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The Very Rev.  
Dean Purey-Cust

Illustrated by  
Alexander Ansted



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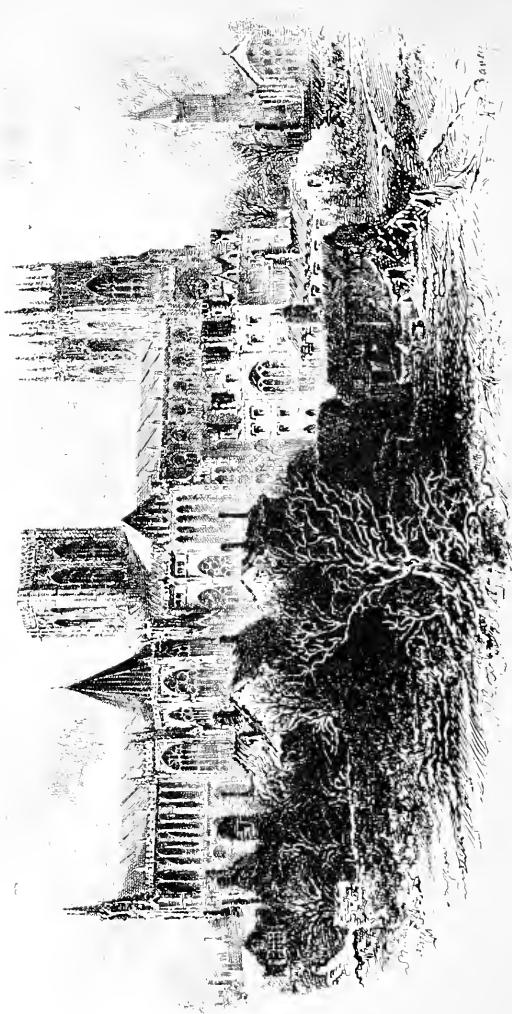


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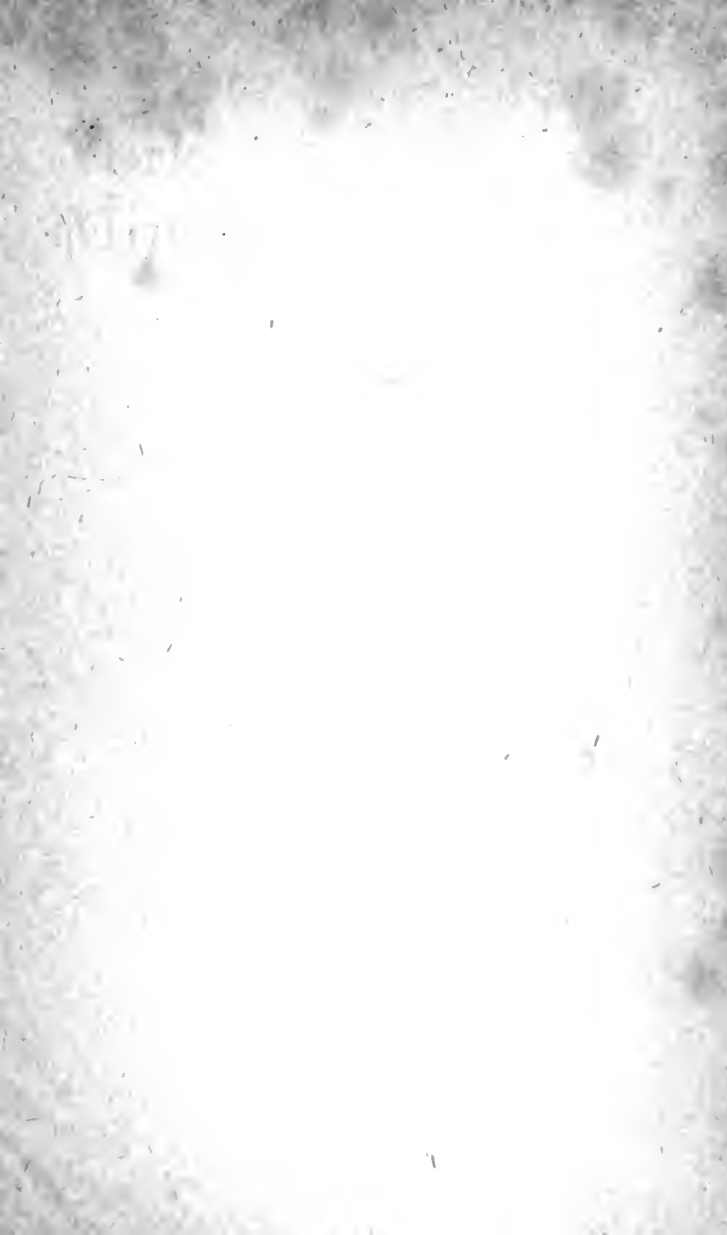






York Minster







# York Minster

*By*

The Very Rev. A. P.  
Purey-Cust, D.D.

*Dean of York*

Illustrated by  
Alexander Ansted

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## York Minster

“**U**T rosa flos florum sic est domus ista domorum” are the words which some unknown hand has inscribed upon the walls of our Minster; and we who love the habitation of His house and the place where God’s honour dwelleth venture to think that these are “words of truth and soberness” even now, though we remember that when they were written there were many features of art and taste adorning the great fabric which have long since passed away. Still York Minster is “a thing of beauty” in spite of ruthless improvements and fanatical zeal and Puritan Philistinism

## York Minster

and indiscriminating utilitarianism and ignorant restorations.

In spite of these, and in consequence of these perhaps, York Minster is what it is ; and if we cannot recall all that tradition tells us once adorned its courts and enriched its sanctuaries, we can admire and appreciate what has come into our hands, and thank God that it is our privilege to worship in a house so worthy of His holy name. Yes, and it is a pleasure and interest to recall the gradual development thereof through so many generations of men ; how it has come up like a flower, from a very small and insignificant beginning, putting forth gradually, as time went on, larger developments, like the seed, first the blade then the ear ; extending like the vine of old her branches unto the sea and her boughs unto the river—each with some fresh and characteristic novelty, as affected by the different schools of architectural taste, which, like the different seasons of the year, have shed their influence over it.

## York Minster

And we love to idealise the scenes which have taken place therein, and the persons, many not unknown to history, who have had their share in the good work or whose lives and actions are associated therewith, or to recall how, sometimes in accordance with, sometimes in opposition to, what they most earnestly desired, it, at length, far eclipsed the most sanguine anticipations of its founders, and in its sober dignity and chastened ornamentation acquired a reputation second to none of "the Houses of God in the land."

It is, of course, a mere speculation, but fancy will sometimes be busy with vain surmises as to whether the present Minster is a development of the original British church, a mere grain of mustard seed, no doubt, as compared with its aftergrowth. But some primitive building did exist, for, as far back as the year 180, Beda tells us, missionaries were sent from Rome by Eleutherius at the request of the British chieftain

## York Minster

Lucius, not for the conversion of the people, but to settle controverted points of differences as to Eastern and Western ceremonials which were disturbing the Church, and tradition speaks of twenty-eight British bishops, one for each of the greater British cities, over whom presided the Archbishops of London, York and Caerleon-on-Usk. So that the Romans probably found a Christian Church already established when Agricola took possession of Eburacum, towards the close of the first century after Christ's birth, and probably tolerated it with proud indifference for many generations until the great persecution of Diocletian in 294, when Constantius Chlorus, one of his associates in the empire, was in command, who, Eusebius says, was nevertheless most liberal and tolerant ; though Beda tells us of numbers of martyrs and confessors, and how churches were thrown down, while trembling believers fled for refuge to the wilderness and the mountains. But certainly Constantius





West Front

## York Minster

professed himself favourable to Christianity in 305, when he divided the empire with Galerius, and, after reigning for a few months, died, and his body was probably burnt and buried here. Here, at York, his son, Constantine, if not born, was saluted as Emperor by the army on his father's death, and eventually deliberately adopted the Christian faith.

This would lead us to expect that favour would be shown to the Christian Church, and tradition has handed down the names of several prelates of York about this date: Eborius, who was present with two others at the Councils of Arles, 314, and Nicæa and Sardica and Ariminium; Sampson, who was driven out of the city by the incursion of Pagans and fled to St David's; Pyramus, Chaplain of King Arthur, that last tower of British strength, and charged by him to restore the desolated and ruined churches; and finally Tadiocus, who, when he saw the armies of Saxons pouring in, joined Theonus,

## York Minster

Bishop of London, and fled to Wales, whither, as the Saxons did not tolerate Christianity, they were followed by all those who desired to keep the faith in peace. However, in 597, Augustine landed at Ebbsfleet in Kent, and eventually converted and baptized Ethelbert, King of Kent, who had married Bertha, daughter of the Frankish king, Charibert, and in 601, Pope Gregory, with a desire to assist Augustine in his work amongst the Anglo-Saxons, sent over Paulinus, as a likely person, should occasion offer, to resuscitate the desolated Church of Northumbria, and restore the Metropolitan See of York. It is said that "Paulinus" was the Latin title assumed by Rum, the son of Urien, a British chief, who having opposed the Saxons in the north had, on their supremacy, fled with his family from the country and sought safety at Rome, and that, therefore, Augustine having endeavoured in vain to persuade the British clergy in Kent to co-operate with him, Gregory selected

## York Minster

Paulinus as likely to be a useful coadjutor to him in the evangelisation of Kent.

Subsequent events, perhaps unexpectedly, favoured this plan, for Edwin, the legitimate heir to the throne of Northumbria, being driven away by his brother-in-law, Ethelfrith, who had usurped the crown, sought for security and protection in other kingdoms, and, in his wanderings, came to the court of Ethelbert, where he became fascinated by Ethelburga, his daughter, and sought her for his wife. Assent was given on condition that she, being a Christian, should be allowed Christian worship, and that he would consider the faith. This he promised to do, and Redwald, King of East Anglia, having slain Ethelfrith in a battle near the sluggish waters of the river Idle, Edwin was restored to his inheritance, and proceeded to take possession of his kingdom accompanied not only by his wife but by Paulinus as her chaplain, who had been consecrated Bishop of the Northumbrians by Justus on July 21st, 625.

## York Minster

For two years Edwin remained uninfluenced alike by the entreaties of his wife and the arguments of the bishop, but at length gave way, and on Easter day, April 12th, 627, he was baptized in a little church or chapel of wood, hastily constructed at his bidding, and dedicated to St. Peter, right in front of the great heathen temple in the centre of his capital, Eburacum.

Nothing is left of this primitive structure, but the well is still pointed out from which the water used at the ceremony was drawn, and a little beyond is a flight of stone stairs ending in a square stone slab which tradition says were the steps and altar of the temple.

There are still traces, however, of the stone church which Archbishop Albert built in its place (741), when it had been greatly injured by fire. Part of the herring-bone walls is still to be seen, and after the great fire in 1829, Brown, the antiquary, successfully traced out the foundations, which, however, are now concealed. However, it remained

## York Minster

uninjured, in spite of incursions of Picts and Scots, until the Conquest, when it shared in the universal destruction meted out by the Conqueror to York and the surrounding country; and Thomas, the first Norman archbishop, found little left but a few tottering roofless walls which had survived the flames. He re-roofed and restored the church as well as he could, rebuilt the refectory and dormitory, and in other respects set in order the affairs of the establishment. And so it remained until Roger de Pont l'Evêque succeeded to the archiepiscopate in 1154.

Langfranc, on his accession to the See of Canterbury in 1073, had found the cathedral of Christ Church, of which Eadmer has left a curious record, almost consumed by fire; but in seven years he succeeded in rebuilding the whole church from the foundation on the plan and dimensions of St. Stephen's at Caen, the abbacy of which he had quitted to become archbishop. A detailed and singu-

## York Minster

larly precise account by Gervase, the monk, is still extant. On the death of Lanfranc, 1089, the see was bestowed on Anselm, who as soon as possible took down the short choir and replaced it with one extending magnificently eastward, provided with a crypt, an apsidal aisle, a processional path with flanking towers, called St. Anselm's and St. Andrew's towers, and radiating chapels, as well as with eastern transepts, all which was, in fact, an imitation of the great Abbey of Cluny, entrusting the superintendence of the work to the priors Ernulph and Conrad, eventually his successor, who, in 1114, completed the choir with so much magnificence that it was denominated "the glorious choir of Conrad." All this, however, was destroyed by fire in 1174, which Gervase himself witnessed, but in four years was restored and even improved by the great French architect William of Sens.

In 1154, when Archbishop Fitzherbert died at York, this fair building must have

## York Minster

been in the zenith of its beauty, and we can well imagine the anxiety of Robert the Dean and Osbert the Archdeacon to secure the election by the Chapter of Roger, who had been Archdeacon of Canterbury from 1148, and who had no doubt already given promise of that architectural ability and liberality of character which eventually made him the most munificent ruler that ever presided over the See of York. Becket succeeded him in the archdeaconry until 1162, when, elevated to the See of Canterbury, the two quondam archdeacons of Canterbury were at the very helm of the Church of England.

Roger seems at once to have commenced the reproduction at York of this great work, by substituting for the short simple chancel of the Minster a complex eastern building which, making due allowance for its want of equal dimensions with Canterbury choir, was yet evidently planned on the same system, with the aisles square ended instead of apsidal, and the flanking towers made to

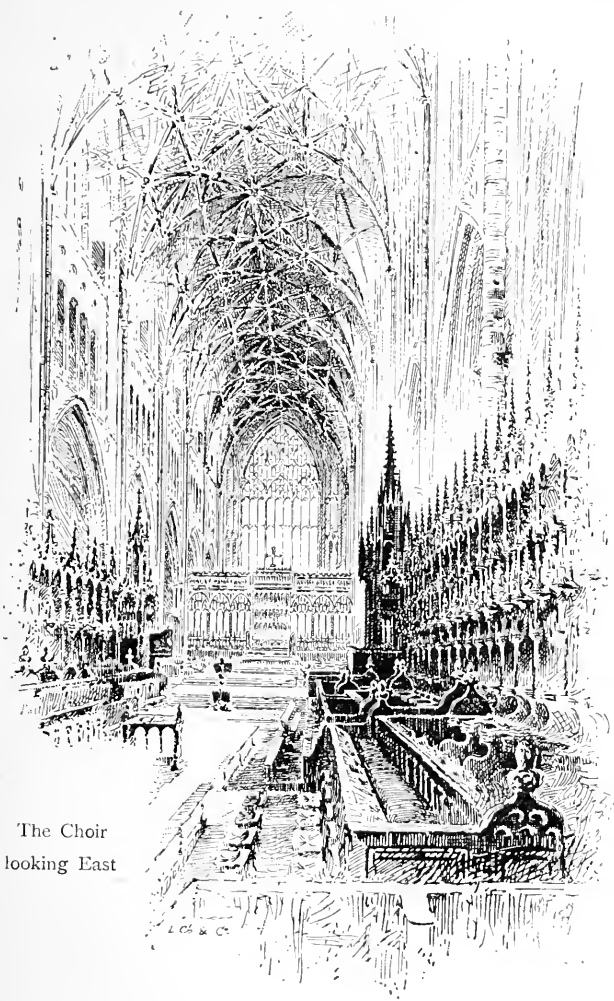




Norman Piers in Crypt

## York Minster

perform the part of eastern transepts. Of this choir, portions only of the crypt still survive. The base of the beautiful western entrance doorway to the north aisle can still be seen by adventurous explorers. The ordinary visitor can still admire the substantial and elaborately incised columns, which once supported the floor of the choir above, and see the arches, with the bold zigzag mouldings, which once rested on them, but which were removed in the days of Edward I. to support a stone platform behind the high altar, on which was erected the shrine of William Fitzherbert, then canonised as "St. William of York," to provide for the northern province a counter-attraction to St. Thomas of Canterbury. If the arches were replaced on the piers the pavement of the choir would be  $15\frac{1}{2}$  feet above the pavement of the crypt, within 6 inches of that of Canterbury, and if the present nave floor were reduced 4 feet to its original level, the respective levels of the nave, crypt, and choir at York and



The Choir  
looking East

L.C. & C.

## York Minster

Canterbury would be the same. No doubt the arrangement of the different flights of steps from the nave to the choir and to the crypt, broken in the centre aisle with a broad landing which still remains at Canterbury, was followed at York. But all this has passed away, and the feature of the "glorious choir" of Roger can now only be realised from the conjectures of the archæologist or the dreams of the antiquary.

But there were munificent laymen as well as ecclesiastics in those days, for Lord William de Percy gave the church of Topcliffe, with all things pertaining, to the church of St. Peter at York, as a perpetual alms for the repairing and building thereof, a gift which still remains in the possession of the Dean and Chapter; and he and his successors continued to assist the development of the Cathedral with munificent contributions of wood until the completion of the nave, when his statue was placed, to commemorate his liberality, above the west door, on the right

## York Minster

hand of Archbishop Melton, the Metropolitan at that time. On his left stands another figure commemorating equally liberal benefactors : Manger le Vavasour, who gave a grant of free way for the stone required for the foundation of the Minster by Archbishop Thomas ; his son, Robert le Vavasour, also gave 10 acres and half a rood of his quarry in Thievesdale in free, pure and perpetual alms ; and their descendants, in like manner, presented almost all the material required for the present buildings, even as late as the great fire in 1829, when Sir Edward Vavasour, although a Roman Catholic, at once placed his quarries at the service of the Dean and Chapter for the restoration of the choir.

Fancy would fain idealise the choir of Roger, which has passed away, for the superstructure to such substantial and dignified masonry as still remains must have been solemn and imposing. Professor Willis suggests a choir the floor of which was

## York Minster

raised 15 feet above the floor of the nave, and transepts with eastern towers approached by flights of steps such as still exist at Canterbury, but the learned professor had few reliable data for his conjectures, and it must remain a conjecture *usque ad finem*. Geoffrey Plantagenet, who succeeded Roger, had not the opportunity, even if he had the will and capacity, to extend the buildings of the Minster. The youngest child of fair Rosamond, the lawful wife, historians now tell us, of Henry II., he was at least a loving son. On his breast his father died, to him the King gave his royal ring, and on his head with his last dying breath he invoked the blessing of heaven. But if his dutiful conduct caused the warm-hearted members of the Chapter to elect their Treasurer Archbishop, it did not conciliate either of his half-brothers, Richard and John. Sixteen years of incessant discord ensued, and then he gave place to one more capable of his position, Walter de Gray. But the Chapter did not at first think so.

## York Minster

He was not one of themselves ; they knew little of the Bishop of Worcester, and what they knew they disliked. He was, in their eyes, an illiterate person. Simon de Langton was more to their mind. But Walter de Gray was King John's friend, and John was not a man to be thwarted. He meant him to be Archbishop, and his representatives persuaded Pope Innocent III. to overrule the election of the Chapter. At least, he was a man of pure life, they said. "Per sanctum Petrum," replied the Pope, "virginitas magna est virtus, et nos eum damus vobis."

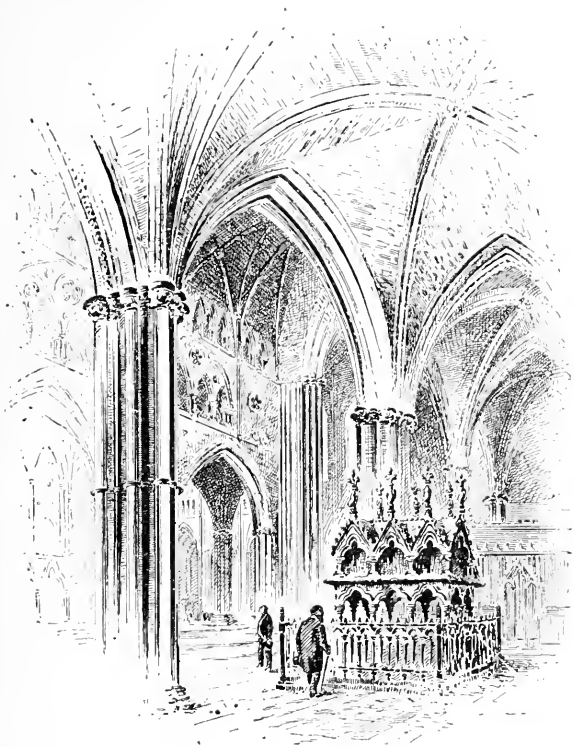
And certainly posterity has had no reason to regret his decision. The glorious early English transepts and tower are believed to have been his conception, vast beyond anything which had been erected in those days, and, as the late Mr. Street has often told me, after all his experiences on the Continent, unsurpassed in Christendom. Walter de Gray, at least, completed the south transept,

## York Minster

“in boldness of arrangement and design, and in richness of decoration without a peer.” And there his body rests in the grave which received all that was mortal of him on the vigil of Pentecost, 1255, still surmounted with the effigy of the great man in full canonicals carved in Purbeck marble, under a comely canopy resting on ten light and graceful pillars, hidden, alas ! by a crude and modern screen of iron, the well-intentioned addition of Archbishop Markham some eighty years ago.

And Providence had associated with Walter de Gray one worthy of such a fellowship, John le Romain, the treasurer of the church, an Italian ecclesiastic who, tradition says, smitten with the charms of some dark-eyed beauty of the South gladly associated himself with the clergy of the Church where celibacy, at that day at least, was not *de rigueur*. He it was who completed the great work his superior had commenced, raised, at his own expense, the great tower, built the





South Transept and Founder's Tomb

## York Minster

north transept, designed "the Five Sisters," and filled it with the exquisite grisaille geometrical glass, which has been the admiration of successive generations for six hundred years. How much Walter de Grey laid out in the erection of the transepts I cannot say: I only know that the South Transept cost £23,000 to restore fifteen years ago. In addition to his work on the material fabric of the Minster, Archbishop Walter de Grey achieved that which had a substantial influence on its progress to its completion. Archbishop Roger had initiated the great work, but had died in his bed, and his influence had died with him. Thomas à Becket, his successor as Archdeacon of Canterbury, had also advanced to the dignity of the archiepiscopate, but he had fallen a victim to his zeal for the Church spiritual, and his martyrdom and canonisation had entailed a shrine in the Cathedral which was eliciting from innumerable pilgrims munificent offerings for the fabric of the church.

## York Minster

If York were to compete with Canterbury it was necessary that here, too, a shrine of some popular saint should attract the presence of the devout, and appeal to their munificence and liberality. This also Walter de Grey, supported as he was by the king, was able to accomplish, and in compliance with a petition from the Archbishop and Dean and Chapter, Pope Honorius, on March 18th, 1226, issued a letter, "tied with thread of silk and a Bull," to the effect that the name of William (Fitzherbert) of holy memory, formerly Archbishop of York, nominated by them for this honour, the predecessor of Archbishop Roger, was "inscribed in the catalogue of the Saints of the Church Militant."

Little, however, seems to have been done during the archiepiscopates of Sewell de Bovell, Geoffry de Ludham and Walter Gifford.

However, in 1279, William de Wykewayne, Chancellor of the Church, was elected to the

## York Minster

see, and he at once took action by translating the remains of the canonised William, on December 29th, to a becoming shrine prepared for them behind the high altar on a platform raised upon the arches of the crypt removed to this, their present, position, for that purpose. It was a grand day in the Minster. Edward I. himself, together with the bishops who were present, carried on their shoulders the chest or feretory containing the precious relics to their new resting-place, and Anthony Beck, consecrated the same day Bishop of Durham, paid all the expenses.

In 1286, Archbishop Wykewayne died, and was succeeded by another, John Romanus, the worthy son of the munificent treasurer, who had doubtless inherited the taste and munificence of his father. Perhaps for that very reason the Chapter selected him, when only Prebendary of Warthill in the church, to be his successor, and his ten years of office, if too short to do much, was sufficient

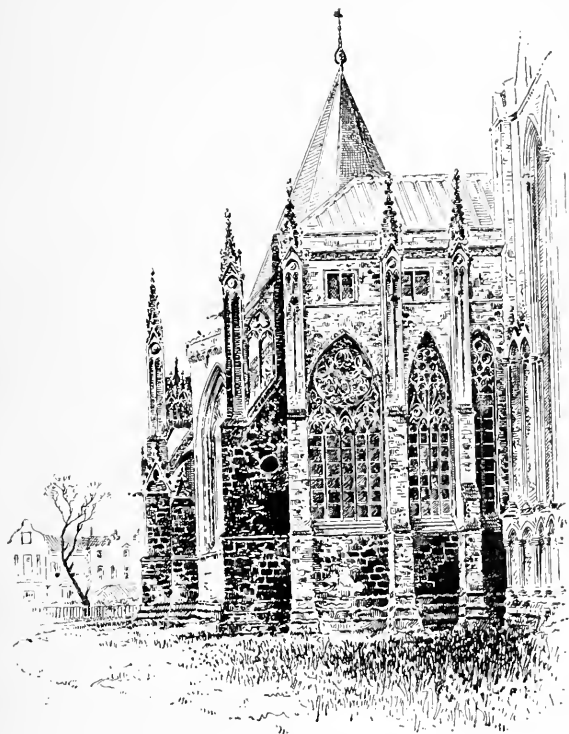
## York Minster

to initiate the great work of building a nave consistent with the transepts. Another style of architecture was setting in, the Decorated, and where could it be better inaugurated than in such a church as this? For one hundred and fifty years the good work went on. Four prelates in succession, Henry de Newark, Thomas de Corbridge, William de Greenfield, William de Melton, each, during his tenure of office, strove to promote the completion of the grand design his predecessor had indicated, in that full perfection of ecclesiastical architecture. No effort was spared, no personal self-denial evaded; clergy and laity alike shared in the enthusiasm of the moment, the Plantagenet kings, for the most part resident in York, by offerings and by influence, encouraging and stimulating the good work. Archbishop Melton contributed many thousands of pounds from his own purse, and had the privilege of seeing the grand conception completed; and there he sits above the

## York Minster

central doorway graven in stone in his archiepiscopal attire, with his hand still raised in the attitude of benediction ; over his head one of the finest flamboyant windows in the world, and on either side the representatives of the houses of Vavasour and Percy, bearing in their arms emblems of the wood and stone which they had offered.

And concurrently with the great work, another, in perfect harmony therewith, was proceeding, viz. the Chapter House, with its great circumference occupied with stalls, surmounted by elaborate and delicate canopies, enriched with innumerable quaint and suggestive carvings of heads and features, some as warnings, some as encouragements, to those who have eyes to see, and of graceful foliage of trefoil and other plants, specially the *planta benedicta*, which illustrated the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the love of God, girdled with a simple yet emblematical wreath of the vine ; while the varied foliage



The Chapter House showing Vestibule Exterior

## York Minster

rises again in the glass, bordering the noble windows, rich with heraldry and sacred subjects, until lost in the stately roof, which, spanning the whole area without any central column, and once glowing with emblematical figures and stars, is centred with a majestic boss of the Lamb of God. Alas that Willement ever essayed to restore it, scraped the paintings from the walls, plastered the ceiling, repaired the floor, and ruined the east window which he had taken to pieces and found himself incompetent to put together again ! Still, though but the survival of its ancient glories, it is "the flower of our flowers," the focus of all the beauties which in their wanton profusion extend on all sides around us.

Who built it ? Who conceived this stately hall, with this elegant vestibule unique in the cloisters of Europe ? Who furnished the funds by which it was founded and completed ? Well, if conjecture may supply what faith or modesty may have left unex-



## York Minster

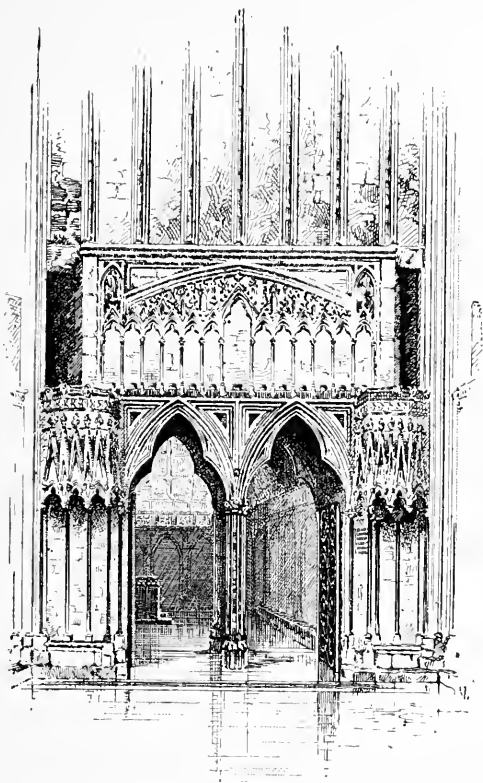
pressed, Bogo de Clare, for the shields in the tracery point to that family. He, an ecclesiastical courtier nearly related to the royal family, and a not altogether worthy scion of the House of Clare, but wealthy beyond all conception with the plurality of his benefices, which the late Chancellor Raine estimated at about £20,000 per annum, was treasurer of the Minster from 1274 to 1285. A man probably not likely to do much to promote the devotion of the Minster, though ready to devote the vast accumulation of money which he had acquired to exalt the glories of the house of which he was a member, and, for the time at least, the reputation of his name.

Melton's days closed under the dark shadow of his defeat at Myton by the Scotch, and Zouche, Dean of York, his successor, though he wiped off the stain thereof by his triumphant victory over them at Nevill's Cross, and took care of Queen Philippa and her children during the

## York Minster

absence of Edward III. in his French wars, did little to promote the material dignity of the Minster, save to build the chapel which bears his name, and which he had intended for a place of sepulture for himself. But Thoresby, a Yorkshireman from Wensleydale, and a Prebendary of the Minster, his successor in 1352, Bishop of Worcester and Lord Chancellor, was a man of very different temperament. He had the further development of the glories of the Minster thoroughly at heart. At once he sacrificed his palace at Sherburn to provide materials for an appropriate Ladye Chapel, gave successive munificent donations of £100 at each of the great festivals of the Christian year, and called on clergy and laity alike to submit cheerfully to stringent self-denial to supply the funds.

During his tenure of office of twenty-three years the Ladye Chapel was completed, a chaste and dignified specimen of Early Perpendicular style, into which the Decorated gradually blended after the year 1360, and



Chapter House doorway from within

## York Minster

unique in its glorious east window 78 feet high and 33 feet wide, still the largest painted window in the world, enriched with its double mullions, which give such strength and lightness to its graceful proportions. But Roger's choir, which was still standing, must now have looked sadly dwarfed between the lofty Ladye Chapel and the tower and transepts.

Alexander Nevill, his immediate successor, probably did not do much to remedy this, for he soon became involved in Richard II.'s rash proceedings, and had to fly to Louvain, where he died in poverty. Neither did Arundel or Waldby, his successors, for the former was soon translated to Canterbury, the latter soon died. But Richard Scrope, who was appointed in his place, would naturally be earnest and vigorous in the good work, for he was a Yorkshireman by birth, son of Lord Scrope of Masham, kinsman of Lord Scrope of Bolton, and, during the short nine years which elapsed between his

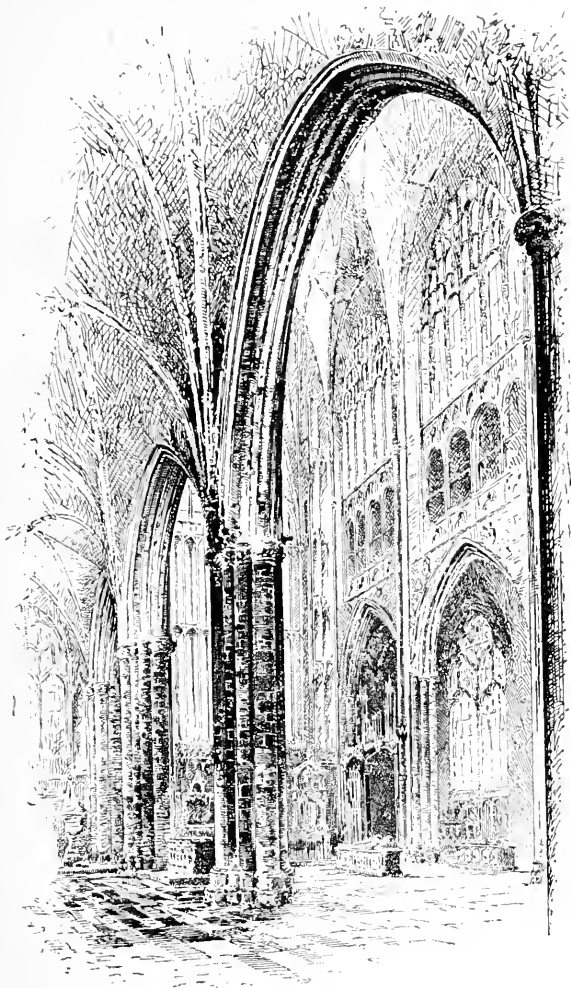
## York Minster

installation and his wanton, cruel murder by Henry IV., the building seems to have made rapid progress. This was energetically continued by Henry Bowet, who followed him, and who, invoking the aid of Pope Gregory XII. to enforce his appeal for funds, and enlisting the aid of Skirlaw, Bishop of Durham, one of the greatest architects of mediæval times, glazed the great East window with its elaborate glass executed by John Thornton of Coventry, 1409, raised the lantern on the central tower, completed the groining of the choir aisles, rebuilt Archbishop Zouche's chapel, the treasury and vestry, and commenced the library. He was indeed a man of action to the end, for when incapacitated for walking or riding by age and infirmity, he was carried in his chair, arrayed in a breastplate with three buckles, five pendants, and ten bars of silver gilt, at the head of the forces raised by the wardens of the North of England, and through the influence of his presence,

## York Minster

encouraged the soldiers to rout the Scotch who had invaded Northumberland and besieged Berwick, 1417.

Little now remained to be done. Robert Wolvedon and John de Bermyngham, two munificent treasurers in succession, helped to bring matters to a prosperous conclusion, the former filling some of the windows with painted glass, the latter raising the south-western tower. The north-western tower was added probably during the archiepiscopate, if not by the munificence, of Archbishop George Nevill. The organ screen, with its elaborate cornice and canopies enriched with angels singing and playing instruments of music, and its stately niches filled with figures of the Kings of England, from William I. to Henry VI., was built by Dean Andrew, himself the friend and secretary of the last-named monarch. And the great church was solemnly reconsecrated as a completed building on July 3rd, 1472, when an ordinance was passed by the Dean and Chapter that



The Lady Chapel

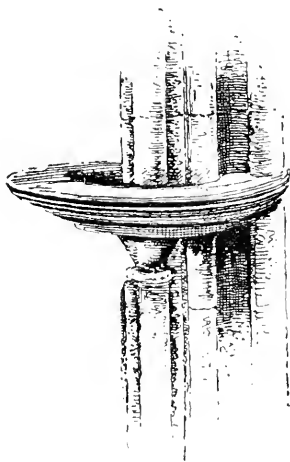




## York Minster

“on the same day the feast of the Dedication shall be celebrated in time to come.”

I have no space to dwell on all the innumerable details of architectural ornament or quaint mediæval devices which decorate the walls, neither on the many interesting monuments scattered throughout the aisles, such as the delicate piscinas, or the Fiddler, a modern reproduction of an old figure which had crowned the little spiral turret of the south transept, intended as a portrait of Dr. Camidge, the organist, at the beginning of this century ; or the tomb of good Archbishop Frewen, the first prelate of the Province after the Restoration.



Perpendicular Piscina



The Fiddler

But even a sketch of York Minster would not be complete without some mention of the glass, for if the beauty in the form of our “flos forum” is due to its architecture, very much of its beauty in colour depends on the glowing and mellowed tints with which its windows are filled. But it is a large subject to enter upon, for as regards quantity there

## York Minster

are no less than one hundred and three windows in the Minster, most of them entirely, and the remainder partly filled with real old mediæval glass, excepting the tracery. Some of the windows too are of great size. The east window, which is entirely filled with old glass, consists of nine lights, and measures 78 ft. in height, 31 ft. 2 in. in width. The two choir transept windows, that in the north transept to St. William, and the south to St. Cuthbert, measure 73 ft. by 16 ft. They have both been restored, the latter very recently, but by far the greater part of them is old glass. On each side of the choir the aisles contain nine windows measuring 14 ft. 9 in. by 12 ft., only the tracery lights of which are modern; the same number of windows fill the clear-story above, the greater portions of which are ancient.

The famous window of the north transept, the Five Sisters, consists of five lights, each measuring 53 ft. 6 in. by 5 ft. 1 in., and is

## York Minster

entirely of old glass. There are six windows in the north and six in the south aisles of the nave, with only a little modern glass in the tracery. The superb flamboyant window at the west end of the centre aisle measures 56 ft. 3 in. by 25 ft. 4 in., and consists, I believe, entirely of old glass, except the faces of the figures. The clear-story windows are studded with ancient shields, but a great part of the glass is, I fancy, modern; those of the vestibule, 8 in number, measuring 32 ft. by 18, are of old glass, including the tracery lights. And in the Chapter House the seven windows, of five lights each, are filled with old glass. The east window has been clumsily restored by Willement. In the side windows of the transepts there is some old glass, and the great rose window over the south entrance still retains much of the old glass; while far overhead in the tower there are some really fine bold designs of late, but genuine, design and execution. Altogether, according to actual measure-

## York Minster

ments, there are 25,531 superficial feet of mediæval glass in the Minster, *i.e.*, more than half an acre—a possession, we should think, unequalled by any church in England, if not in Christendom.

But the difficulty in describing the glass arises from the fact that many of the windows are composed of fragments of glass of different dates, which, for various reasons, perhaps to preserve them, have been interchanged during past generations. The educated eye of the glass painter can detect splendid specimens of every school of glass painting throughout the Minster, but sometimes comparatively small portions isolated in the midst of glass of a totally different period. The Five Sisters window is an almost complete specimen of Early English glass, with an elaborate geometrical pattern formed by the conventional foliage of the *planta benedicta*, but at the foot of the central light there is a panel consisting of distinctly Norman glass, portraying Jacob's

## York Minster

dream, or Daniel in the lion's den, for it is indistinct, and critics differ. The suggestion is that this panel formed part of the previous window, in the old Norman transept, and, for some unknown reason, being specially valuable, was preserved and incorporated in its successor. The tracery lights of the vestibule windows are filled with old Norman glass, and the late Canon Sutton was of opinion that the stone tracery had been specially designed to suit it. The clear-story tracery in the nave contains also much Norman glass, probably from the old Norman nave, and in many other windows we can trace similar insertions.

Sometimes groups of figures may be noticed evidencing, by their utter lack of connection with their environment, that they have been transplanted from some other window. Sometimes a single figure, under a Decorated canopy, stands out in a window of distinctly Perpendicular tracery. Sometimes several of such figures fill separate



Transept, Lantern, and Five Sisters' Window

## York Minster

lights when they have evidently been intended to be together. Sometimes kneeling figures, each of which had been intended to represent the donor of some window, have been brought together in a rather amusing and inharmonious fellowship. Sometimes the whole of some large figure has been removed, and only the outline left, which has been indiscriminately filled up with a patchwork of scraps of all kinds and subjects. This is specially noticeable in the window on the north side of the choir, where the letters R.S., in the bordure, indicate that it had been put up to the memory of Archbishop Scrope ; here there are three large outlines of female figures, each with a child in her arms, one of them probably the Virgin, but all detail has been obliterated. Sometimes only a portion of a figure remains, *e.g.*, a beautiful and venerable head and shoulders of some grave ecclesiastic in the most delicate mezzotint ; or a dignified face with splendid crown and nimbus, and cope and pectoral cross adorn-



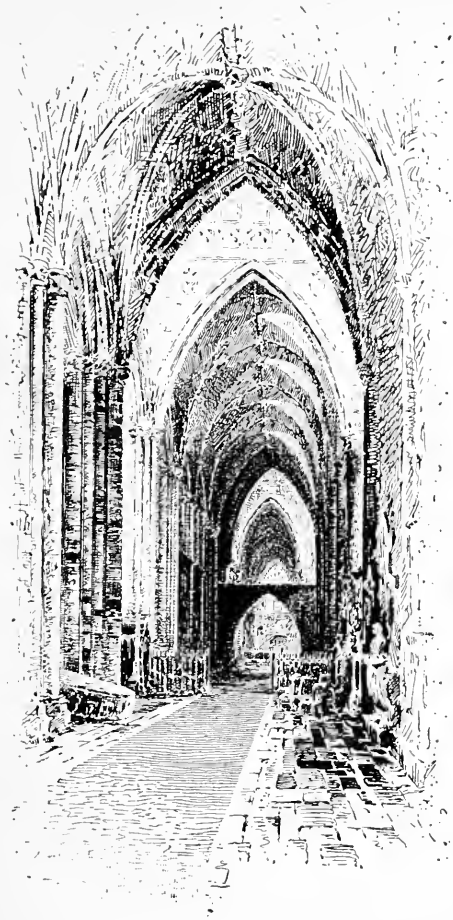
## York Minster

ing what remains of a saintly figure ; or a crowned head, in a maze of painted fragments, around which the initials, E., in the bordure, evidently denote Edward the Confessor. Again, there are legs only, with the water flowing over the feet and the end of the staff which the hands had grasped, evidently the remains of some grand figure of St. Christopher, a very frequent and favourite figure in the church windows of York. Or, again, draped figures of ecclesiastics, complete almost to the hem of their robes, but destitute of feet, which may be discovered in the tracery above, where they have been utilised simply to supply some fracture. Sometimes heads and bodies, which have evidently no real association, are found united together. The former occasionally the work of some modern painter, who had attempted with his own brush to supply what was lacking. This is manifestly the case in the west windows of the central aisle of the nave, where the faces of the archbishops are

## York Minster

evidently modern insertions, and in the west window of the south aisle, where a stately figure of our Lord on the Cross, tended by little angels, has been terribly marred by a most repulsive modern face, which has been added. But sometimes the head and body are both mediæval, but sadly incongruous, for male faces are to be found on female shoulders, and delicate crowned heads of virgins or angels on the stalwart bodies of men.

And similar confusion exists in many other details: borders of different dates which have been pieced together, or incongruous modern borders which have been devised to make up the space on each side of some smaller window, which has been brought from some other church. Some of the windows, indeed, are almost, if not altogether, perfect. The east window has been patched with pieces of crude coloured glass, but only as repairs, possibly after the great fire in 1829, otherwise it must be very much as put up by



The North Aisle

## York Minster

John Thornton, 1405 ; and in its nine lights divided into six tiers, it contains two hundred panels of groups of figures, the two upper tiers being subjects from the creation of the world to the death of Jacob, the remainder from the book of Revelation. The tracery lights of the east window of the north aisle seem to me altogether untouched.

The choir transept windows have been restored, but contain a large portion of the old glass in five lights. That on the north side, erected by some member of the family of de Ros, has one hundred panels of groups of figures illustrating the life of St. William, that on the south, erected by Langley, Bishop of Durham, seventy-five similar panels illustrating the life of St. Cuthbert. The grand series of windows in the vestibule also seems to me absolutely untouched since the day when they were first put up, and, with their figures of kings and queens and borders of Plantagenet badges, contain very

## York Minster

striking specimens of the best date of painted glass.

The windows on the north aisle of the nave, no doubt erected soon after its completion, are equally perfect, and were probably presented by members of the court of Edward I. The window next to the transept given by Peter le Dene, the court ecclesiastic and tutor of Edward II., when Prince of Wales, has six illustrations of the life and martyrdom of St. Catherine, step-niece of Constantine the Great, and therefore a very acceptable subject to the people of York. It is adorned, moreover, with the shields of the immediate relations of Edward I., while the border of the central light contains figures in tabards emblazoned with the arms of some of the principal nobility of the day. The next window, presented by Richard Tunnoc, the bell-founder, has three illustrations of the entrance of St. William to York, and two of the founding of bells, while peals of gold and silver bells are spread in

## York Minster

profusion throughout it, and the worthy bell-founder himself kneels at the foot of the central light presenting his window to the Archbishop.

The next window, from its quaint border of birds and animals, seems to be the offering of Brian FitzAlan, Lord of Bedale, who treated with good-humoured banter and ridicule the dilemma caused at the siege of Caerlaverock by banners emblazoned with similar coats of arms being displayed by Hugh Poyntz and himself. And the window beyond was evidently given by some member of the family of Clare.

On the opposite side the glass is more mutilated, and it is difficult to trace the subject in some of the windows. One, however, conspicuous with the lions of Edward I. and the castle and dolphin of Blanche of Castile, in compliment to her great grand-daughter, his second wife, is believed to have been presented by Archdeacon de Maulay, when his friend, Anthony Bek, was consecrated

## York Minster

Bishop of Durham here in the presence of the king. At the foot of the window the figures of his brothers, gallant knights in those days, bearing their shields above their heads, may be still traced on close examination. Splendid figures of St. Lawrence, St. Christopher, and another fill the lights of the next window. The glass in all the windows is good and probably coeval with the building, though much of the tracery glass is modern and bad, the work of William Peckett, a glass painter of some local repute, who, at the close of the last century, undertook to restore the glass of the Minster. It is difficult to accord the measure of praise and blame to which he was entitled, for certainly, on the one hand, we are indebted to him for preserving many fragments which otherwise would have been lost, and yet, on the other, we cannot but condemn the strange medley of groups and figures, heads and bodies, together with large diapers of bright and coarse designs to fill up vacant

## York Minster

spaces, which are evidently his work, and, in some instances, sadly inharmonious with the rest of the window. The single figures in the south window of the south transept are specimens of what he could do, and if lacking in artistic treatment of form and drawing, are not altogether defective in colouring. But we have much to be thankful for, for the elaborate MS. account of the Minster, written by Torre, the antiquary, in the reign of James II., shows us that we have lost very little of what existed in his day; and it is marvellous to think that so much should have survived not only the mistaken zeal of would-be preservers and restorers, but the flames of the terrible fires, one of which consumed the woodwork and roof of the choir in 1829, and the other burnt off the roof of the nave in 1840.

We could wish that we knew something more definitely about the glass painters of the Minster. The fabric rolls tell us nothing before the fourteenth century, and



## York Minster

are rather tantalising than satisfying afterwards.

As early as 1338 Thomas de Boneston covenants by indenture to glaze two windows at his own proper cost, find all the glass, pay the workmen their wages for the finishing thereof, and Thomas de Ludham, the *custos* of the fabric, became bound to pay him twenty-two marks sterling for the same. Another indenture of the same date was made between Thomas de Boneston and Robert: for making a window at the west gable of the cathedral church, the said Robert is to find all sorts of glass and be paid 6d. per foot for white and 12d. per foot for coloured glass. In Archbishop Melton's register of the same year, the Archbishop pays to Master Thomas Sampson 100 marks for glasswork of the window at the west end of the church lately constructed—*i.e.*, the great west window. In 1361 Agnes de Holm leaves 100s. to the fabric for a glass window containing figures of St. James the Apostle

## York Minster

and St. Catherine. In 1371 the name of William de Auckland appears as Vitriarius, and it would seem that the Dean and Chapter always maintained such an official, with a working staff to execute what glass might be required. From time to time great stores of glass and lead seem to have been accumulated, and there are constant entries of expenses occurring in wages and materials, *e.g.*, white glass for the great windows of the new choir, "coloured glass," "old coloured glass," "glass of small value."

In 1400 John Burgh seems to have been the glazier at 27s. 5d. per annum, with Robert, his assistant, at 25s. In 1419 John Glasman, of Ruglay, supplies three sheets of white glass. John Chambre is glazier in 1421. In 1443, Thomas Schirley with his assistant William ; Thomas Cartmell in 1444 ; Matthew Pete with two assistants, Thomas Mylett and William Cartmell, in 1447 ; Matthew Pete in 1456, when he seems to have

## York Minster

employed several assistants, Thomas Clerk, Thomas Shirwynd, Thomas Coverham, William Franklan, Robert Hudson, &c., with much expenditure for "yalow glass," &c. ; John Pety, 1472 ; Robert Pety, 1509, the last member of a family which had long filled the office. Richard Taylor supplies two chests of Rennyshe glass in 1530 ; William Matthewson, of Hull, twenty-two wisps of Borgandie glass ; and in 1538, one cradle of Normandie glass.

The indenture with John Thornton for glazing the great east window is still extant ; he is to "complete it in three years, pourtray with his own hands the histories, images, and other things to be painted on the same. He is to provide glass and lead, and workmen, and receive four shillings per week, five pounds at the end of each year, and, after the work is completed, ten pounds for his reward."

Little enough it seems to us ; but the system was very different from that which

## York Minster

prevails now ; yet certainly the result which it produced justified the system, whatever it was, for, admitting that length of time and atmospheric influences may have toned and mellowed the colouring, there are evidences of craftsmanship in the designing and production of those days, which the best workmen of our own time have been ever ready to acknowledge, and before which they have been willing to pay generous homage.

Truly, at the Reformation, the building must have been “*flos florum*,” enriched with everything which the taste of man could devise or his skill execute. The massive walls, fashioned according to the highest canons of Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular architectural taste, the great windows glowing with painted glass of each successive style, the vast area subdivided by stately screens of carved wood and stone into countless chapels and chantries ; shrines glittering with offerings of precious and jewelled metals, and adorned with colour and



ACCEPTUS FREWEN  
qui inter vivos esse desit  
Mar 28 AD 1664.

## York Minster

gilding; the treasury stored, as the fabric rolls tell us, with gold and silver plate in rich profusion; vestments of the most costly fabrics and approved fashions. Exuberant in all that was of the earth earthy; but, I am afraid, sadly lacking in those inward and spiritual graces of which these should have been the outward and visible signs. History may not be impartial, perhaps not altogether accurate, and mixed motives may have animated those who dealt vigorously, not to say ruthlessly, with these things. But too many records remain to show us that "cleansing fires" were needed, and that, however depraved the instruments, however debased their motives, the work which they did was imperative, if Christian faith and life, and the worship of God in spirit and in truth were to flourish and abound in this our fatherland.

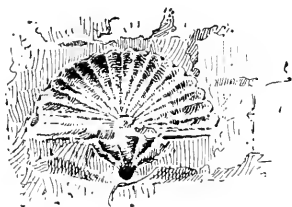
Nor need we indulge in unavailing regrets. It is impossible not to wish that much which has been ruthlessly destroyed had been

## York Minster

spared, and that many things of beauty could be recovered. We could wish that the unhallowed fingers which hesitated not even to rifle the very graves, had been checked, that the fires of 1829 and 1840 had not swept over the choir and nave; but enough survives to gladden eye and heart with the noblest evidences of mediæval work and taste, and tokens on every side abound to testify that, in these latter days, Yorkshiremen have been as ready to repair the decay of age, restore the ravages of fire, and support the glory and dignity of God's house as ever they were in days gone by. We walk about our Zion and go round about her and tell the towers thereof, and they speak to us of a living faith, not of an effete ecclesiasticism or of mere archæological interest. We rejoice that it is still emphatically a house of prayer, not only when "two or three are gathered together," but when its aisles are thronged with a vast multitude, uniting in some special act of prayer and praise, or listening to some

## York Minster

eloquent exponent of the Gospel of peace ;  
and “when through the long drawn aisle and  
fretted vault the pealing anthem swells the  
notes of praise,” we lift up grateful hearts in  
devout unison, that we are permitted to  
worship Him in this His house on earth, and  
desiring that we may be permitted to attain  
to the “building of God, the house not made  
with hands eternal in the heavens.”



Perpendicular Shell-Ornament Piscina

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