATHEDRAL*



*ELY CATHEDRAL*

*View from South-West*



*ELY CATHEDRAL*

*The Nave*

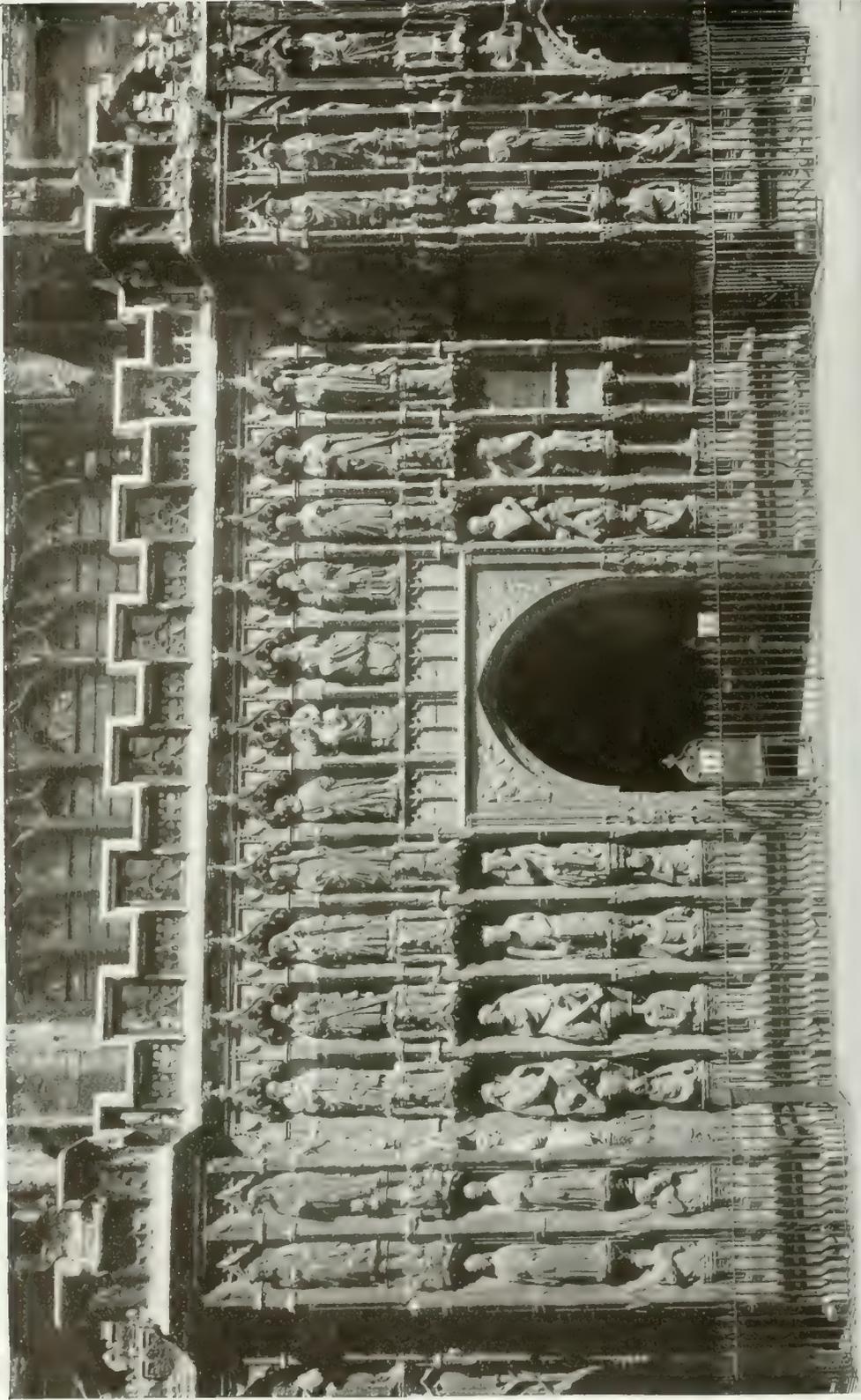


*ELY CATHEDRAL*  
*North Aisle*



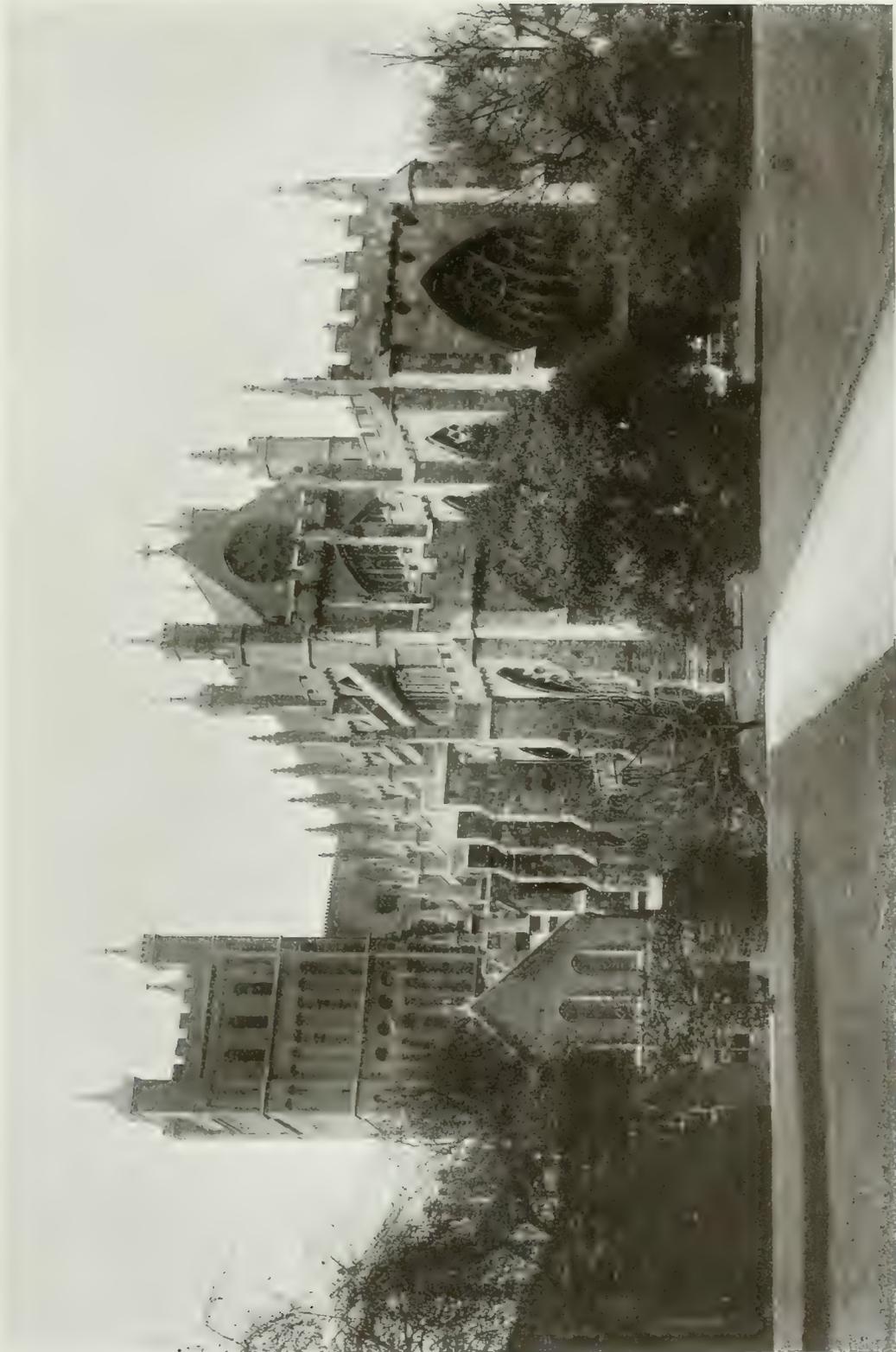
*ELY CATHEDRAL*

*Prior's Doorway*



EXETER CATHEDRAL

*Detail of West Front*



*EXETER CATHEDRAL*

*View from Palace Garden*



EXETER CATHEDRAL

*Nave, looking West*



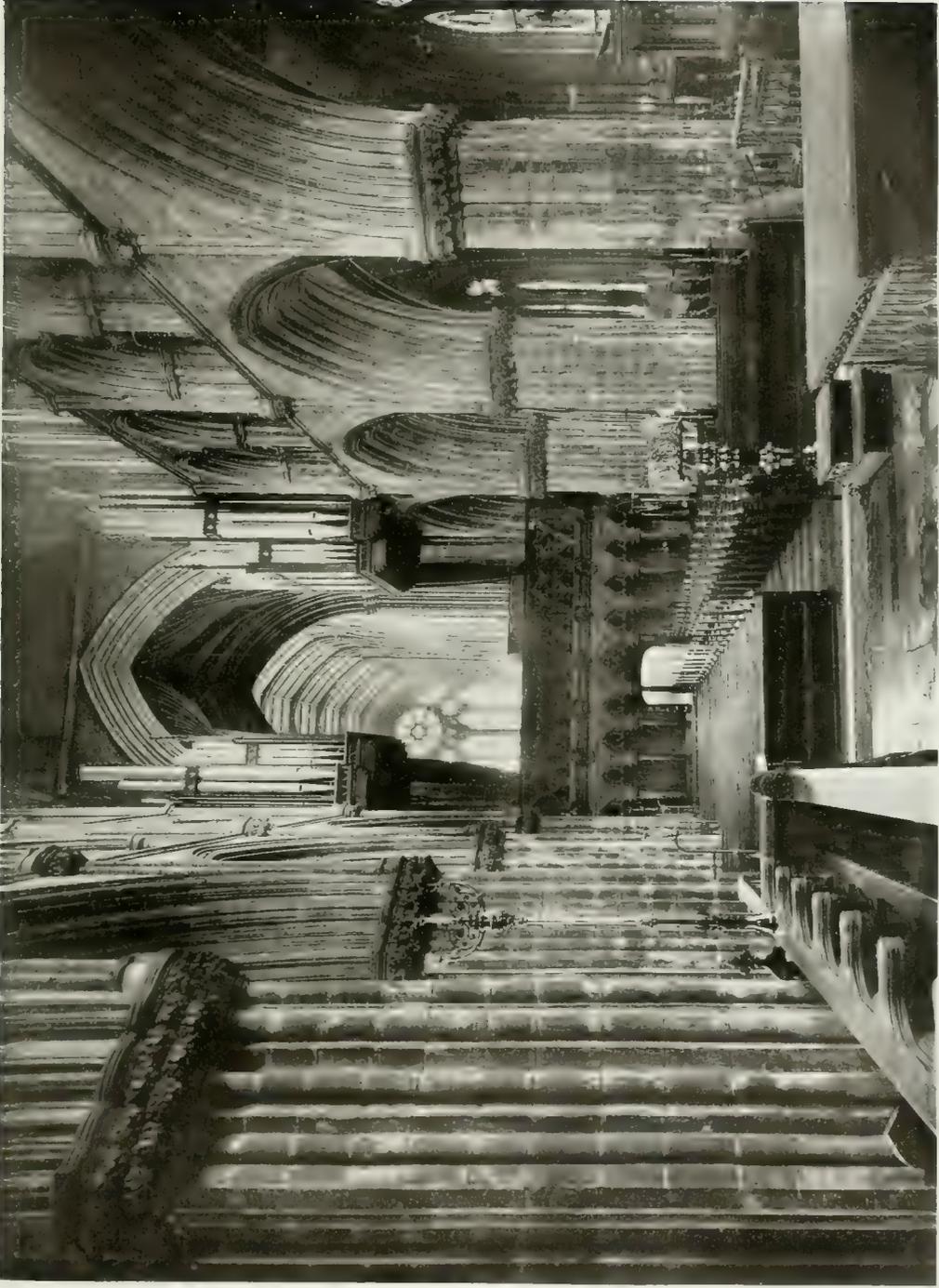
GLASGOW CATHEDRAL

*Nave, looking East*



GLASGOW CATHEDRAL

*Blackadder Crypt*



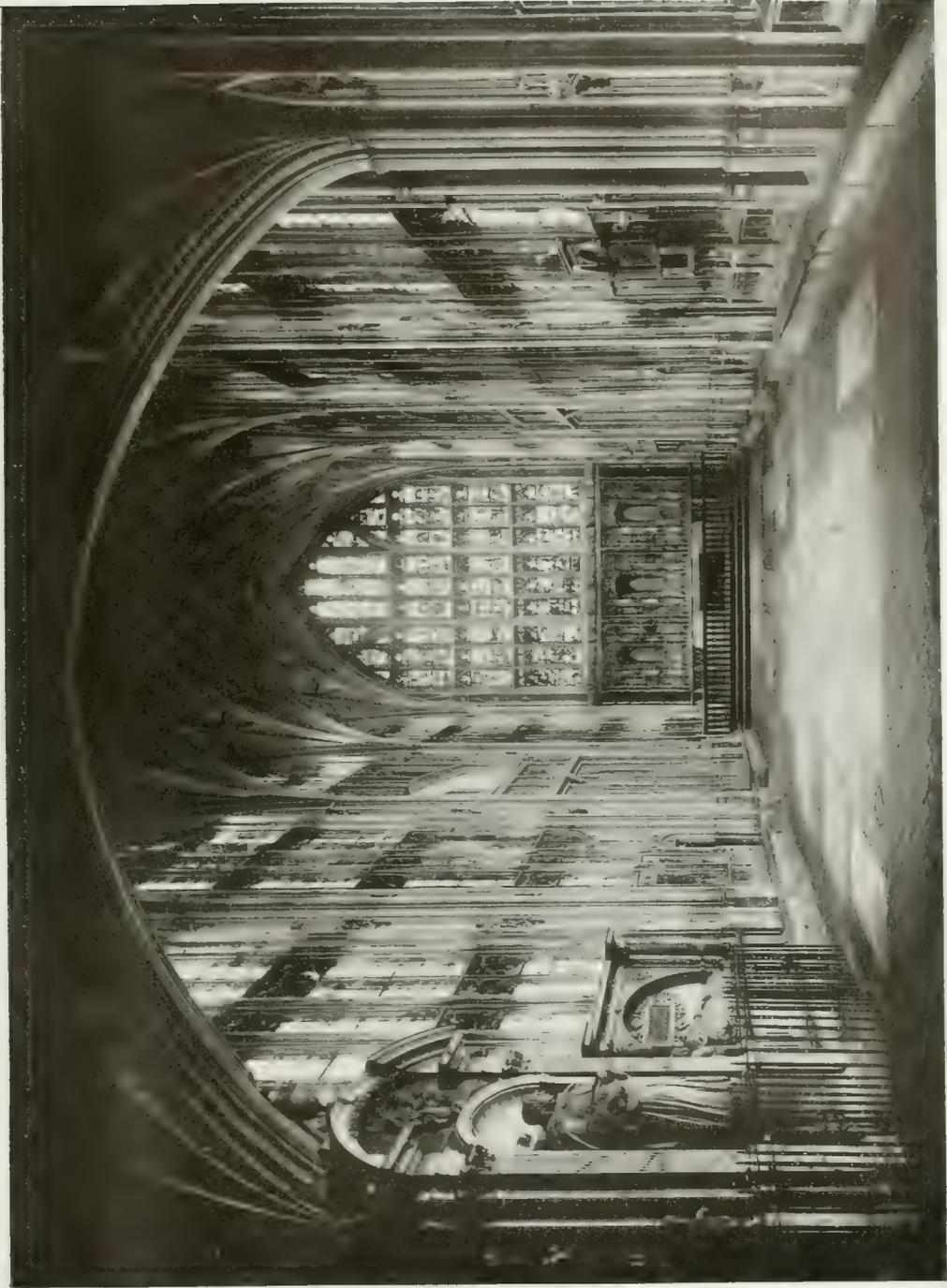
GLASGOW CATHEDRAL

*Choir, looking West*



*GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL*

*Choir, looking East*



GLoucester Cathedral.

Lady Chapel



GLoucester Cathedral

*Cloister*



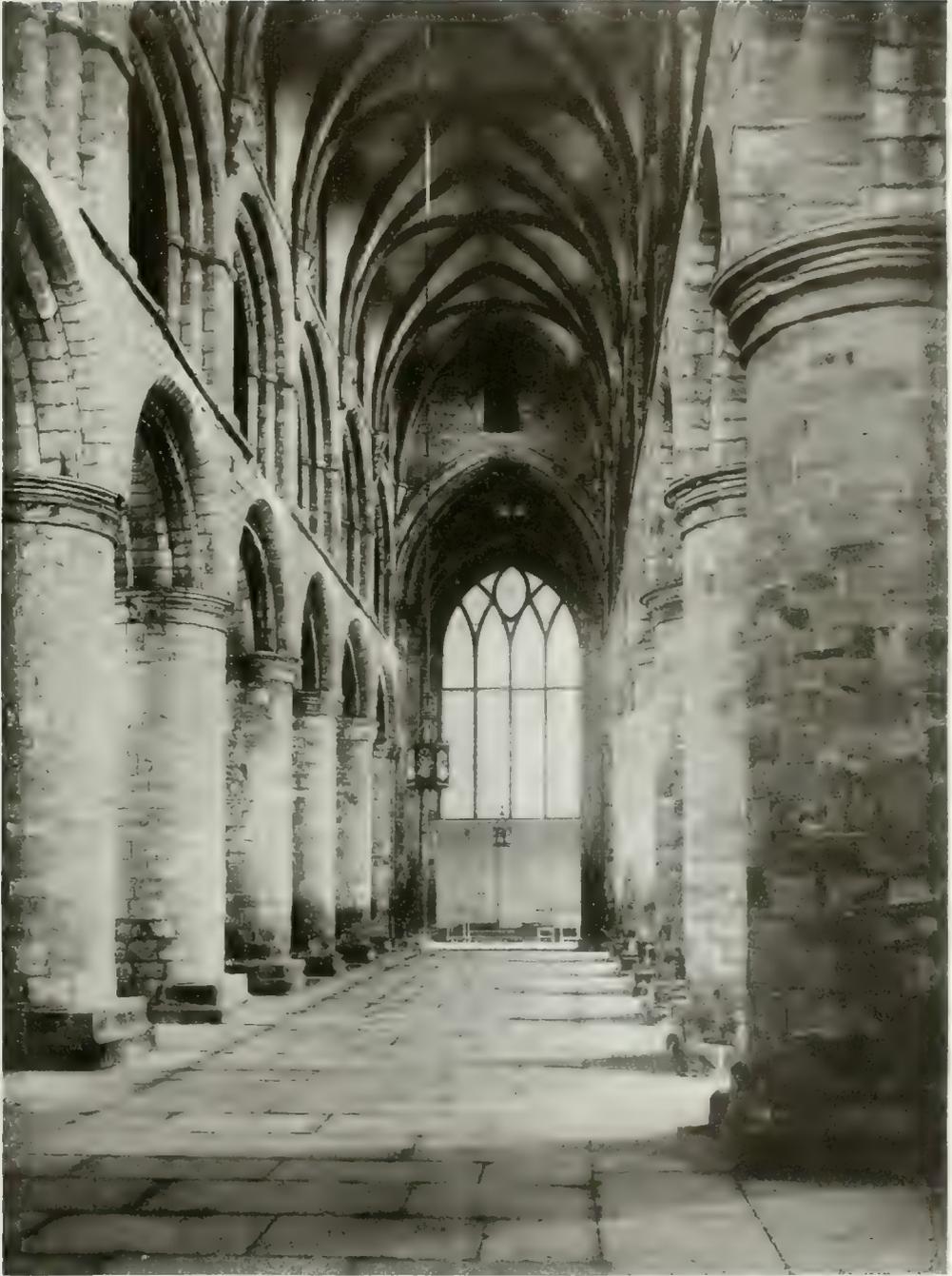
HEREFORD CATHEDRAL

*View from Castle Green*



HEREFORD CATHEDRAL

*Nave, looking East*



*KIRKWALL CATHEDRAL*

*The Nave*



LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL

*View from Pool*



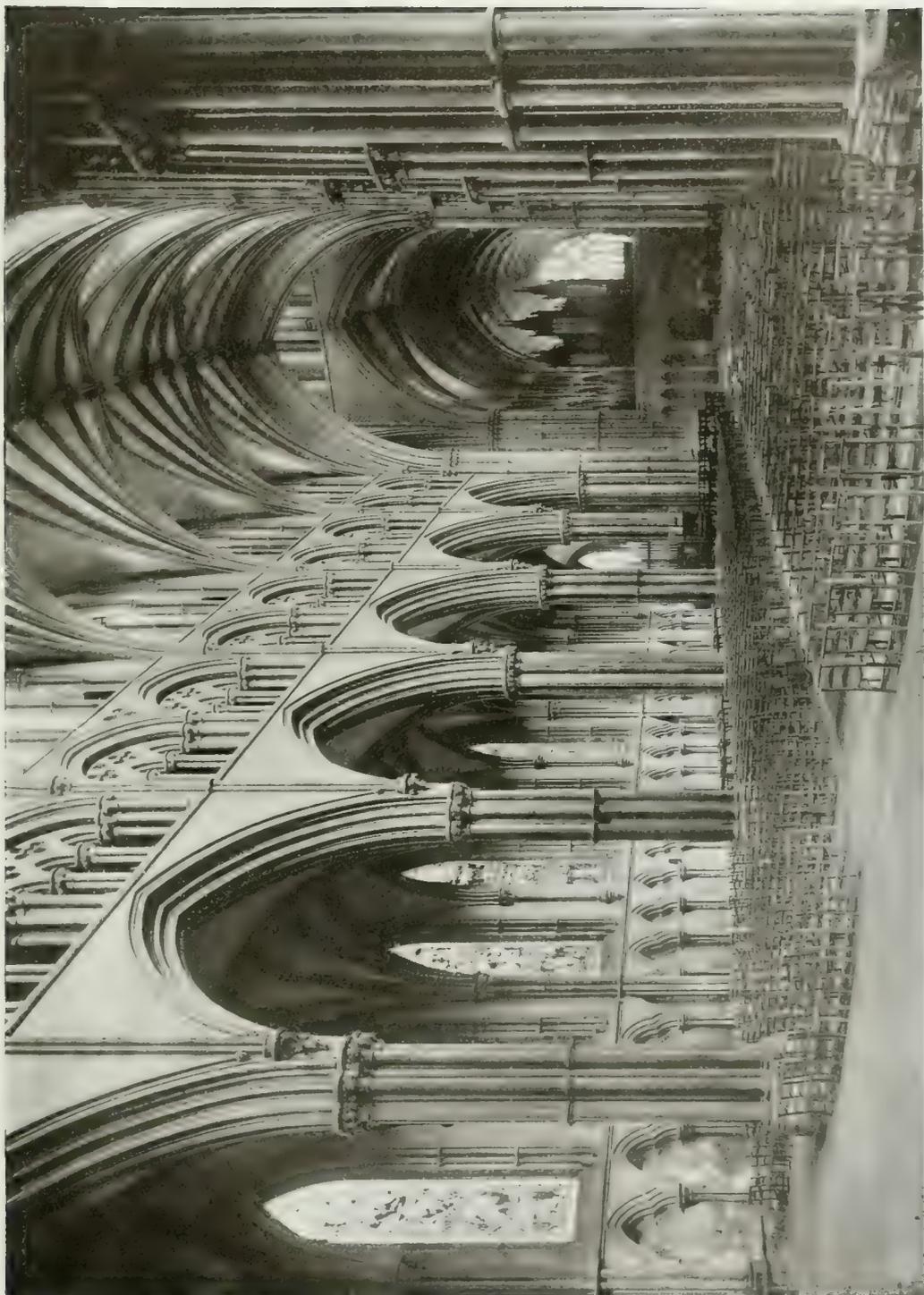
LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL

*Lady Chapel*



*LINCOLN CATHEDRAL.*

*View from South West*



LINCOLN CATHEDRAL

*Nave, looking East*



*LINCOLN CATHEDRAL*

*Nave, looking West*



*LINCOLN CATHEDRAL*

*The East Window*



LINCOLN CATHEDRAL

*The Angel Choir*



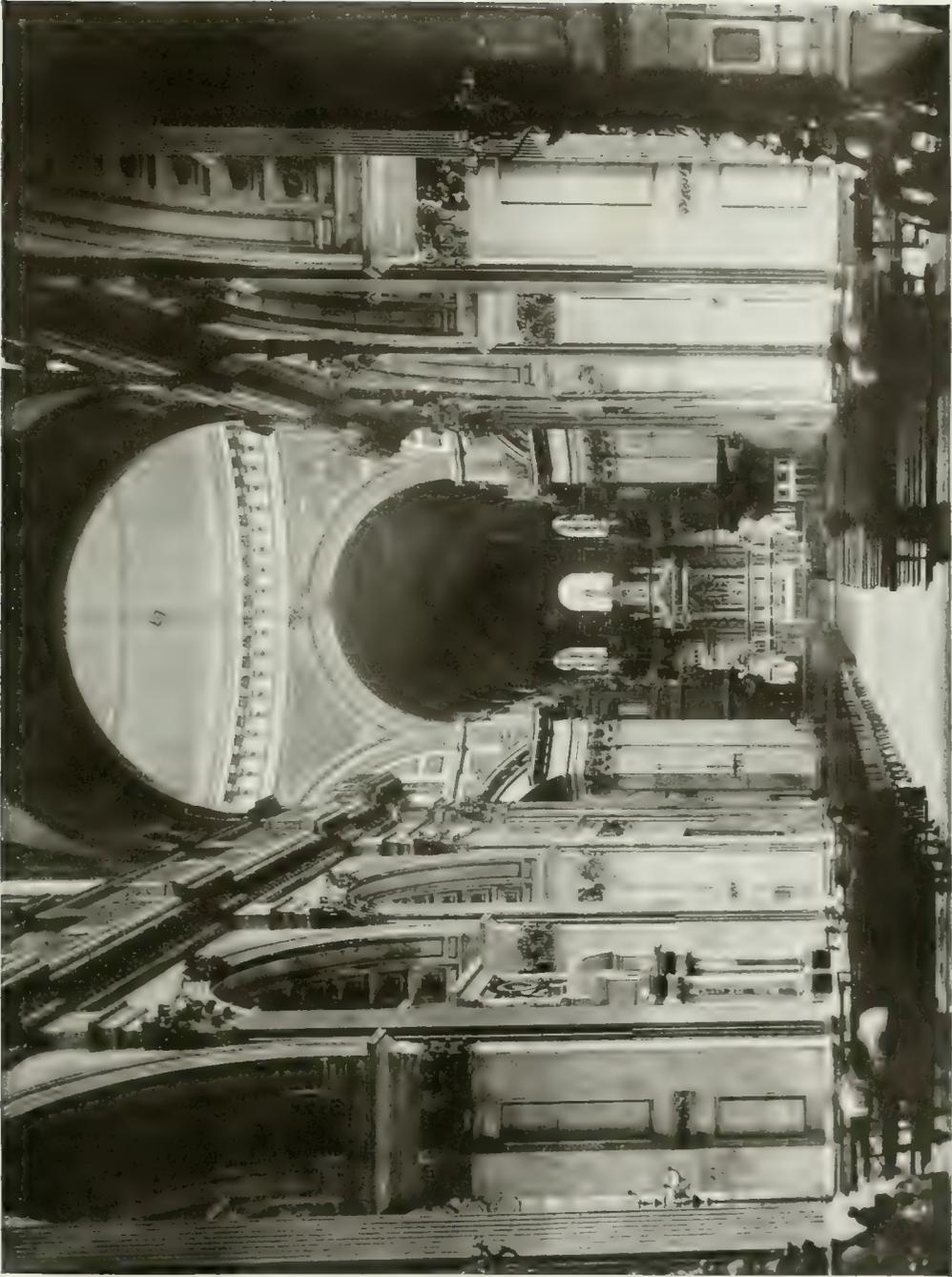
LLANDAFF CATHEDRAL

*View from South-East*



LONDON. ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

*View from South-West*



LONDON. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.  
*The Nave*



LONDON. SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL

*John Trehearne's Monument*



LONDON. ST BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT

*The Nave*



MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL

*The Nave*



NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL

*The Choir*



NORWICH CATHEDRAL

*The Nave, looking East*



NORWICH CATHEDRAL

*The Choir*



*OXFORD CATHEDRAL*

*Christ Church*



PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL

*View from St John's*



PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL.

*View from South-East*



PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL.

*Choir, looking West*



*PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL*

*The Chancel*

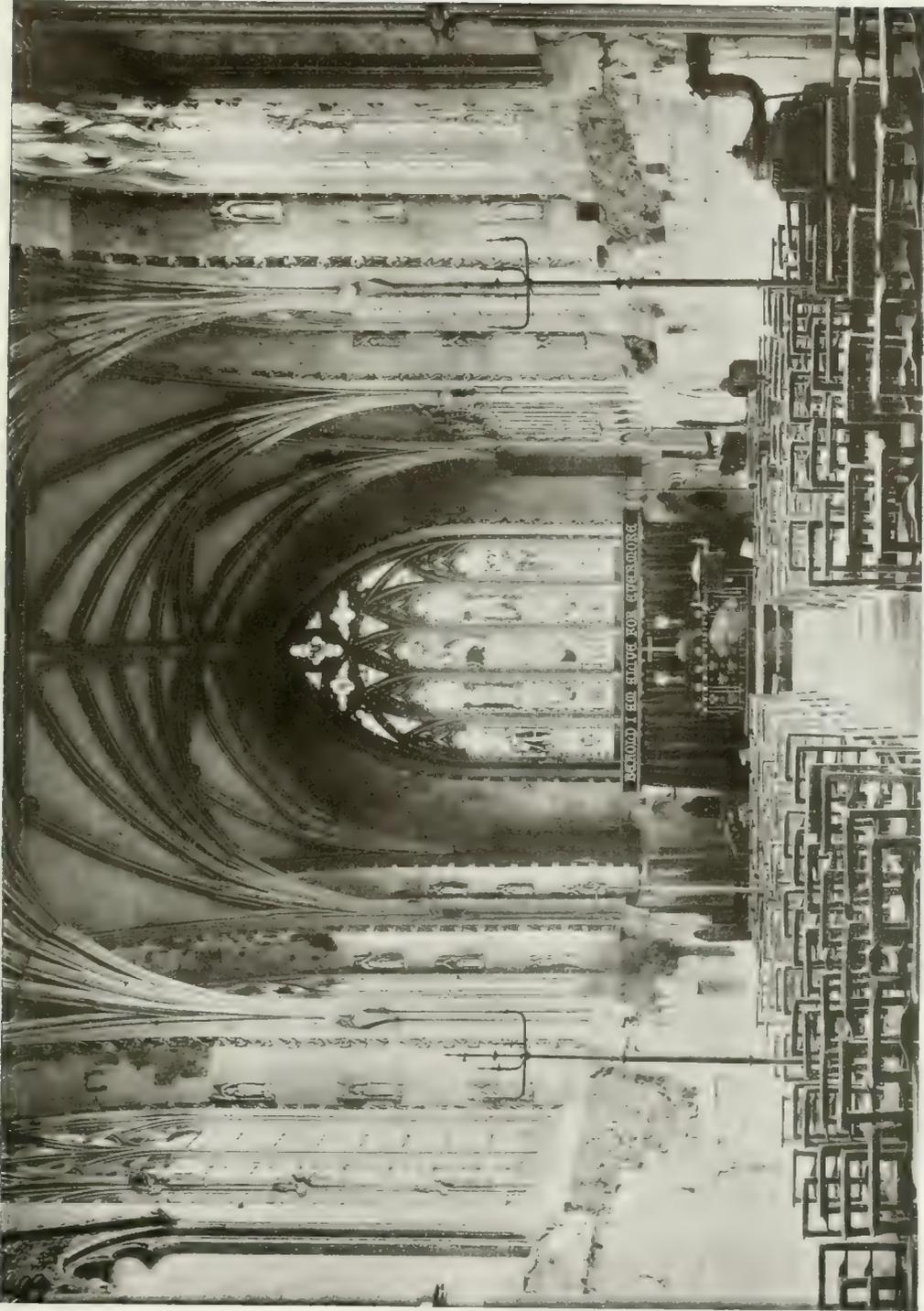


*RIPON CATHEDRAL*  
*View from South-East*



ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

*Nave, looking East*



ST ALBAN'S CATHEDRAL

*Lady Chapel*



*ST ASAPH CATHEDRAL*

*View from South-West*



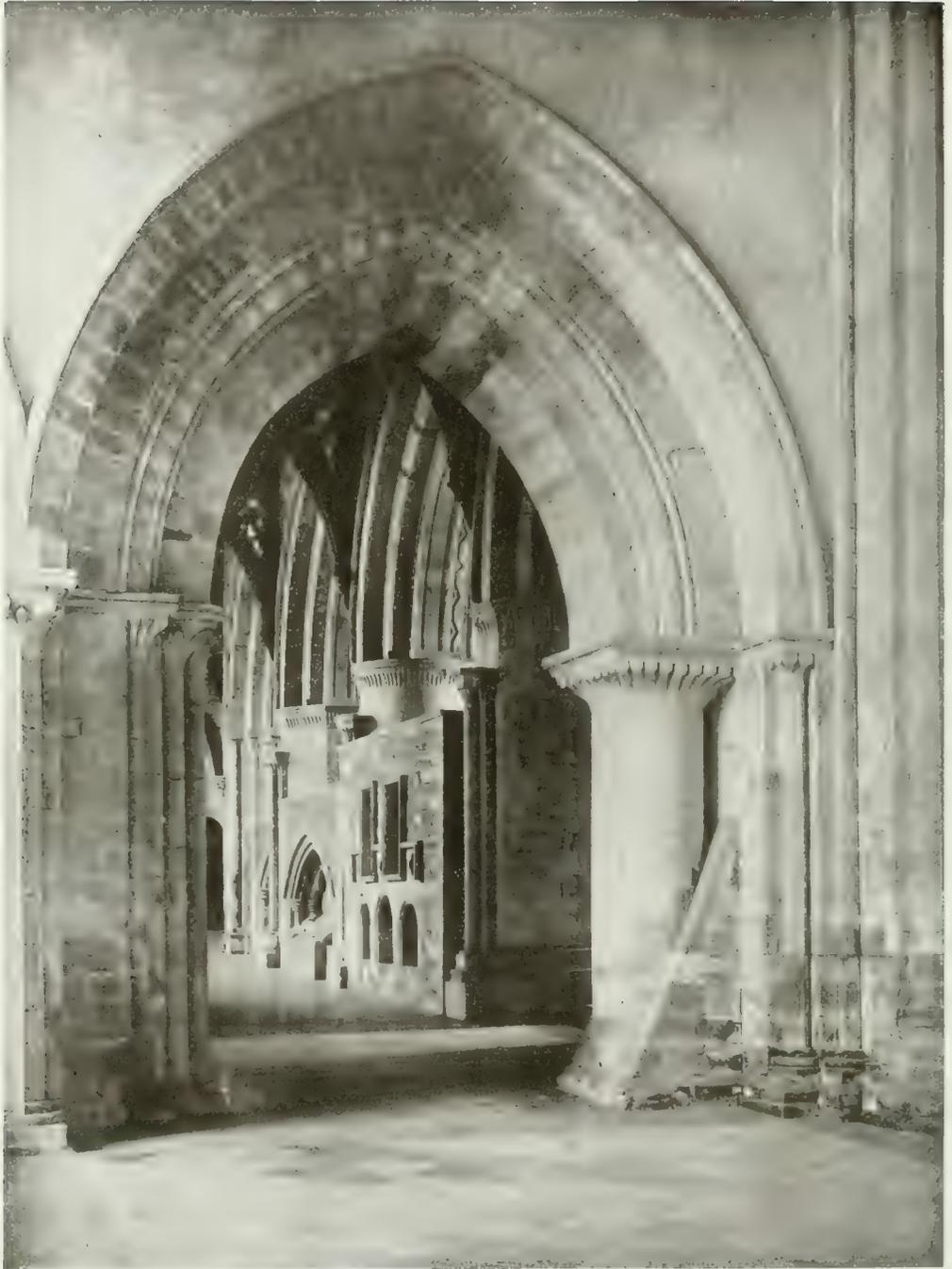
*ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL*

*Choir, looking East*



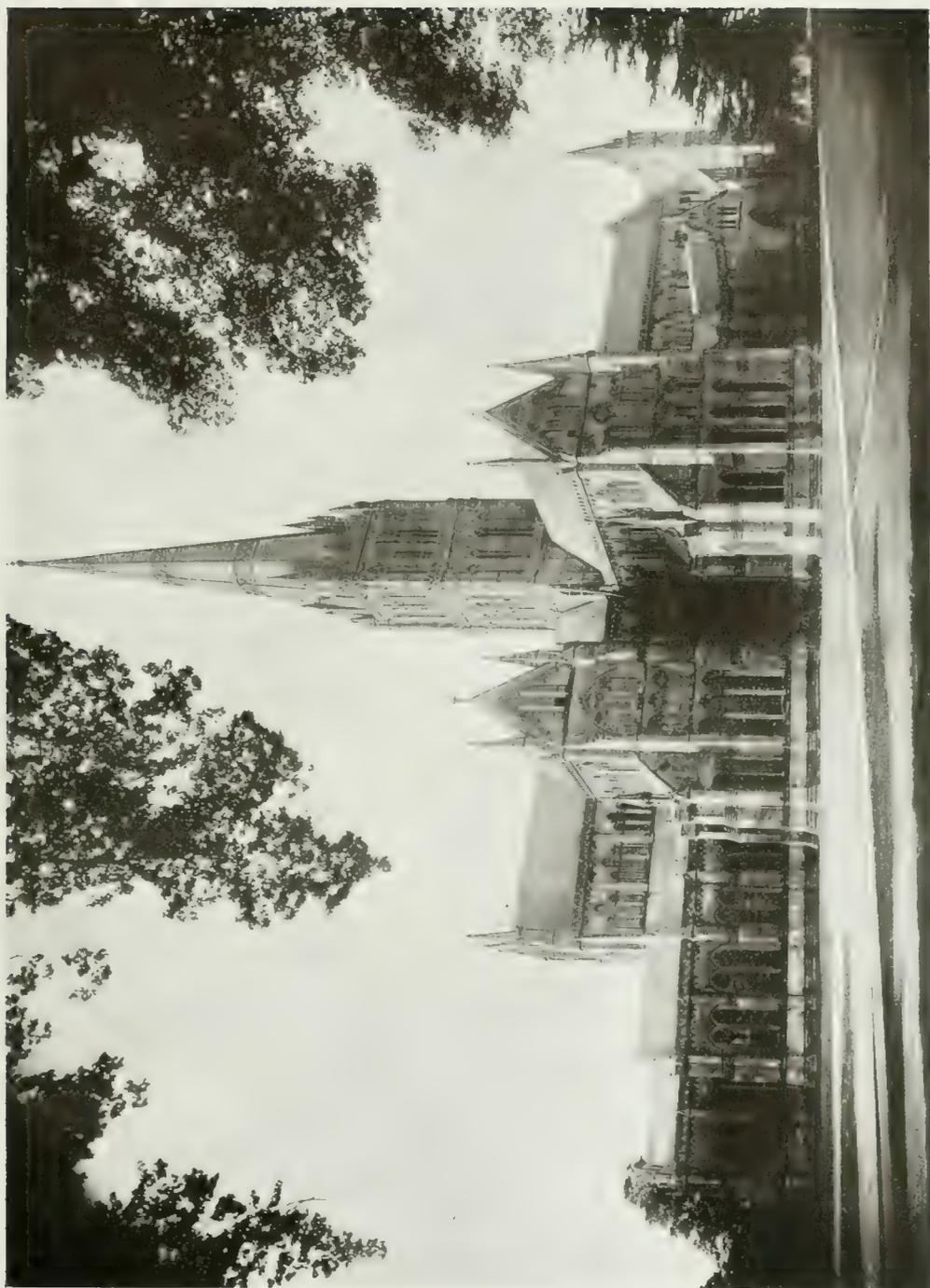
ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL

*Nave, looking East*



*ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL*

*St David's Shrine*



SALISBURY CATHEDRAL

*View from North-East*



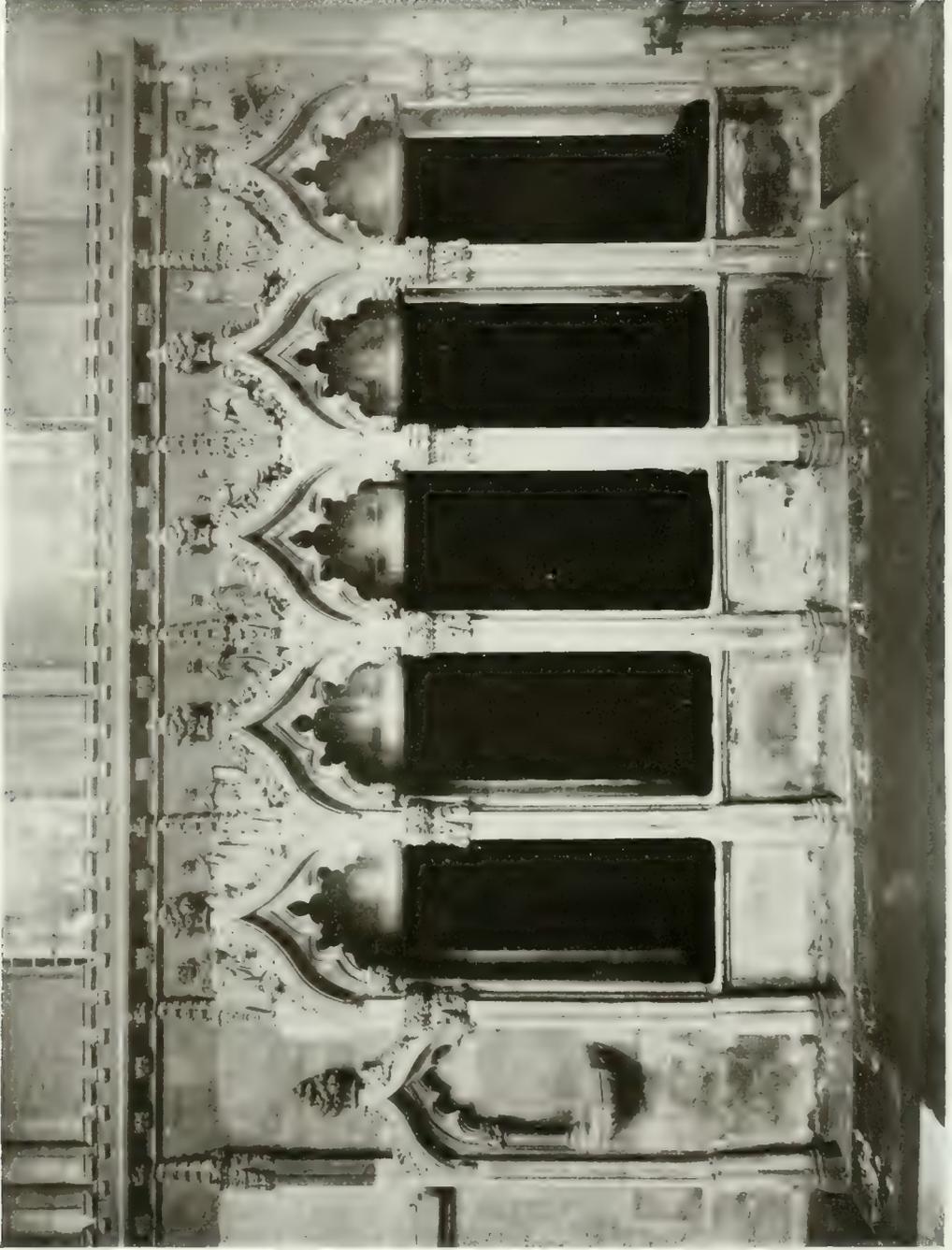
SALISBURY CATHEDRAL

*Cloister*



*SOUTHWELL CATHEDRAL*

*Choir Screen and Transept*



SOWELL CATHEDRAL

*The Sedilia*



*TEWKESBURY ABBEY*

*Warwick Chapel*



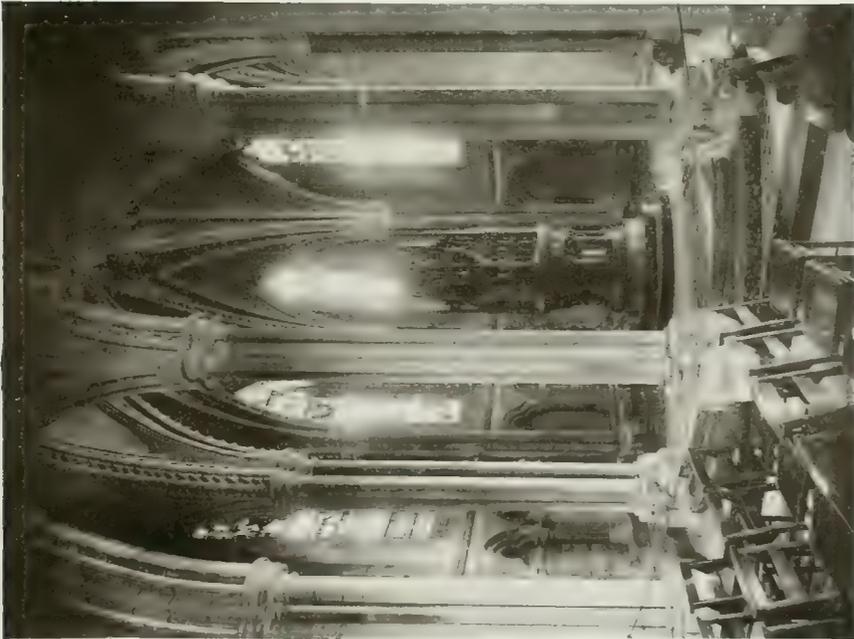
*TEWKESBURY ABBEY*

*Abbot Wakeman's Tomb*



*TICKENCOTE*

*Norman Arch*



*TRURO CATHEDRAL*

*The Baptistry*



WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL

*The Nave*

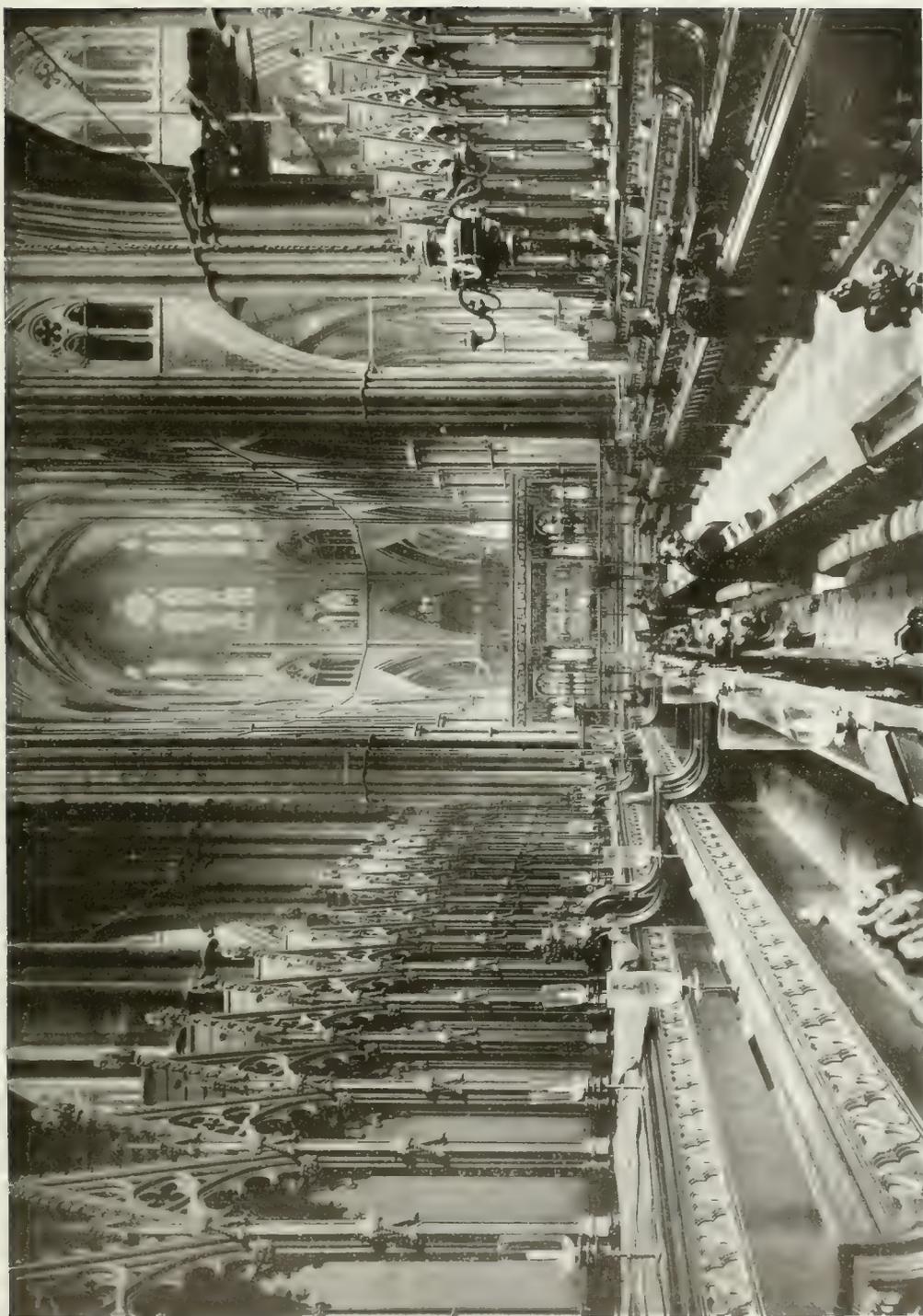


WELLS CATHEDRAL.  
*The West Front*



WESTMINSTER ABBEY

*Nave, looking East*



WESTMINSTER ABBEY

*Choir, looking East*

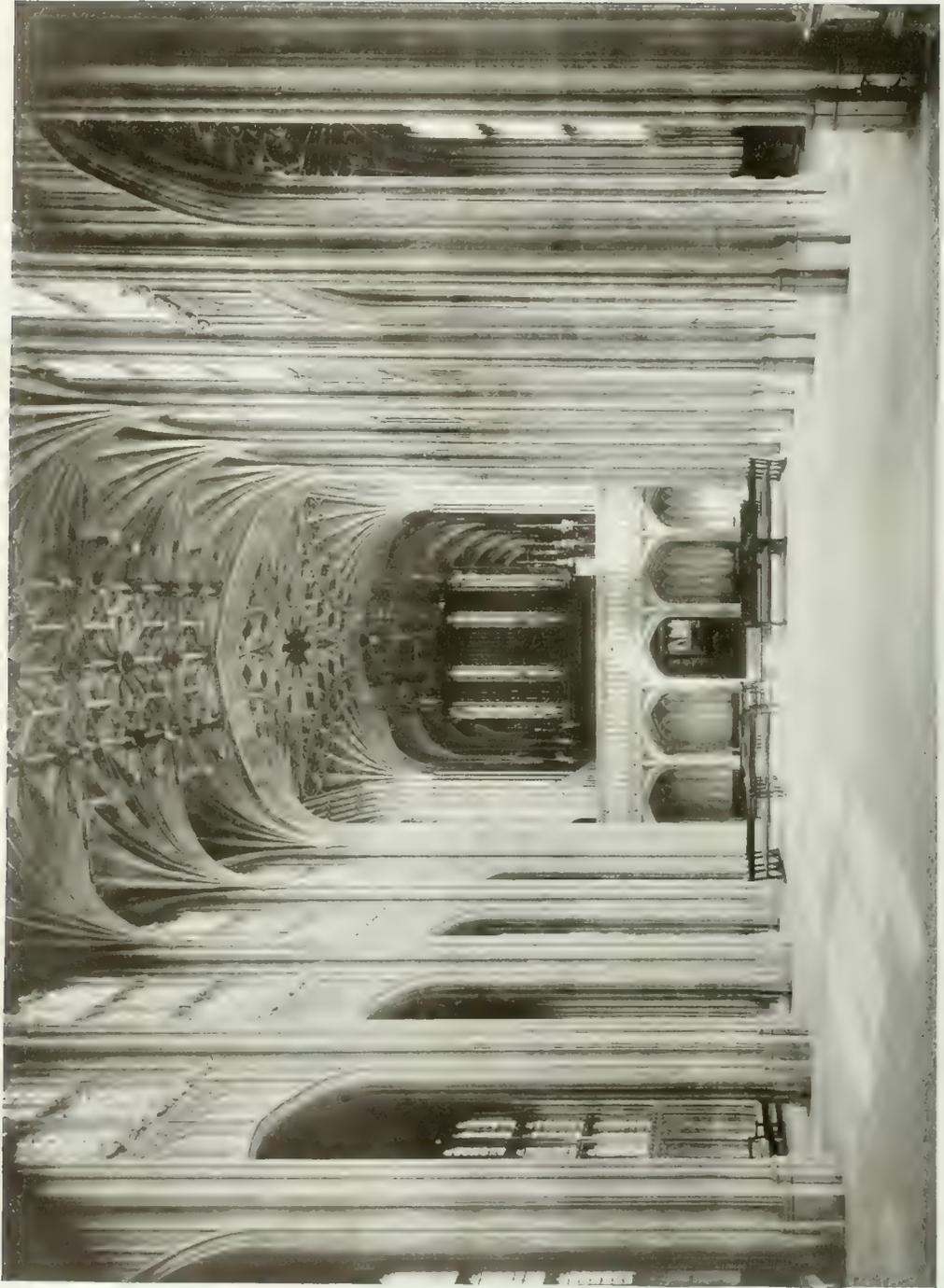


WESTMINSTER ABBEY

*Chapel of Henry VII*

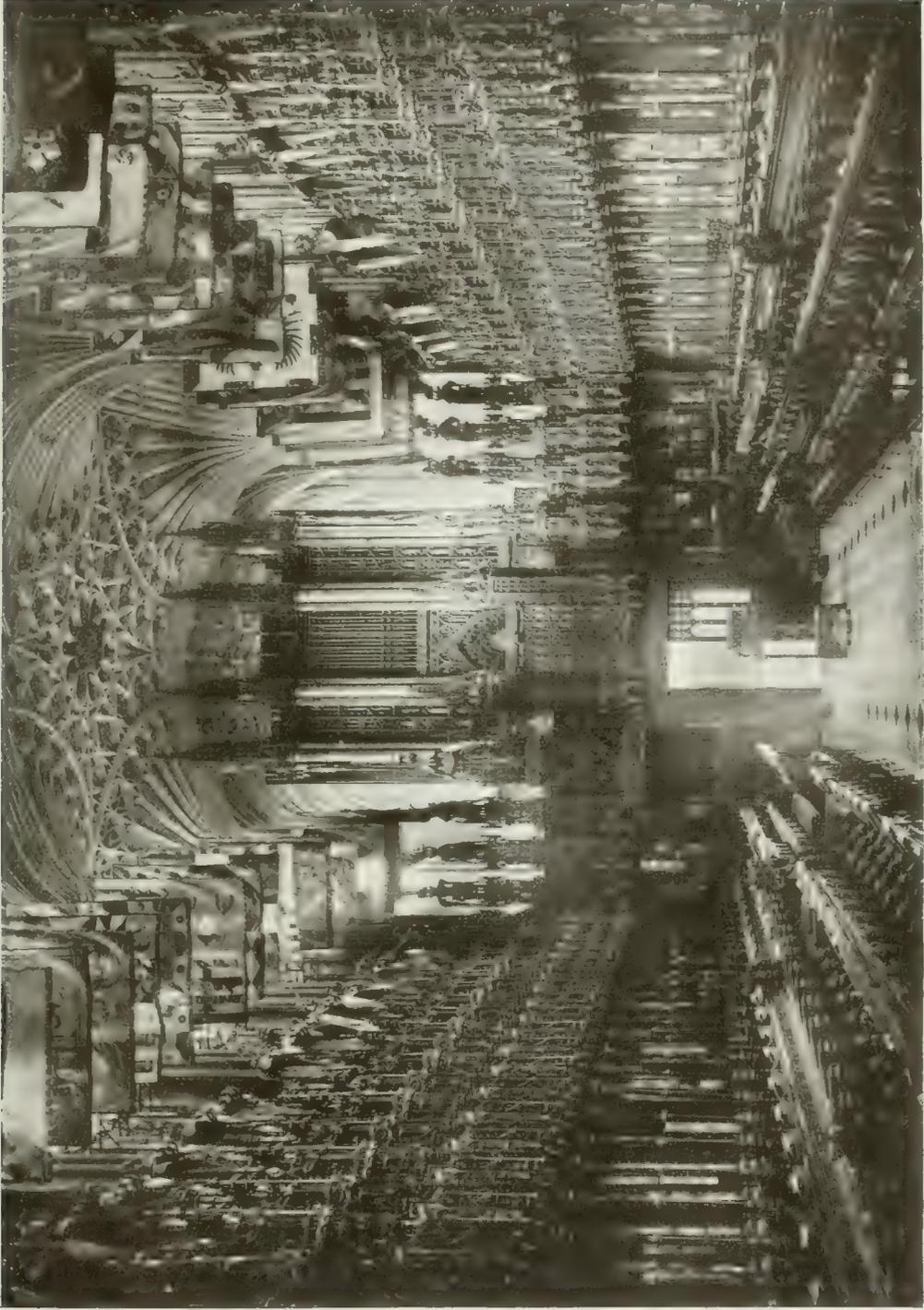


WESTMINSTER ABBEY  
*Stalls in Chapel of Henry VII*



WINDSOR. ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL

*The Nave*



WINDSOR. ST GEORGE'S CHAPEL

*Choir, looking West*



WINDSOR. ST GEORGE'S CHAPEL

*Altar and Queen's Gallery*



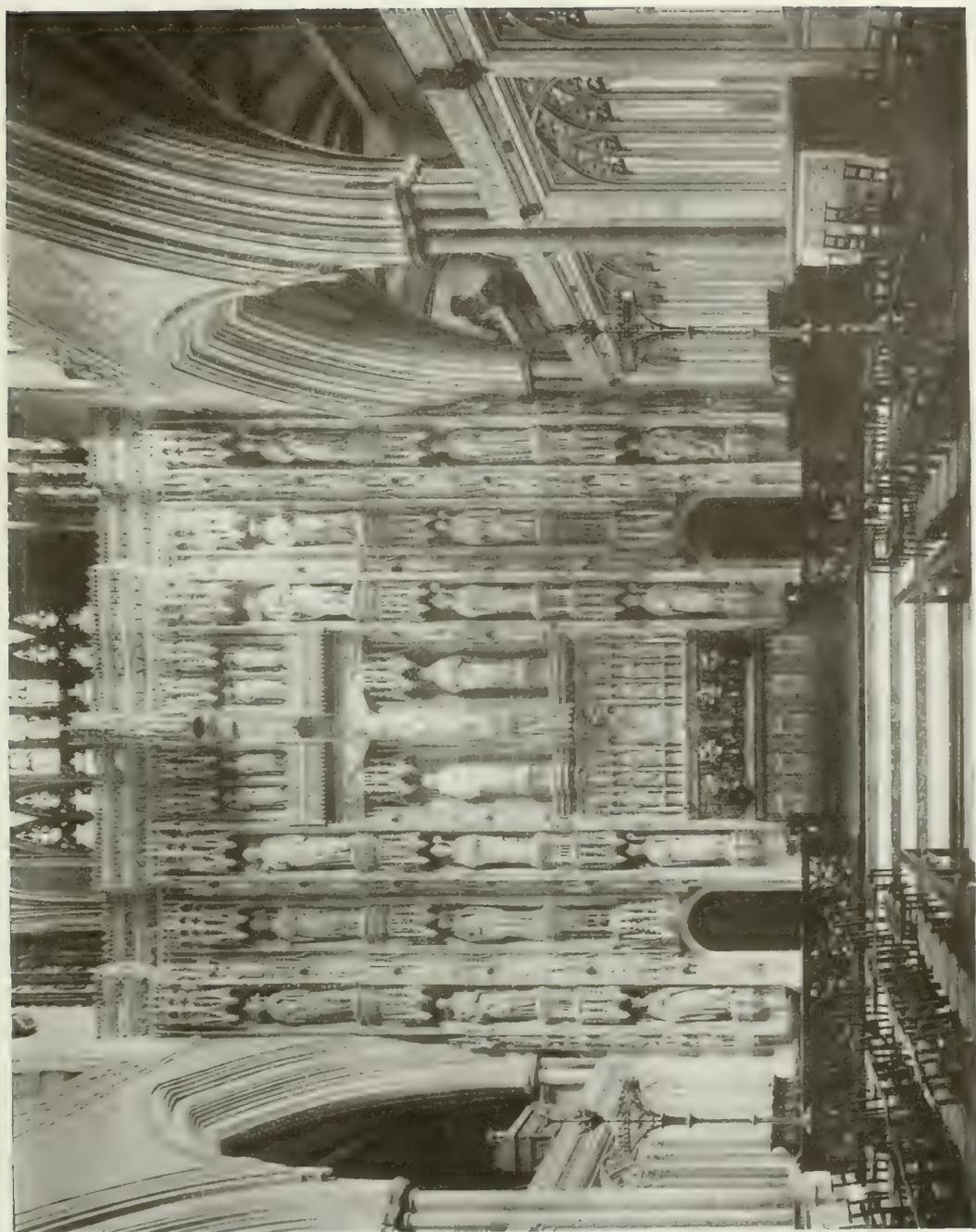
WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL

*The Nave*



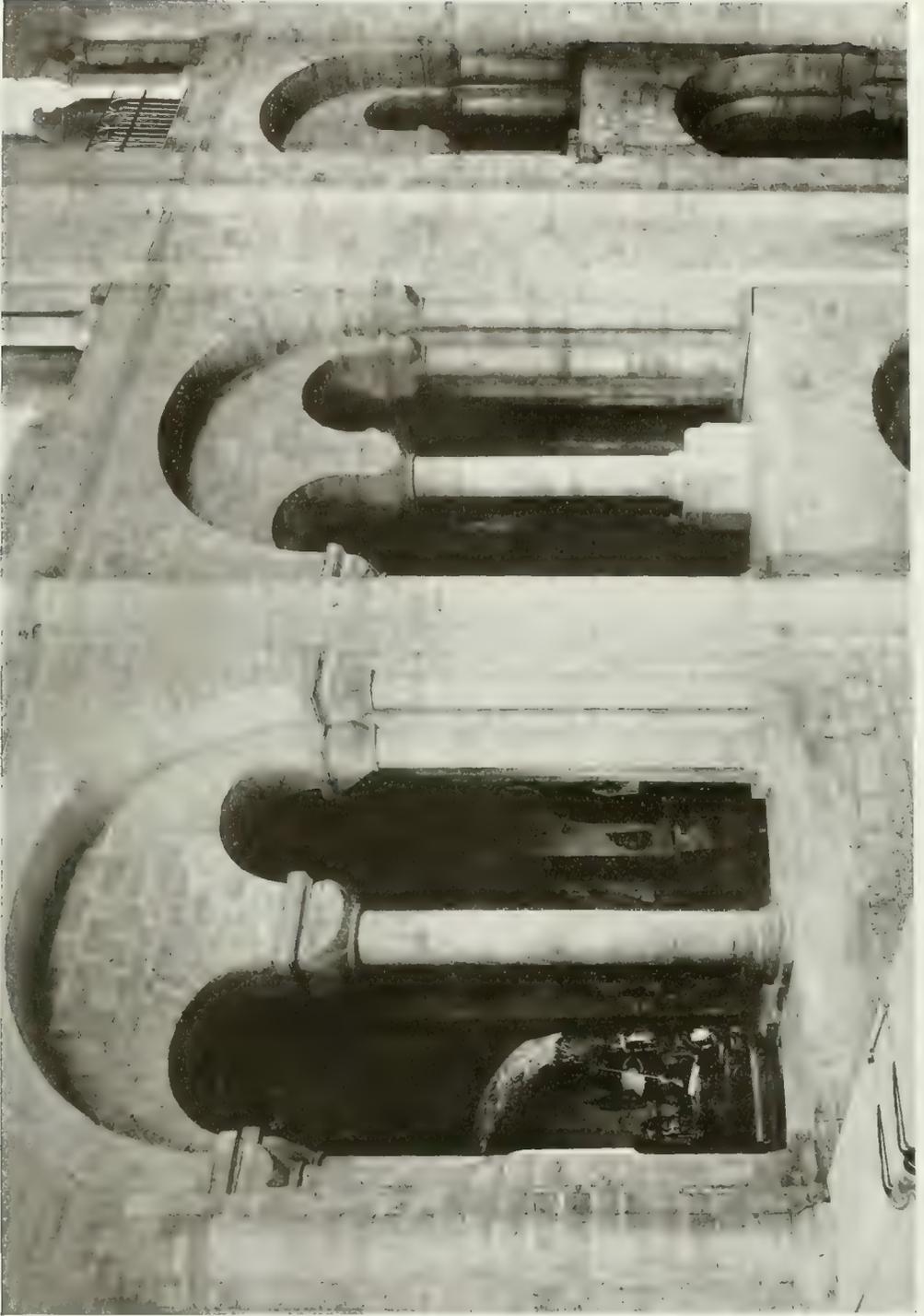
WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL

*South Aisle of Choir*



WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL

*The Great Screen*



WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL  
*Norman Arches in North Transept*



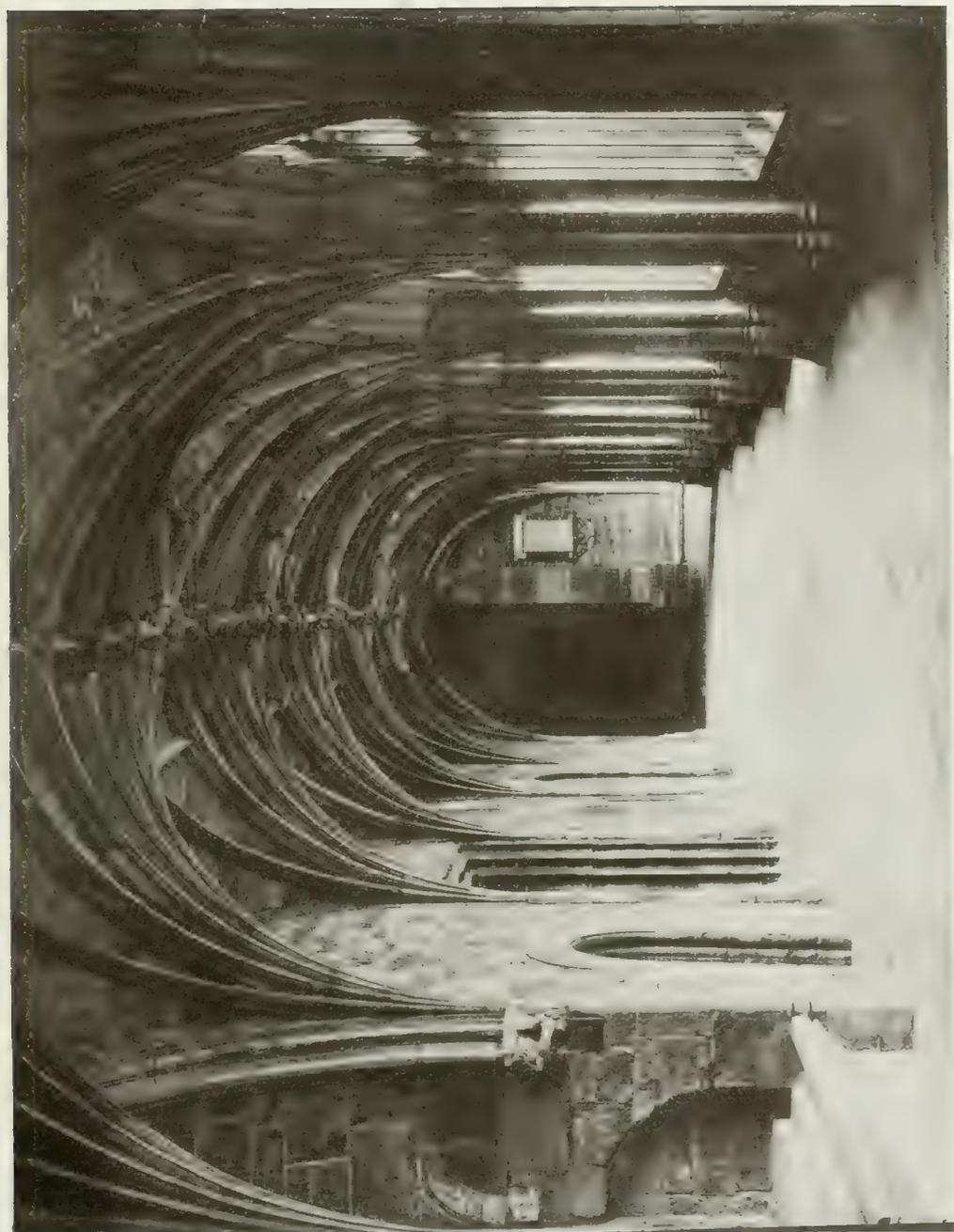
WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL

*The Font (Twelfth Century)*



WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

*View from South-West*



WORCESTER CATHEDRAL  
*Cloisters*

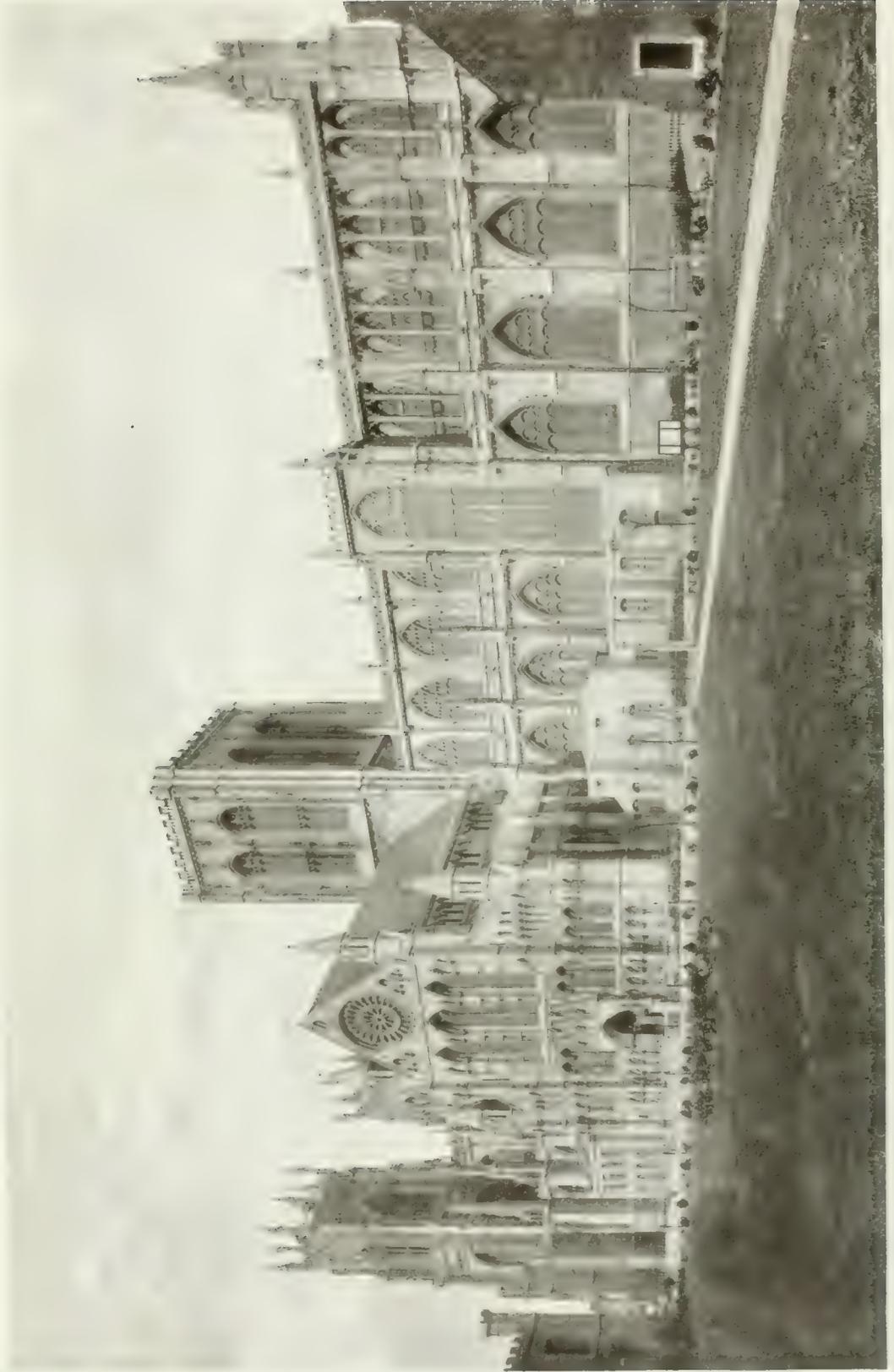


WORCESTER CATHEDRAL

*Ruins of Guesten Hall*



*YORK MINSTER*  
*The West Front*



YORK MINSTER

*View from South-East*



**YORK MINSTER**  
*Nave, looking West*



*YORK MINSTER*

*Choir, looking East*





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5461 THE CATHEDRALS  
W26 AND OTHER  
C.2 CHURCHES OF  
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