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A history of Ely Place



A  
HISTORY OF ELY PLACE

OF ITS

Ancient Sanctuary,

AND OF

ST. ETHELDREDA,

ITS TITULAR SAINT.



A GUIDE FOR VISITORS BY THE  
REV. STEPHEN EYRE JARVIS,  
Rector of St. Etheldreda's.

—  
FIFTH EDITION.  
—

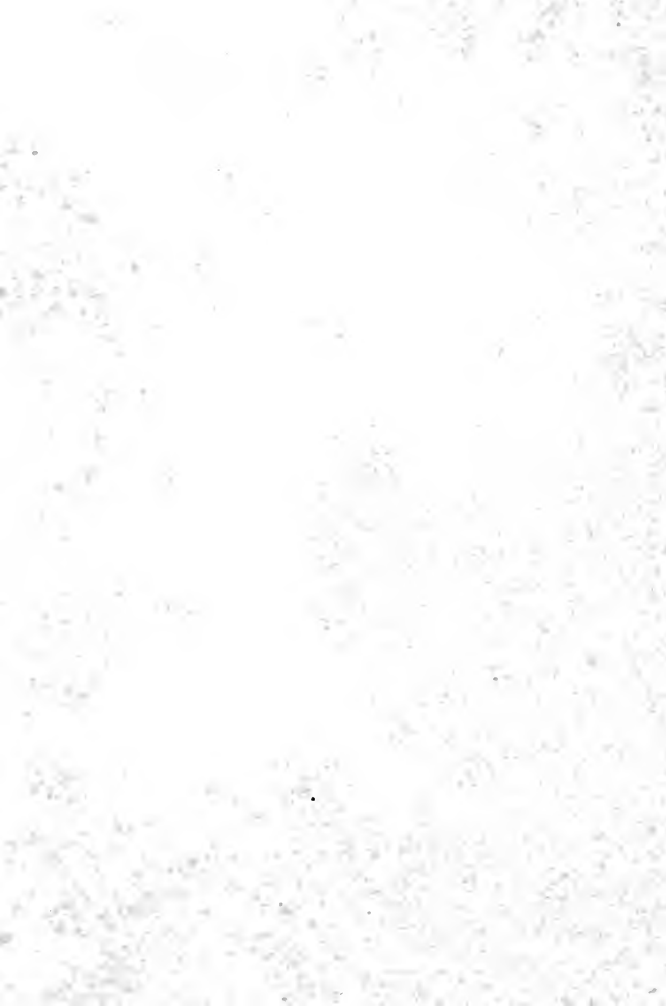
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1911.

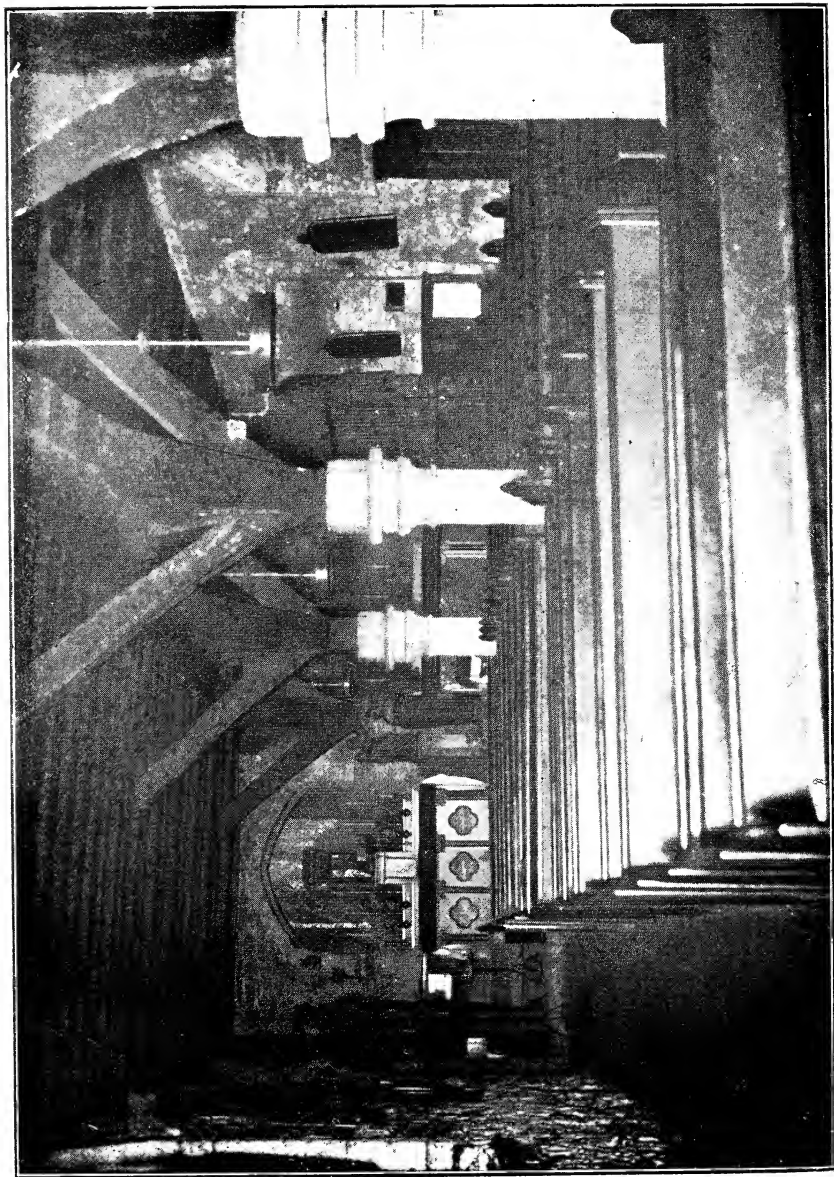
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## History of Ely Place.

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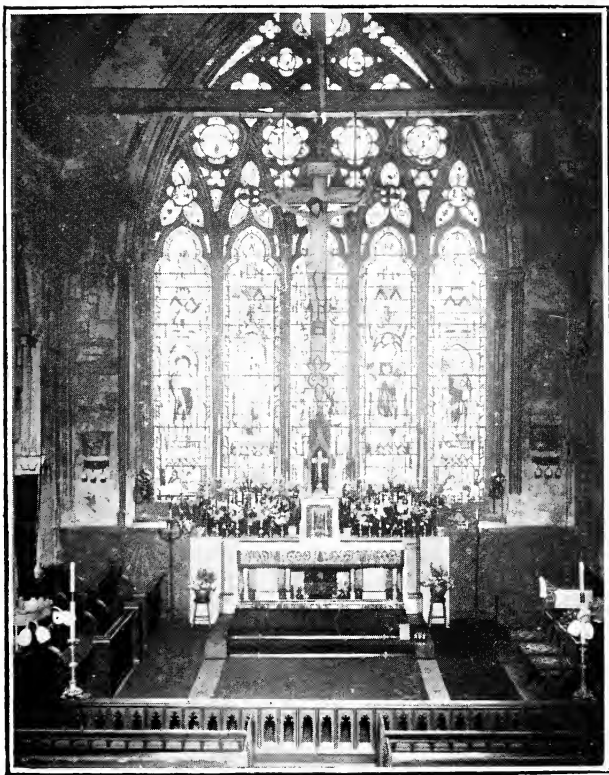
**A**MONG the thousands of wayfarers who, each morning, hurry along the great highway of Holborn on their way to the City, few comparatively of those who may observe the iron gates of Ely Place, opposite Negretti and Zambra's, just where Charterhouse Street opens out at Holborn Circus, are aware of the religious and historical interest attached to this hallowed spot of Old London. The name of Ely House remained unchanged for centuries, and more than six hundred years have passed away since the history began of the London palace and chapel of the Bishops of Ely. Every vestige of the episcopal palace has long since disappeared, and the only relic of antiquity now remaining is the beautiful chapel of St. Etheldreda, Queen and Virgin, and Foundress of the Abbey of Ely.

In former times most of the Bishops had seats, in or near London, in which they resided during their attendance on Parliament. Within the precincts of these residences they retained their jurisdiction as in their own dioceses. Some of these episcopal residences, with their enclosures, were exempt also from the ordinary civil jurisdiction, so that taxes could not be levied there. Hence they were called Liberties. Ely Place, besides being a *Liberty*, was also a Sanctuary, where persons pursued by the law

for certain offences could not be arrested by the civil authorities. Within present memory the Queen's writs did not run here, and no police officer or sheriff could follow a prisoner or a debtor who had taken sanctuary in the Liberty. To this day Ely Place has a kind of local control of its own, and is governed by certain Commissioners elected annually by the householders. Until lately they entirely managed the paving, draining, lighting, watering, and guarding of the Place. They have their own day and night watchmen, with gold-laced hats, who fulfil the functions of police. Here still, as in days of yore, the silence of the night is broken by the call, hour by hour, of the watchman, from ten o'clock at night until six in the morning. One of the oil street lamps, which were the means of lighting all London before the introduction of gas, was hanging in Ely Place when the Fathers of Charity took possession of St. Etheldreda's. Then only was this old oil lamp removed from over the presbytery door. At the doors of some of the houses until a few years ago were seen the iron extinguishers used to put out the torches which supplemented the lights of the London streets before the introduction of gas lamps, and were carried by servants or link-boys before the sedan chairs of the gentry.

Ely Place dates back to the close of the thirteenth century. John De Kirkeby, Bishop of Ely from 1286 to 1290, left by will to his successors in the See a messuage with nine cottages, situated in the parish of St. Andrew's, Holborn. William of Louth (de Luda), his successor, who had been Archdeacon of Durham and treasurer of the King's household, held the See from 1290 to 1298, increased





The High Altar of St. Etheldreda's.



the demesne, and bequeathed fresh property to the See. It appears that it was during his episcopate that the chapel of Ely Place was built on the ground left by Bishop De Kirkeby. Such was the opinion of Sir Gilbert Scott, the eminent architect, who, judging from the style of architecture of St. Etheldreda's, deemed that the chapel must have been erected between 1290 and 1299. This beautiful chapel seems to have been coeval with the exquisite monument to the Bishop in Ely Cathedral, a work clearly by the same hand, and with the tombs of Edmund Crouchback, second son of Henry III. and Aveline his wife, Countess of Lancaster, at Westminster, and of Archbishop Peckham of Canterbury—four works of art which may challenge Christendom for anything architectural of the kind to surpass them. And this chapel bears so much resemblance to them in some details as to point to the same architect. Certainly as early as 1303 distinct mention is made of the Chapel of St. Etheldreda as already in existence, and this confirms the opinion of Sir Gilbert Scott, drawn solely from the style of architecture. Bishop John de Hotham, at his death in 1336, added six messuages, two cellars and forty acres of land, which he gave to the prior and convent of Ely to say Masses for his soul, and for other objects. This Chapter estate, of which the present Saffron Hill is the site, appears to have been distinct from the episcopal possessions adjoining it. Thus the Bishop first, and afterwards the Chapter of Ely, entered the pre-existing parish of St. Andrew, and possessed themselves of a considerable estate, which, in virtue of certain ancient charters to the Church of

Ely, became independent of any other authority. Camden calls Ely Place "a citie habitation of the Bishops of Ely, well becoming Bishops to dwell in, for which they are beholden to John de Hotham, Bishop of Ely under King Edward III."

Thomas Arundel, who was consecrated in 1373, and afterwards became Archbishop of Canterbury, expended great portions of his revenue on the palace. Moreover, he built the cloisters and Gate-house, in the stonework of which his coat-of-arms was to be seen in the time of Stowe. During the time also of Bishop Arundel, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and father of King Henry IV., took refuge at Ely House when his palace of the Savoy had been burnt down by rioters. There he remained until his death, which occurred in 1399, as Hollingshead relates: "In the meantime, A.D. 1399, the Duke of Lancaster departed out of this life at the Bishop of Ely's place in Holbourne, and lieth buried in the Cathedral church of St. Paule, in London, on the north side of the high altar, by the Ladie Blanche, his first wife."

Many sumptuous feasts were given in Ely House. In Michaelmas Term, 1464, the serjeants-at-law held their banquet there, to which, amongst other distinguished persons, the Lord Mayor was invited with the Aldermen and Sheriffs. But on the Lord Mayor looking for the chief seat of state in the hall, as was always the custom in the City when the King was not present, Lord Grey of Ruthin, then Lord Treasurer of England, was advanced to the place of honour—a grievous slight upon the Chief Magistrate of the City, who took it so ill that he left the banquet-room, carrying in his train the Aldermen, whom his lordship

consoled with a dinner at his own house instead. As an explanation of the above, be it noted that Ely Place and its precincts had always claimed a privilege of express exemption from the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor of London as an independent *Liberty*.

The next circumstance to be noted in the history of Ely Place has reference to an event of great interest and importance in the history of England. It is remarkable for the dialogue written in connexion with it by Shakespeare. The Duke of Gloucester is represented as saying to the Bishop of Ely, John Morton, on the morning of the execution of Lord Hastings at the tower of London, "My Lord, when I was last in Holborn I saw good strawberries in your garden there, I do beseech you send for some of them." "Marry, and will, my Lord, and with all my heart," replies the Bishop. See King Richard III. Act iii. Scene 4. Then followed that extraordinary scene which took place in a room shown to this day, called the Council-room, in the White Tower, in which the tyrant bared his withered arm, accused Hastings of witchcraft and treason, and condemned that nobleman to instant death. Notwithstanding his complaisance, Bishop Morton was taken into custody by the Protector on the same day, together with Archbishop Rotherham, Lord Stanley and others, who were suspected of being opposed to schemes of Richard.

In 1531 a sumptuous banquet was given in the great hall of Ely House, when eleven new serjeants were made. This hall is stated to have been a spacious room seventy-four feet long, standing east and west, lighted with six Gothic windows, and

furnished in a manner suitable to the hospitality of the times. The entertainment lasted five days. On one of these days King Henry the Eighth and Queen Catherine with the foreign ambassadors were present. Amongst the guests were the judges, the Lord Mayor, aldermen, and the principal knights, squires, and gentlemen of the City. Stowe gives full details of the dinner on that occasion.

Here also in the cloisters of Ely House it is said that King Henry VIII. first met with Cranmer. And this brings us to the times of the so-called Reformation, when the Catholic faith was overturned in this land, and Church property seized by the Crown and given to Protestant favourites and adherents.

In the March of the year 1576 accordingly a new era took place in the history of Ely Place, when Sir Christopher Hatton, the special favourite of Queen Elizabeth and Lord Chancellor of the realm, obtained, by the intervention of his mistress, a footing in the City domicile of the Bishops of Ely. For Bishop Cox, who had taken an active part in drawing up King Edward's first *Common Prayer Book*, was soon required by the Queen, under threats and menaces of being unfrocked, to grant a lease to Sir Christopher of the Gate-House and other portions of the palace in the front courtyard, as well as the keeping of the garden and orchard. In 1581 Bishop Cox died, and the See being kept vacant for eighteen years afterwards, Sir Christopher had already secured firm possession of the property when Bishop Heaton in 1599 claimed his rights. But the Queen upheld Sir Christopher in his ill-gotten gains, and when later on he was dying at Ely Palace she went there to visit him. Many years





The Screen and Organ Loft.

afterwards it was agreed, after long disputes, that the owners of the Hatton property should pay £100 a year to the Bishops of Ely in compensation for what they had lost. In the Harleian MSS., in the case between the Bishop of Ely and my Lord of Hatton, it is stated that "several cellars are possessed by others even under those rooms of the house which the Bishop hath now left to dwell in, and they are intermixed with the cellars which he uses, having lights and passages into the cloisters and the most private parts of the house. Even half of the vault or burying place under the Chapel is made use of as a public cellar, or so was very lately, to sell drink in, there having been frequently revellings heard during divine service." Hatton Garden, Hatton Wall, Vine Street and Saffron Hill—names still retained by the neighbouring streets—mark the old alienated episcopal property, and remind us of where the beautiful garden lay, sloping down to the south-east along the right bank of the Fleet river, then a salmon stream falling into the Thames near where Blackfriars Bridge now stands.

The Palace, thus dismantled of its gardens, lost one of its special charms, and perhaps the new Protestant Bishops, no longer having the same influence and social status as that formerly enjoyed by the old Catholic Bishops, felt themselves rather out of place among the Barons of Parliament, and had little need of a London palace of aristocratic proportions. So it came to pass, as we gather from Gardiner's History of England, that in the March of 1620, during the reign of James I., Ely House was let on lease to Gondamar, the Spanish Ambassador, and

the chapel was again used for Catholic worship. Here persecuted English Catholics, as in the other Embassy chapels, were able to hear Mass without incurring legal penalties. About this time the persecution of the Catholics was at its height. Sixteen priests had been hanged, drawn and quartered, and by the year 1622 there were no less than 400 priests in prison. Gondamar was doubtless able to afford a refuge to many such priests who were being hunted down like wild beasts. It is related in the Howell letters that the Countess Gondamar, with her maids, used early in the morning to sweep and clean the chapel and get all things ready for Mass. Along the great highway of Holborn passed those dread processions from Fleet Prison to Tyburn, in which heroic priests and Catholic laymen were dragged on hurdles to execution. In the history of one of them we are told that as the procession passed Ely House it was joined by the gentlemen of the Spanish Embassy. It is recorded in Malone's "History of the Stage" that the last Passion Play performed in England was acted before Gondamar during his residence in Ely Place. Later on we find the Duke of Richmond occupying the Gate-House of Ely Palace, where eventually he died. Afterwards the Duchess retired into the Bishop's part of the buildings, and we are told that she had the Lenten services in the chapel even as well conducted as those which were held at Whitehall. Thus the chapel was again in the hands of the Protestants.

From 1638 to 1667 Matthew Wren, uncle of Sir Christopher, the great architect, was Bishop of Ely. Wren was committed to the Tower for endeavouring to restore Catholic practices into his diocese, and he



remained there for twenty years until 1660 when he was released. During the time of his imprisonment the greatest and best part of Ely House was pulled down, the garden built upon, and the house reduced to a very dark inconvenient dwelling, retaining scarcely any of its former splendour, except as regards the ancient hall and chapel.

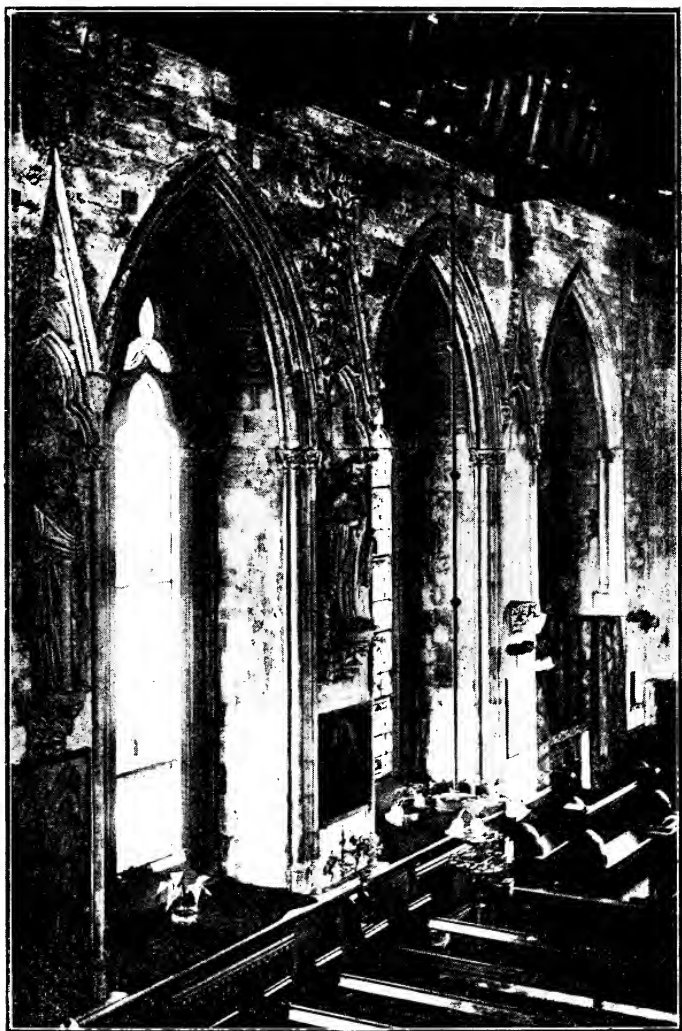
In 1642 the place was converted into a prison by order of Parliament, and the Serjeant-at-arms was appointed keeper, with a charge that the chapel, especially the windows, as well as the garden, should receive no injury. In the times of trouble that followed Ely House was made a hospital for wounded soldiers and sailors. Numbers of these who died there were carried to be buried in the churchyard of St. Andrew's, Holborn. It is recorded that Queen Anne who was a great admirer of the celebrated Bishop Ken came to Ely House to hear him preach in the Chapel there.

From this date there is a little of interest to note in the history of Ely House until the year 1772, when the Bishop obtained an Act of Parliament to sell the property to the Crown. After the transfer it was purchased by a Mr. Charles Cole, an architect, who afterwards built the houses in Ely Place, preserving the chapel as a place of worship for the residents on the estate. For some years the church was leased to the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor. Then, in 1844, it passed into the hands of the Welsh Episcopalians. It remained in their hands until the whole of the property in Ely Place came to be sold under an order of the Court of Chancery, in order to finish a law suit between the descendants of the original purchasers. The Fathers of Charity heard of the

proposed sale and sent an agent to bid for the chapel, which was knocked down to them for the sum of £5,400—less than the value of the freehold ground on which it stands. Father Lockhart, writing on this subject, says: “The day after we had made the purchase the clergyman of the Welsh congregation called on me to offer a considerable advance on the sum we had paid. It seems the Welsh people had got the notion that if the price ran up beyond the £5,000 they were prepared to pay, Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, the great Welsh magnate, would authorize his agent at the sale to go on with the bidding. Their agent, when he had made his last bid, looked across the room to our agent, whom he supposed to be the person authorized to act for the Welsh baronet. ‘I suppose,’ he said, ‘it is all right in your hands?’ ‘Certainly,’ was the reply of our agent, on whose next bid, it was knocked down to him. It was only after the sale that they learned that the property had passed into Catholic hands. ‘Well, sir,’ said the Welsh clergyman, when I declined to sell, ‘I am sorry we have lost the old place, but this I will say, if we were to lose it, I am glad it has passed into your hands, for you will appreciate its beauty, and, I have no doubt, restore it in a way we should never do.’” Owing to the restoration of church and crypt, which occupied a period of nearly five years, the building was not re-opened for Catholic worship until the 23rd of June, 1876, on which day the feast of St. Etheldreda, its titular patroness, is annually kept in the Roman calendar.

Having thus briefly sketched the history of Ely Place, let me now add something in the way of a





Tracery of Side Walls.

description of its old buildings, gathered from Sir Gilbert Scott's valuable paper, "Ely Place, Holborn." It appears that shortly before the demolition of the old palace, plans and sketches were made of it in 1772 as it then stood. They had been preserved in the family of Bishop Keane, the last Bishop to occupy the palace, and were presented by one of that family to Sir Gilbert Scott, who in turn gave them to the "Society of Antiquaries." Sir Gilbert also presented copies of them to Father Lockhart, which are still preserved in our archives here. "These plans and sketches," says the eminent architect, "show the palace as mainly consisting of a cloistered quadrangle of two storeys, the lower one being the cloister proper, and the upper storey consisting mainly of rooms. There are two great buildings adjoining it, or nearly so, the one at the south-eastern and the other at the north-western part of the cloister. The former is on the ground level, or the level of the cloister; the latter on the upper level, approached from the north-western corner of the cloister by steps, its lower storey forming a crypt. There are other apartments south and west of the cloister, as well as on the east side of the ground. There is a considerable space, and a Gate-House to the south, and a larger space towards the north, behind which is a building, apparently stables." Speaking of the drawings in his possession, Sir Gilbert says that they have clearly been to a great extent the originals of those given by Grose, who adds to them the names of the leading parts, showing the hall to be towards the south in the direction of the Gate-House, and the chapel towards the north.

The following description of Ely House reproduced from Grose by Sir Gilbert, will be of interest. Speaking of the injuries the palace received in the seventeenth century, Grose says: "Ely House was reduced to a very dark and incommodious habitation, without any remains of its ancient splendour and magnificence, except the Chapel and the ancient Hall. This house stands on the north side of Holborn, almost opposite to St. Andrew's Church. The entrance is through a large gateway, or porter's lodge, into a small, paved court; on the right hand are some offices supported by a colonnade, and on the left a small garden, separated from the court by a brick wall. In the front appears the venerable old Hall, originally built with stone: its roof is covered with lead. Adjoining to the west end are the chief lodging-rooms and other apartments.

"The inside of this hall is about 30 feet high, 32 feet broad, and 72 feet long. The timber of the roof forms a semi-dodecagon. It is lighted by six Gothic windows, four on the south and two on the north side. The floor is paved with tiles. At the lower end is an oaken screen, and near the upper end there is an ascent of one step, for the high table, according to the old English fashion. To the north-west of the Hall is a quadrangle cloister, its south side measuring 95, and its west 75 feet; in the centre is a small garden. The east side is at present shut up, and has been converted into a kind of lumber room or cellar. Over these cloisters are lodging-rooms and galleries, where are several ancient windows, but not above two small pieces of painted glass, and these neither beautiful nor curious.

“ Adjoining to the north side of the cloister, in a field containing about an acre of ground, stands the Chapel. This field is planted with trees, and surrounded by a wall. On the east side, next the Hall, are the kitchens; here were several other offices, which have been taken down within the memory of persons now living.”

Grose, continuing, says, “ The chapel is dedicated to St. Etheldreda, and is a right-angled parallelogram, in length 91 and in breadth 39 feet, having at each angle an octagonal buttress, or turret, crowned with a conical cap or pinnacle. The east window is large and handsome; on each side of it, as well as of those on the north front, are niches with pedestals for statues. The ornaments seem to have been carefully finished, but the whole building is at present greatly defaced by time and the weather. The inside is still very neat, and seems to have been lately repaired. The floor is about 10 to 12 feet above the level of the ground, and is supported by eight strong chestnut posts running from east to west under the centre of the building. This forms a *southern* or crypt, the size of the chapel, having six windows on the north, answering to as many niches on the south side. At present several windows are stopped up. The entrance into this place is through a small Gothic arch under the east window.”

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## Ely Chapel.

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Of the venerable old episcopal residence of the Bishops of Ely, comprising the Palace, with its banquetting-hall, the Gate House, the double quadrangle with its cloisters, court-yards and stables, nothing now remains but a few broken capitals and fragments preserved in the present cloister of St. Etheldreda as a memory of the past. The chapel alone has withstood for the most part the ravages of past ages, and stands now in all its strength as it stood six hundred years ago, to connect the present with the past. It appears to have been erected by Bishop de Luda, some time between 1290 and 1299, out of funds left him for the purpose by his predecessor William de Kirkeby. This opinion is endorsed by Sir Gilbert Scott, judging from the architecture alone. In any case we have documentary evidence, showing that the chapel was already in existence in 1303. In describing the sacred edifice, I shall largely avail myself of a valuable paper recently read at St. Etheldreda's, at a meeting of the Guild of St. Gregory and St. Luke, by a well-known architect, Mr. S. Nicholl, A.R.I.B.A. With the help of Mr. Nicholl's criticism, we shall be able to understand St. Etheldreda's, as it was in the past, as well as something of the beauty of its architecture.







Ancient British Font"—St. Etheldreda's, Ely Place

This ancient and beautiful structure, says Mr. Nicholl, must have stood out as beautiful even in the days when there was not an ugly building in London, not a structure which did not delight the eye of the artist and craftsmen, a state of things we can hardly realize now. Even then it was almost alone of its kind; it is now in London quite peerless. For the sake of comparison with other though more sumptuous chapels, I will cite the Sainte Chapelle of Paris, and the Chapel of St. Stephen in the Palace of Westminster, noting in the first place the dates of erection and the dimensions.

The Sainte Chapelle of Paris was erected by Saint Louis, as a shrine for the Relics of the Passion ceded to him by Baldwin II. The first stone was laid in 1245 and the chapel was consecrated in 1246. The dimensions are about 108 feet in length by 35 in width. St. Etheldreda's, next in date, from its style and some documentary evidence, appears to have been erected between 1290 and 1299, the internal dimensions of the upper chapel being 80 feet 5 inches by 29 feet 4 inches. St. Stephen's, Westminster, is said to have been erected in pious emulation of the work of St. Louis. The foundation was laid in 1292, and the work was continued until 1298, the period of the erection of St. Etheldreda's. The crypt of St. Stephen's, happily preserved, is of this period. The internal dimensions of the upper chapel were about 80 feet in length by 32 feet. When first erected it had proportions similar to those of St. Etheldreda's. Later on, in Edward the Third's time, it was greatly aggrandized, how exactly it is not certain, but Mackenzie, who carefully surveyed the

structure after the fire, found what he considered to be evidences of a clerestory above the original and then existing walls. This upper portion, whatever it may have been, was considered unsafe by Sir C. Wren, and was taken down in 1692.

Of Ely Place, the chapel alone is left to us. Westminster Hall stands with its noble roof, but St. Stephen's was so damaged by the fire that the upper chapel was cleared away, leaving us but the crypt and cloisters. It is here we may note that the three chapels I have cited were two-storied structures, not with sunken crypts, but with superstructures sufficient to raise the upper chapel well above the ground line. The use of the crypt of the Sainte Chapelle and of St. Stephen's was for worship, and, in that of Paris, the canons were interred. The use of St. Etheldreda's undercroft is doubtful. There was access to it from the cloister, which, was on the lower level, although it seems to have been blocked off when the plan was taken. The doorway shown in the north side, which might have served for externs, was probably made after the desecration, and there was a staircase leading upwards from the undercroft to the north-west entrance of the upper chapel. In the Harleian MSS. it is stated that even half of the vault or burying-place under the chapel is made use of as a public cellar, or was so very lately, to sell drink in, there having frequently been revelling heard during divine service. This was the state of things in the early seventeenth century. When the floor of the undercroft was lowered to its present level, skeletons were found buried there.

The undercroft measures 78 feet 10 inches by

25 feet. It is a plain quadrangle in plan, divided down the centre by a row of wooden pillars, the lower portions of which were removed at the recent restoration, and stone pillars substituted. The lighting is by windows of two lights with trefoiled heads. The only structural evidence of usage is that in the south wall, both the east and west ends, where there are double aumbries of good dimensions and designs. I may here note that aumbries for the service of the altar are generally in the north side, opposite the sedilia. There are no traces of sedilia or of piscinæ in the undercroft, although there is considerable thickening of the wall beneath the sedilia of the upper chapel, showing the clear intention from the commencement of the work to provide for them. I have already alluded to the entrances, and to the staircase in the north-west angle. There are two such staircases in the Paris Chapel.

The access to the upper chapel was by stairs from the cloister which led up to the south doorway, which is still the entrance. Access was also obtained from the apartments which were formed over the cloister, by the same doorway. Opposite to the south doorway there is a doorway in the north wall of the same dimensions, indicating, perhaps, a processional path across the west end of the chapel, or an entrance for externs. The present internal appearance of the roof, intended as a restoration, is, of course, modern. I need not further allude to it, except to note that in one of the views of 1772 the greater portion of the roof appears to have been flattened, only a small portion of the east end retaining the pitch of the gable.

“At this point,” says Mr. Bernard Whelan, the

restorer of the church, "it may be fitting for the purposes of the present Edition to break off these extracts from the Address of Mr. S. Nicholl; A.R.I.B.A. As what is said about the internal appearance of the existing roof of Saint Etheldreda's has been repeated in the several previous editions of this little work, it may be just to readers that the opinion just expressed be retained in order that it may be contradicted: 'The present internal appearance of the roof intended as a restoration, is, of course,' *not* 'modern.' Doctor Johnson had the grace to confess to 'sheer ignorance'; Mr. S. Nicholl can have the opportunity of following his good example. Never had the restorer of a dismantled building more precise indications of its original design than in the roof of Saint Etheldreda's. When recovered from the Welsh Episcopalians the chapel had a coved or segmental plaster ceiling; this was quickly removed amid inconceivable filth, living and dead. The lath and plaster had been hung from the old coupled rafters: these were all in their places: they were of chestnut: they were eight inches by six inches, laid flatways, so that the greater thickness should be seen from below: a few of them were decayed: they were replaced in oak, as chestnut was not obtainable: many of the rafters were leaning towards one another and had to be made straight; this was because the somewhat primitive principle of the construction of the ancient roof had been destroyed, in order to get the snug-looking plaster ceiling. That was done by cutting away the tie beams which supported the king post: this went up to the apex and carried the ridge pole which ran from end to end of the building, supporting the topmost ends of the rafters: all these





Entrance to the Church, South Doorway.



perversely removed features were carefully replaced. Immediately beneath the wall plate which received the lower end of the rafters was found the rotting wood of the tie beams, chopped off flush with the wall : these beams proved to have been sixteen inches by twelve, again laid flatways : for these restored features Canadian oak was used as no other timber of sufficient scantling was available. There was no guiding principle of design in the placing of the tie beams : they range with no feature of the stonework below : the whole roof is a framework of simple construction and of sufficiently noble dimensions made to protect walls of elaborate and original architecture : all ornament stops at the wall plate : it is a roof such as may be found above the groining in thirteenth century cathedrals of the highest rank : externally it provides the lofty line of ridge : while internally it is content with the dignity of solidity and usefulness. There is no continuity of design between the stone and the timber work ; in a building of the end of the thirteenth century this is a puzzle and a thing unique : superimposition is the only bond between roof and walls ; this fact may have deceived the critic when he imagined that 'the internal appearance of the roof, is, of course, modern.' The strange quality of Saint Etheldreda's is that it is a reversion to a principle of construction much earlier than its own period ; there is no counterpoise : it is purely static : there is no concentration of thrust on particular points ; hence the walls of the crypt are an even eight and those of the upper church an even six feet thick : on the summit of these are laid wall plates to carry a roof of evenly distributed weight : just below these were

inserted, in haphazard fashion, horizontal tie beams merely as a matter of sound, though primitive, carpentry : the absence of buttresses throughout is, somewhat paradoxically, the outward and convincing manifestation of this static theory of construction. Apart from all the details—in themselves sufficiently unusual—the originality of Saint Etheldreda's rests upon the fact that, on the verge of the fourteenth century, it was deliberately designed on a structural principle not later than the Romanesque. The grouping of the windows of the upper church with the intervening crocketed gablets was a novelty of well articulated design : the tracery and its cusplings are each *sui generis* : the profiles of the mouldings have a bold delicacy, while the thick walls, displayed in the deep reveals, give them the desirable enhancement of plain surfaces. There is elsewhere no work by the architect of Saint Etheldreda's—not even at Ely."

The windows are, fortunately, ample, so that though two of the side windows are blocked, and the great west window dimmed by adjacent buildings, there is little, if any, sense of gloominess. A remarkable and beautiful feature of the interior of St. Etheldreda's is the series of brackets and statues between the side windows. A similar arrangement exists in St. Louis's Chapel, the statues being of the twelve Apostles, each statue holding one of the consecrated crosses. The sedilia in St. Etheldreda's have long been destroyed, but a fragment of one of the divisions remains to mark the position ; and I have given to the Fathers at St. Etheldreda's a copy of a sketch made by Mr. Walters of their remains as they existed before the restoration of the chapel, when a portion of their

canopy had to be removed to make way for the present entrance from the house adjoining. With regard to the great east and west windows, I would call attention particularly to the lowness of the cill behind the altar, which is so marked as to have been used as an argument in favour of the absurd theory that the building was the hall and not the chapel.

But the architects of this period considered the windows as paintings, just as appropriate as in a sunnier clime is the great wall painting of the Sistine Chapel. St. Etheldreda's is not a solitary example. The small chapel of St. John, at Northampton, has its east window similarly placed. The cill of the altar-end window of Gilston Parish Church is only four feet above the floor level. In the apsidal windows of the Paris Chapel the lower panels were of clear glass, so that when the king presented the relics to the view of the people, they could be seen from the outside in the court.

There are a few relics of the old days in the chapel and precincts which are worthy of notice. Among them a holy water stoup which has been let into the wall near the crypt door, a large capitoll of early English design will be found in the centre of the quadrangle, and other loose stones, many of which probably formed part of the sedilia, have been placed in the cloister. Also the very ancient bowl apparently of granite, which now serves as a holy water stoup at the entrance of the church. It is of much earlier date than any portion of the existing structure, and was found buried in the centre of the undercroft. It is far too small to have been a baptismal font of its period. As it has been lined with lead since the restoration, we

cannot say whether it is pierced for a drain or not; if not pierced, it might have originally served its present purpose; if pierced, it might have been a piscina. Sir Gilbert Scott, being asked his opinion of this ancient relic, replied, "You may call the bowl British or Roman, for it is older than the Saxon period;" from which it is thought that it may have belonged to an ancient British Church, and as a sacred vessel no longer in use, it was buried according to Catholic custom, in order that it might not be desecrated to common uses. Father Lockhart, writing on this subject, makes the following conjecture:—"Here, then stood not improbably the earliest Christian Church of London on this very spot, which was then a wild and wooded hill, outside the walls of the Roman City, like the British Church of St. Martin, just outside the walls of Canterbury. If so, it may have been here that the British Bishop of London, who afterwards attended the Council of Arles, received the news of the martyrdom of St. Alban, at Verulam on the outbreak of the persecution of Dioclesian, A.D. 303." In the porch there is a well-carved escutcheon of the Royal Arms of England, which in its day evidenced the Royal supremacy. It is of the date of Charles I. When the Fathers of Charity took possession of the chapel it was found hanging over the Communion-table, which took the place of the ancient altar. Of course it was taken down, but being a beautiful piece of oak carving, it was placed outside the church on the wall facing the south entrance. Under it is the following inscription, placed there by Father Lockhart, the first Rector of St. Etheldreda's: "This





Shrine of St. Etheldreda.

emblem of the Royal supremacy was removed from the Church of St. Etheldreda when it was restored to the Roman obedience." In the centre of the cloister there is a carved capital of early form, of the origin of which I feel rather doubtful. It is credited as having belonged to the cloisters.

Having culled the above remarks, with a few exceptions suggested to me by the narrative, from Mr. Nicholl's excellent paper, although not always so exactly as to warrant my using inverted commas, I now turn to consider the more modern aspect of St. Etheldreda's, as we see it since its restoration to Catholic worship, and now converted into a parish church.

In the crypt Mass is said daily, in winter time, the Blessed Sacrament being also reserved there, as well as in the upper church. The crypt is a favourite resort for numbers of Catholics from far and near. Some declare that they can say their prayers here better than anywhere they know. It is very unlike any other place of worship in London. You may kneel there and not hear a sound of the Holborn traffic. The walls are eight feet thick. The light admitted through the deep embrasures of the windows is tempered by the stained glass, which looks as if it were as old as the church, with its sea-green tints and medallions of saints, contemporaries of St. Etheldreda the Saxon Princess. The little lancet windows are painted mostly in grezaille; lighted up with enough of ruby, gold and blue to save them from monotony. Overhead are massive beams and rafters of oak wood, black with age. A centre row of dwarf pillars supports the struttings of the roof,

on which rests the floor of the upper church. The crypt is divided into two aisles. At the end of each is a stone altar. The Confessionals occupy the deep embrasures of the windows on the north side, being separated off by heavy cedar screens. Against a pillar in the sanctuary, between the two altars, is a striking figure of St. Bridget, brought hither when the old chapel in Baldwin's Gardens, was pulled down. On either side of the Sanctuary are the statues of Our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph. One of the altars is dedicated to the Sacred Heart, the confraternity of which has been erected at St. Etheldreda's. The canopy over the statue of Our Lord was recently erected in memory of Father Richard Bone, who succeeded Father Lockhart as Rector of the church, and died in 1898. There is also a good organ in the crypt, and the evening services of the Confraternities of the Sacred Heart and of St. Joseph are held there. The first Mass on the restoration of this place to Catholic worship was said in the crypt by His Eminence Cardinal Manning, June 23rd, 1876.

Entering the upper church by the south door, the graceful proportions of the architecture completely satisfy the eye of the soul and fill it with delight. The first object that attracts attention is the beautiful Gothic screen at the west end of the church, the work of Mr. Bentley. The screen lightly sustains a choir gallery, where a new organ was recently built by Mr. Lewis, of Brixton. Both the screen and organ are the gift of Mr. Edward Bellasis, Lancaster Herald, of the College of Arms. Along the west side of the screen are emblazoned the shields of the donor's family; on the east side there are the arms



of the reigning Pontiff, the arms of England, of Cardinal Vaughan, of the first Bishops of the Sees of London and Ely, as also the arms of Father Lockhart, the restorer of the church, and of Rosmini, the Founder of the Institute of Charity. The eastern window is said to be one of the most beautiful in England, and is larger than any in London. The glass of the window is very fine, with its gem-like mosaic character, its canopies and enrichments. The upper part of the tracery is filled with imagery of angels with their instruments of music clustered round the figure of the Archangel Michael, who is hurling the great red dragon from his place of pride. The principal figure filling the central space over the altar is that of Our Lord, crowned and robed as our High Priest and King, His right hand raised in the act of blessing. To the right hand of Our Lord stands His Blessed Virgin Mother, on the left St. Joseph. The two outer lights of the window on either side are occupied by figures of St. Etheldreda and St. Bridget. This window is the gift of His Grace the Duke of Norfolk, in memory of his sister Etheldreda. The selection of the figures in the window is to commemorate the two well-beloved old Catholic Chapels of the Missions of the Holy Family in Saffron Hill, and of St. Bridget in Baldwin's Gardens, and which are now united in the parish of Ely Place. The stained glass window was the work of Messrs. Saunders & Co. Before we quit the eastern window, we must glance at the altar and the exquisite spire of its throne, all in alabaster. Beneath the altar is a gilded and jewelled reliquary, containing many relics of saints, but especially a portion of the incorrupt hand of St.

Etheldreda. This relic has a history. About a century ago, in pulling down an old farmhouse in Sussex, on the estate of the Duke of Norfolk, the workmen came upon a hollow place behind a wall which led to a small cell, evidently a priest's hiding-place in the days of persecution. In a niche in the wall of the cell they discovered a quantity of things which had evidently belonged to a priest. Among them was found, carefully wrapped around with linen cloths, what seemed to be a model of a beautiful female hand carved in ivory. Around the wrist was a cuff in silver gilt, and on it an inscription in characters of the ninth century—*Reliquiæ S. Etheldredæ Reginae et Virginis*. These relics were taken to the Duke of Norfolk, who made them a present to his agent, Mr. Harting. When his daughter took the veil as a nun in the Dominican Convent, at Stone, in Staffordshire, Mr. Harding presented the relic to the convent. When St. Etheldreda's Church was restored to Catholic worship, Bishop Ullathorne, of Birmingham, in whose diocese the convent is situated, detached with his own hands a portion of the relic, which was duly attested and sealed with the episcopal seal. Father Lockhart went to Stone to receive it, and it was then placed in the reliquary here under the high altar, where it is still preserved.

The shrine of Saint Etheldreda will be found on the north side of the Sanctuary.

An altar of oak, carved and painted, is set beneath the statue of the Saint. She stands, clothed in garments showing her double dignity of Queen and Abbess, and holding in her hand her miraculous staff ;





Ely Place  
in 1770. P. 111 C

Foundress of Ely, there rests on her left arm, the model of her religious house.

The west window, the tracery of which is also very beautiful, is even larger than that at the east end of the church. The stained glass is by John Hardman, and represents the martyrs who suffered under the tyranny of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth. The Carthusian Fathers of Parkminster and Mr. Middlemore have been generous contributors. Foremost among the martyrs are the figures of Blessed John Fisher and Blessed Thomas More filling the centre light. Our Lady Queen of Martyrs at the foot of the Cross supporting the dead body of her crucified Son is represented immediately above them. On either side are depicted the Carthusian martyrs from the Charterhouse, in our near neighbourhood, who were executed at Tyburn, as also their brethren of the York Charterhouse, executed in that city, the former being the first victims of Henry VIII. The window yet remains incomplete from want of funds. The complete design is in the hands of Messrs. Hardman of Birmingham: Coming now to the side windows, all of which are filled in with stained glass, in part the work of Mr. Worrall, five of them were the gift of Mr. Edward Bellasis, one was presented by Mr. Edwin de Lisle, and another by the Rev. G. Dunn, as may be seen from the inscriptions under each of the windows. The subjects of the eight side windows may be summarised as follows:—1st. The creation and fall of the angels. 2nd. The creation, fall and banishment of Adam and Eve. 3rd. The sacrifice of Abel, the death of Abel, flight of Cain, the flood, and Noah's sacrifice. 4th. The Tower of Babel, call of

Abraham, his offering to Melchisedeck, and sacrifice of Isaac. 5th. Jacob's ladder, the sale of Joseph, the Paschal Lamb in Egypt, and passage of the Red Sea. 6th. The law given on Mount Sinai, the Manna, Brazen Serpent, and the crossing of the Jordan. 7th. The promise to David, the Temple of Solomon, the Captivity and the Return. 8th. The Birth of Our Lord and the Christian Sacrifice of Calvary and of the Altar seen in vision by the prophet.

In the sanctuary, near the south entrance, there is a beautiful brass commemorative tablet dedicated to the memory of Father Lockhart, by whom this beautiful monument of antiquity was acquired. The inscription runs thus :—

### In Memoriam.

William Lockhart, B.A. Oxon., Priest of the Order of Charity, founded by Rosmini, Rector of this Mission, a man of great kindness of judgment, and loyalty to truth. Friend and disciple of Manning and Newman, he preceded both in the great act of their lives. By his instrumentality this ancient chapel of the Bishops of Ely, wherein later in times of persecution, as a Catholic embassy chapel, the Holy Mass found for a while an inviolable sanctuary, was in (A.D.) 1876 restored to the old religion of an undivided Christendom. Born 22 August, 1819; died May, 1892.

ON WHOSE SOUL SWEET JESUS HAVE MERCY.

## III.

**St. Etheldreda.\***

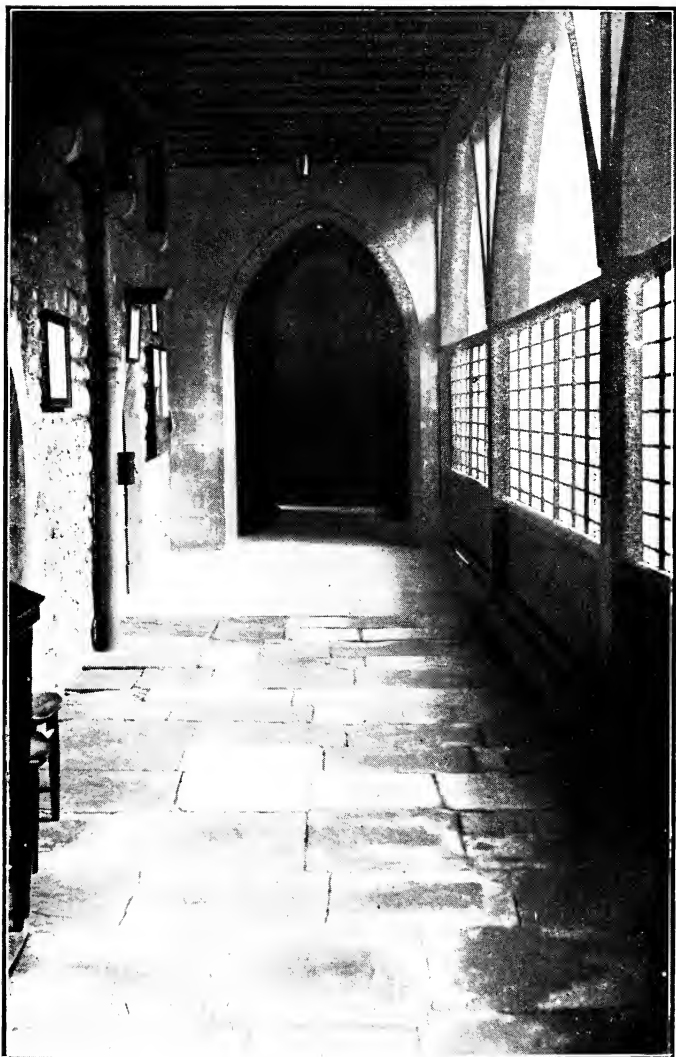
St. Etheldreda or Audrey was born in the middle of the seventh century, about the year 630, at Exning in Suffolk, a village which is now almost a suburb of Newmarket. She was a daughter of Anna, the Christian king of East Anglia. In a green shady meadow just outside the village, surrounded by giant elms, are still to be seen the five springs and the clear purling brook in which the future Queen and Saint was baptised by St. Felix, the First Bishop of Dunwich. When she grew up she was, with much reluctance on her part, married to Tonbert, a prince of East Anglia, who bestowed upon her the Isle of Elge, or Ely, as her dowry. However, the pious princess, who was greatly honoured and revered by her husband for her singular sanctity, obtained from him after the marriage his formal consent to her taking a vow of virginity during their union. Two years later, in 654, her father Anna was killed in battle with Penda, the powerful King of Mercia. A year later her husband Tonbert died, and the widowed princess retired to her demesne at Ely, evidently intending to devote the remainder of her life solely to religion. Her pious mother, St. Hereswyda, had already retired to the convent of Chelles, near Paris. Her three sisters also, St. Sexburga, St. Ethelburga, and St. Withburga, all at different periods withdrew from the world, and eventually, like their mother St. Hereswyda and St. Ethel-

\* In compiling this sketch of St. Etheldreda's life the author has availed himself greatly of Dean Stubb's "Historical Memorials of Ely Cathedral," 1897.

dreda, were recognised by the Church amongst the number of Her canonised Saints. Etheldreda's widowhood lasted five years. Then her father's ancient enemy, Penda, the Mercian king, was conquered and slain at Wynwred, near Leeds, by Oswy, of Northumberland, and the supremacy of the great heathen kingdom of central England was thus broken. With the ruin of Mercia the two Christian kingdoms of Northumbria and East Anglia drew together. The union was cemented by the marriage of the scions of the two royal houses. Oswy's son Ecgfrid was married to St. Etheldreda, Anna's daughter, and our Saint again prevailed with her second husband, even as she had done before with Tonbert; so that during the whole of his life also she still preserved that virginal integrity which had always been so dear to her. In 670 Ecgfrid came to the throne, and seems then to have wanted to withdraw from the pledge he had given St. Etheldreda. He therefore consulted St. Wilfrid, Archbishop of York, hoping to prevail upon him to use his influence with our Saint to get her to meet his wishes. St. Wilfrid gave him no support, but rather helped to confirm the resolutions of the Queen, until finally he obtained from the King the promise that he would abandon his design, and allow Etheldreda to retire into a convent. Now, in order to understand the conduct of the Queen in this matter, we must remember that her freedom in these marriages was very doubtful, and that freedom is essential for the validity of the marriage contract. Moreover, according to the law of the Catholic Church, even supposing freedom to have existed, a vow







The Cloister.

made to God by either party to enter religion suffices to dissolve the contract, provided only the marriage has not as yet been fully consummated. Such appears to have been precisely the case with St. Etheldreda. Add to this also the formal consent of her husband allowing our Saint to vow to God her virginity: a consent which having once been given by him could not lawfully be withdrawn after she had made her vow. So, being released from her marriage, which had never been consummated, she set out at once to Coldingham, there to take the veil at the hands of St. Wilfrid. But soon Ecgfrid seems to have repented of letting Etheldreda go so easily, for he gathered together a band of followers to take his Queen from the convent by force. By the counsel of Ebba the abbess there, who was the King's aunt, Etheldreda fled southwards to find refuge in her old home at Ely. There she arrived, after encountering many perils, and after many miracles had been wrought in her favour. Concerning this journey, it is related in the *Liber Eliensis* that the "Queen, going forth secretly with two handmaids of God, Sewenna and Seware, came to a lofty hill situated not far from the monastery, which she ascended. But God, who commands the winds and the waves and they obey Him, does not forsake those that put their trust in Him, and so by His command, as we believe, the sea leaving its natural channel, and pouring out its waters abundantly, surrounded the hill on which the holy virgins had taken refuge; and, so we are told by the inhabitants of the place, for seven whole days, while they continued in prayer, and without food or drink, the tide protected them,

and what is most wonderful, forgetting its accustomed ebb, it tarried there as long as the King remained. And so the handmaiden of Christ, secure in her rocky eminence, escaped the wrath of the King, and suffered no hurt from him." After the departure of the king, Etheldreda, with her two companions, Sewenna and Seware, proceeded on their journey. She crossed the Humber at Wintringham, and left instructions for the building of a church at Alftham, where it was afterwards erected. From Alftham, the pilgrims continued their flight on foot through byeways and lanes. The chronicler relates that one day, "tired with the long journey and overcome with the heat, the Queen lies down by the wayside to rest, and she sleeps, watched by her two faithful handmaidens. And lo! when she awakes from her sleep she finds that her pilgrim's staff, which she had fixed in the ground by her side dead and dry, had put forth branches clothed with green bark, and bearing leaves." "This staff," says the monk Thomas, her historian, "became an ash tree, and is the greatest of all the trees in that province; and the place where it grew is to this day called *Responsatio Etheldredæ*; and there is now built a church in honour of the Blessed Virgin to the praise of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is venerated in His Saints." A description of these miracles may still to this day be seen on the corbels that support the dome of Alan de Walsingham's fourteenth century octagon.

Arrived at Ely, the Queen, in 673, founded there her celebrated Abbey, and afterwards also a monastery of monks in the neighbourhood, both of which she governed. At that time it was not unusual for both

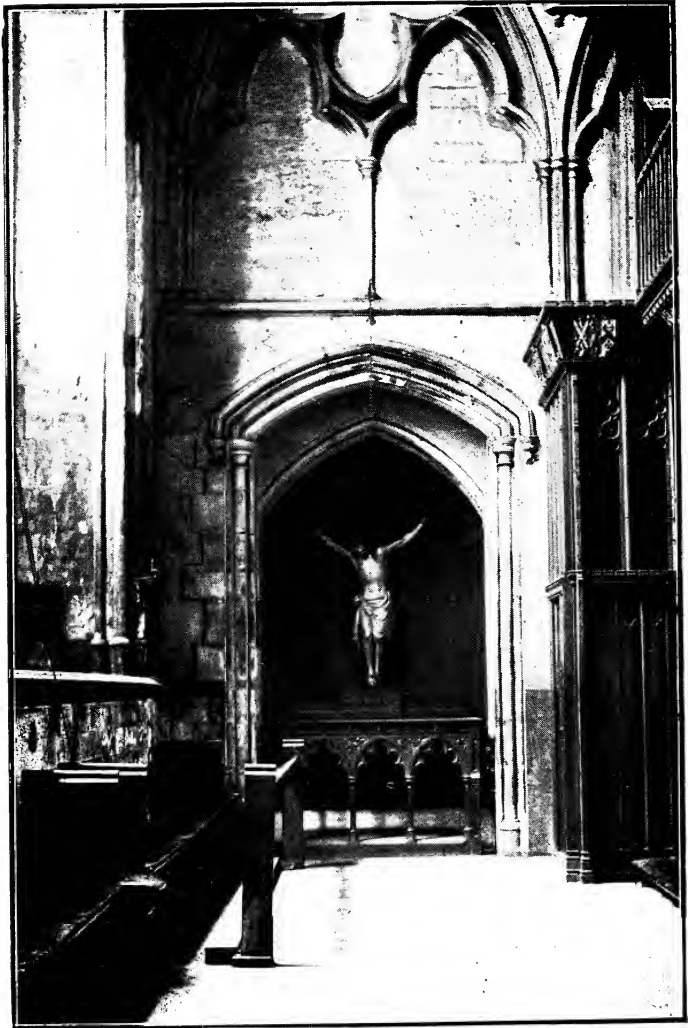
a monastery and a convent to be governed by the same authority. Thus there was St. Bridget at Kildare, while in Normandy there was the Abbess at Chelles, where St. Etheldreda's mother had taken refuge, and there was also the celebrated St. Hilda; and all these governed both monks and nuns. It was natural, therefore, that Etheldreda's foundation at Ely should be on the same model, *i.e.*, with a house for the monks and one for the nuns, both being under the rule of the Abbess.

The life of St. Etheldreda as Abbess was a short one. In the sixth year of her rule at Ely she was attacked by the plague, and after three days' illness died on the 23rd of June, 679, "being taken to the Lord in the midst of her people," as Ven. Bede her historian, says, "and just as she had herself ordered, she was buried not elsewhere than among them in a wooden coffin." Sixteen years later her sister, St. Sexburga, the widowed Queen of Kent, who had succeeded her as Abbess, removed her body, which was found to be marvellously protected from corruption, from the grave, and placed it in a white marble sarcophagus. St. Bede says that "the coffin in which she was at first buried was a means of cure to some who were afflicted in their eyes, who, when they had put their heads to the same coffin and prayed, presently were relieved of the discomfort of pain, or dimness in their eyes. They washed, therefore, the body of the virgin, and having put on it new garments, took it into the church, and placed it in that sarcophagus which had been brought, where even to this day it is held in great veneration. Indeed, in a wonderful manner the sarcophagus was found fitted for the body of the virgin, just as if it had been

specially prepared for it; and the place for the head, worked as a separate part, appeared most aptly shaped to the measure of the head." (Bede, Hist. Eccl., iv. 19.) This first translation of St. Audrey took place on the 17th October, 695, when the marble shrine with its sacred relics found its resting-place by the High Altar of the Convent Church.

About the year 1080 the foundations of the new church at Ely, which, during the next four centuries, gradually grew into the Cathedral, as we know it to-day, were laid by Abbot Simon. It was so far completed in 1106 that the second translation of St. Audrey was effected with great pomp and ceremony, Herbert of Losinga, the Bishop of Norwich, preaching on the occasion on the life, death and miracles of the Saint. A third time the shrine was moved, when Hugo de Northwold's splendid Presbytery was added to Abbot Simon's choir. Into this noble presbytery, on the 15th October, 1252, in the presence of King Henry II. and his son, and many of the leading nobles and prelates of the kingdom, the shrine of St. Etheldreda and of the three other Abbesses, and the shrine of St. Alban were removed a few feet eastward from their position in the Norman choir, and the whole church completed as we have it to-day was re-dedicated in honour of St. Etheldreda, St. Mary, and St. Peter. There it remained until the time of the so-called Reformation, when all relics, shrines, images, etc., were ordered to be demolished and dispersed. It has already been told how a hand of the Saint, still incorrupt, escaped the general destruction, and is now preserved in the Dominican Convent at Stone, and how a portion of it reposes in the





Original North Doorway.



reliquary under the high altar of St. Etheldreda's, Ely Place, Holborn.

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IV.

**St. Etheldreda's Parish.**

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The Catholic parish of St. Etheldreda's, Ely Place, covers a considerable area, being situated partly in the City, partly in Holborn, and partly in Clerkenwell. It extends east and west from Newgate Street to Gray's Inn Road, to the south along the Thames from Paul's Pier to the Temple Gardens, and is bounded to the north by the Clerkenwell Road as far as the railway bridge. This parish includes some of the most poverty-stricken districts in all London, and we find, according to the report of Mr. Booth, that the distress is greater in this neighbourhood than even at the East-end. There are a number of courts, alleys, and slums of the worst kind hidden away in the vicinity of the Central Meat Market and at the back of Farringdon Street Railway Station, not to speak of the district covered by Leather Lane and its adjacent courts, as also Shoe Lane and Saffron Hill. The latter is known to all readers of Dickens as the home of the "Artful Dodger" and "Fagin the Jew." And although the thieves' kitchens and certain doubtful pawnbroking establishments, where silk handkerchiefs supplied by the pocket-picking gentry

might be purchased cheap, have long since disappeared, yet there remain a number of poor tenements that have not yet been pulled down, in spite of what has recently been done to clear out our poor people. Still, there are thousands of poor Irish in this neighbourhood belonging to the districts of Ely Place, Back Hill, and Lincoln's Inn Fields. And but a few years ago, before the wholesale pulling down of entire streets, courts, and alleys had begun, there were between three and four thousand of these people in our own district alone. But now their numbers are greatly reduced owing to the causes above assigned, so that we now put down our poor Catholic population at less than six hundred souls.

We do not rely to any extent on lady visitors amongst our Catholic poor, who expect to see the priest himself often at their homes. They would rather resent the kind advice freely offered by zealous visiting ladies anxious to improve their moral condition, and to see that they discharged their religious duties and came to church regularly. But they look for and appreciate the visits of the priest, and are always glad to see him, though he may have nothing to give except a kind word. When he calls, sitting down amongst them he at once makes himself at home, listens to all they have to say, and makes enquiries about them. He knows each of them by name and all about them, for he fully possesses their confidence. He generally wants to know if there are any new arrivals of Catholics in the same court or in the house; for in each house there are always several families. It is not an uncommon thing for a family to occupy only one room, and that, too, a small one.

But the poor have generally two small rooms for which they pay five or six shillings per week. We sometimes witness heartrending scenes of poverty and misery; little children only half-clad, dirty, and neglected, huddled together in a small dark room, fireless and miserable, and looking thin and wan and emaciated from want. This happens particularly in homes where intemperance prevails. Some of these people live in a state of chronic poverty, and it is difficult to know how to help them. But drink has generally something to do with that. Such people never stay very long in any place; they are constantly shifting; they get evicted, their things are put into the streets, but they manage to borrow enough to get a room somewhere near, and get along somehow for a time. Certainly the poor are exceedingly generous to one another in times of distress like this. They will give lodging and food to an outcast whom they happen to know, and will make a collection amongst themselves out of their poverty to help one another to pay the expenses of a funeral, if the deceased happened not to be in a club, or insured in the "Prudential." Some of our young women are flower-girls or fruit-sellers. They may be seen with their baskets at Regent Circus, Tottenham Court Road, near the General Post Office, or at the Royal Exchange, busily engaged in making up flowers for the button-holes of smart young men. They are most of them very good, and sometimes bring flowers for the church for the adornment of the altars. Their fathers and brothers, some of them, are hawkers of cheap fruit, and they generally do very well. One of the best ways of helping these people is to stock them with a

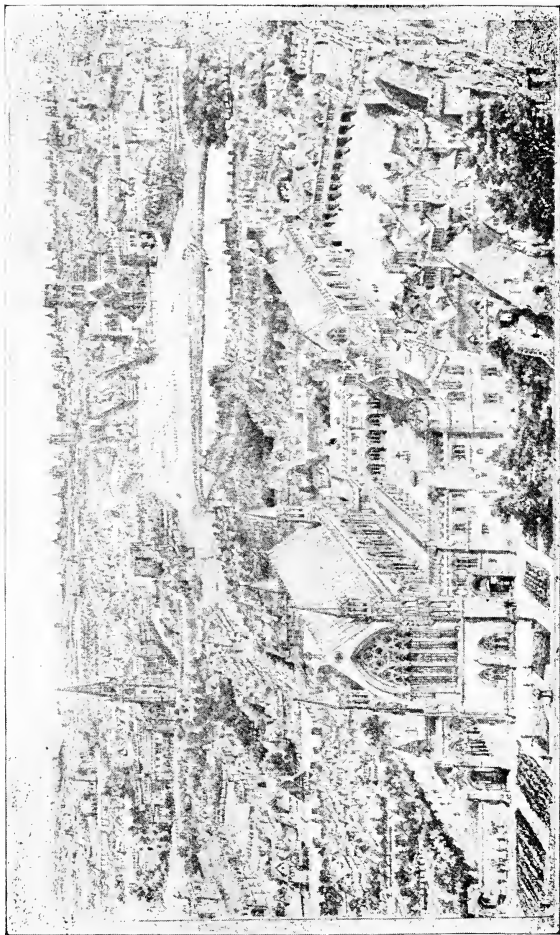
barrow, or basket of fruit. A few of the very poorest gain a miserable living by hawking penny toys and novelties, which I have seen them making by themselves at home. Others are newsvendors or porters in the Meat Market, or employed in factories and warehouses, while a few who are more fortunate exercise a craft, or keep a small shop.

We have a Girls' Guild for our young women called the Guild of St. Etheldreda, having for its object to bring together of an evening, several times a week, for purposes of recreation, the work girls of the parish after their day's toil. They have the use of a room in the Saffron Hill School where they meet together, bringing with them generally their sewing, which gives them light occupation, while they converse pleasantly together. Sometimes they are entertained with a little music, or an interesting book is read to them, or they get up recitations and songs. This Guild is under the charge of one of the nuns, who sits with them of an evening and endeavours to amuse them. I may mention here that the Sisters of Providence have a flourishing upper school for young ladies living in the neighbourhood. Their Convent is at 28 Ely Place, opposite the Church.

Our schools of course are the special object of our care and solicitude. They are situated in Saffron Hill where we have over two hundred and fifty children.

Our schools under the Board of Education for many years never failed to earn the highest Government grants. When the Education Acts of 1902 and 1903 was passed they came of course under the control of the London County Council. Under the present arrangement the school is maintained out of





St. Etheldreda's, Ely House, Holborn. By Brewer.

*By kind permission of "The Builder."*

the public rates to which ratepayers of all religious denominations contribute in proportion to their numbers. But we Catholics unjustly enough have not only to contribute the school buildings at our own expense, we have to maintain them also. Moreover as a condition of their being taken over at all, we have had to undertake very extensive and expensive alterations of our school buildings to meet the requirements of the Council. Our schools therefore always have been and probably always will be a heavy expense to us, and hence the need of voluntary subscriptions. To find the necessary funds we have recourse to various expedients. First of all we have an annual November concert at the Holborn Town Hall, which is generally considered a great success. The proceeds go to the schools. Then we have a school collector, who collects at the church one Sunday in the month. This work of collecting for the schools, was carried on for fifty-five years by Mr. Cornelius Donovan, whose death in November 1910 was a great loss to us. He was a very genial old man of the working class. Everybody in the neighbourhood knew him and loved him. All recognised his pleasant face, his courteous invitation, the rattle of his money-box, and his innocent chaff and humbug. Few who knew the man could get away from that box without dropping something into it when Donovan pleaded for the children. It is estimated that during the past fifty years this working-man collected not less than £2000, or 480,000 pennies. May he rest in peace. Then, besides the collecting-box, we ourselves are constantly asking our friends to help us, and nearly all that is given us for our own disposal goes to the schools,

which are a perpetual drain upon our resources. The children of the schools get an annual outing to the country, and this involves an annual expense which has to be met by voluntary contributions to the school funds. Owing to subscriptions sent in by or through us to the "fresh air fund," we are enabled to send from seventy to ninety of them for a fortnight every year to the country. Lastly, I must not forget to say, with very great gratitude, that the Robin Society for years past, as I hope it will always continue to do for the future, provides the school children, and any poor waifs and strays from the gutters we can bring in, with an excellent tea at Christmas-time in our own school-rooms at Saffron Hill. God grant that our schools for which we have made so many and so heavy sacrifices may be preserved to us in the future!

But the centre of attraction in the parish is, of course, the Church, where our people gather on Sundays and week-days for their religious devotions. And certainly there is many a congregation in the West-end that might envy our poor people their beautiful old church of St. Etheldreda's, Ely Place, which for centuries has been one of the sights of old London. The church is frequented by Catholic visitors staying at the neighbouring hotels, as well as by others attracted by the solemnity and decorum with which the services are carried out. There is an excellent choir of men and boys, the music is of a high class and the singing exceptionally good, St. Etheldreda's choir being well known as one of the leading ones of London.

Solemn High Mass is sung here every Sunday morning, and Vespers are chanted in the evening.



On week-days two Masses are said every morning. Particulars of the hours of the services will be found in the annexed horary. The Presbytery is at No. 14 Ely Place, adjoining the church, and there are two resident priests to look after the parish and the works of charity connected with it.

# Services

AT

## St. Etheldreda's Catholic Church

Ely Place, Holborn Circus

(The Gates of Ely Place face the Circus).

### Morning Services

SUNDAYS	WEEK DAYS	HOLIDAYS
Holy Mass	Holy Mass	Holy Mass
at	at	at
8, 10.	7.15, 8.	7, 8, 9, 10.
High Mass,		
11.15.		

Wednesday and Friday.      Benediction  
at 1.15 p.m.

N.B.—Priests wishing to say Mass at St. Etheldreda's are requested to give notice the *day before* at the Presbytery adjoining the Church, that arrangements may be made for their convenience.

### Evening Services

SUNDAYS	WEEK DAYS	HOLIDAYS
Vespers,	Rosary,	Rosary,
Sermon and	Sermon and	Sermon and
Benediction	Benediction	Benediction
at 7.	on Tuesdays	at 8.
	and Fridays	
	at 8.	

Catechism and Benediction on Sunday  
afternoons at 3.30.

Baptisms at 4 o'clock.

N.B.—Confessions in English, French, and Italian, are heard in the Crypt on Saturdays from 6.30 to 9.30 p.m. Also during the Masses and on special application at the Presbytery during the morning and afternoon. On the eve of the great festivals, Confessions are heard from 7 in the evening.

Gothic  
Screen  
West End of the  
Church of  
St. Ethelreda













The  
Closter.  
S<sup>t</sup>. Ethelreda. 7th. C.







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