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Author: Sidney Heath
Illustrator: E. W. Haslehust

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EXETER FROM THE CANAL

EXETER

Described by Sidney Heath

Pictured by E. W. Haslehust

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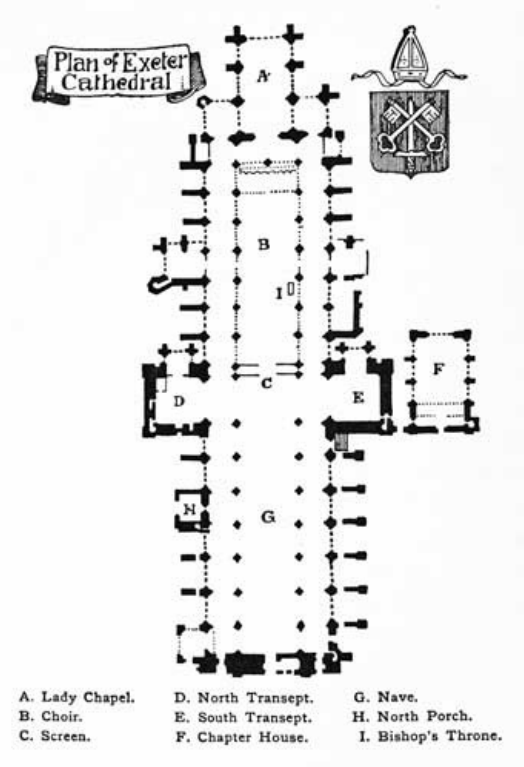


View larger image

Plan of Exeter Cathedral

[Pg 5]

THE CITY

Just as the five cities of Colchester, Lincoln, York, Gloucester, and St. Albans, stand on the sites and in some fragmentary measure bear the names of five Roman municipalities, so Isca Dumnoniorum, now Exeter, appears to have been a cantonal capital developed out of one of the great market centres of the Celtic tribes, and as such it was the most westerly of the larger Romano-British towns. The legendary history of the place, both temporal and ecclesiastical, goes far back to the days when, for a late posterity, it is difficult to separate fact from fable. It is,

however, quite established that here was the capital of the Dumnonii, the British tribe whose dominions included both Devonshire and Cornwall, and who named their capital *Caer-uisc*, the city of the waters. [Pg 6]

With the coming of the Saxons, the river, the Roman Isca, became the Exa, and the city was called Exanceaster, modified in due course to Exeter.

In point of position, on a mound rising from the river, it was a splendid site for a fortress in the days of hand-to-hand warfare, and the military value of the site lends support to the statement of some writers that the Romans utilized the British fortifications and built a castle. In few places of its size can one see so clearly the extent of the old walled town, while the disposition and formation of its outer ring of houses, on the lower slopes of the mound, show very clearly the limits of the mural circumvallation before the city burst asunder its tight-fitting belt of stone, within which, for the safety of its populace, it had been imprisoned for centuries.

Climb the higher parts for a bird's-eye view of the city, and the scene is entrancing. We look down upon the calm-flowing Exe threading its way through the valley till it debouches at Exmouth; on the riverside beneath us is the quay, with coasting schooners and barges moored alongside, and sundry bales of merchandise heaped upon the wharf, as though the people were playing at commerce to remind the world at large that Exeter was once an important port, although some ten miles from the river's mouth.

But the Exe, in a quiet way, has much to boast of in the nature of beauty and romance, [Pg 7] particularly where it flows past the wooded grounds of Powderham Castle, the Devonshire seat of the great Courtenay family. Truly there is much to redeem modern Exeter and make it interesting over and above its historical atmosphere. Yet with comparatively few vestiges of age the city has an historical past. In both a religious and a military sense she has played a part in the annals of England, and more than one ancient document in the Library of the Dean and Chapter bears testimony to her honour, her valour, and her glory.

It is a city which has the impress of many ages and many minds stamped upon it. Here each influence—military from the Roman legions, ecclesiastical from the Saxon prelates, feudal from the Norman lords—has sunk deeply into the land, and has affected the general plan of the numerous buildings, as it has moulded the slowly succeeding phases of the civic and the religious life. It is no mere dream of the early ages, no sentimental reverie of mediævalism. It is enough to go through the streets, noting the remnants of the ancient walls, the brutal strength of the surviving fragment of the castle, the sheltered position of the tidal basin, the many churches dedicated to the honour of Saxon saints, the proud beauty and massiveness of the Cathedral, if one would realize, not the fancies of the artist and the poet, but the hard facts of history that [Pg 8] made the ancient days so great, and which have caused our own days to be so full of their memories.

As compared with the sister counties of Cornwall and Dorset, Devonshire is not particularly well represented in memorials of the Roman occupation, although an immense number of Roman coins have been unearthed at various times. Coins, however, unless found with definite structural remains, indicate presence rather than a settled occupation, for large quantities of the Roman coinage must have continued in circulation long after the last of the legions of imperial Rome had departed from British shores. The few Roman antiquities of Exeter that have been found are important in a comparative sense, although they contrast poorly in structural character with those of our other Romano-British towns. It has been held that not only were the foundations of the city walls Roman, but part of the existing remains of Rougemont Castle have also been assigned to this period.

Mr. L. Davidson was of opinion that the old church tower of St. Mary Major (now removed) exhibited traces of Roman work, and foundations presumed to be Roman were noted by him as having been found at the corner of Castle Street and High Street, in St. Mary Arches Street, Bedford Circus, Market Street, South Street, and Mint Lane.

In 1836 more definite structural remains were found in High Street, consisting of a family sepulchral vault, 7 feet square, arched over, and containing five coarse cinerary urns arranged in niches around its interior. This was discovered behind the "Three Tuns" inn, and during the same year at a great depth below the site of the County Bank, a low-arched chamber was found in which were a quantity of bones of men and animals. [Pg 9]

No Exonian find, however, exceeds in interest the discovery, in 1833, of a bath and tesselated pavement behind the Deanery walls in South Street. The walls were of Heavitree stone and brick, and the original pavement was of black-and-white tesseræ set in concrete. The associated remains of a thirteenth-century encaustic-tile pavement indicates the use of the old Roman bath a thousand years or so after it had been made. Several other tesselated pavements are recorded as having been found in Pancras Lane, on the site of Bedford Circus, and on the north side of the Cathedral near the Speke Chapel. In 1836 a small bronze figure of Julius Cæsar (now in the British Museum) about three inches in height, was dug up during the removal of some walls in the Westgate quarter of the city. The only recorded find of a military weapon is the bronze hilt of a dagger unearthed in South Street in 1833. This is of more than passing interest, as it bears the name of its owner—E. MEFITI. ĔO. FRIŠ.—which has been read thus: "Servii or Marcii Mefiti Tribuni Equitum Frisiorum"—Servius or Mercius Mefitus, tribune of the Frisians. [Pg 10]

The antiquary Leland mentions two Roman inscriptions as built into the city wall near Southernhay, but they are gone, and besides the inscribed dagger we have only a seal of Severius Pompeyus, and sundry graffiti or funereal pottery, in the way of literary relics of Roman Exeter. The poverty of Devonshire in memorials of the Roman period is shown by the fact that, outside Exeter, there are not a dozen places in the county which have yielded Roman vestigia other than coins.

In 926 the Britons were driven from Exeter by Athelstan, who banished them into Cornwall, and fixed the River Tamar as their boundary. Athelstan was one of the greatest benefactors the city has had; for, in addition to increasing the fortifications by means of a massive wall flanked by towers, he built a castle on the Red Mount, now known as Rougemont Castle. Although very little of this now remains, a portion of the ruins is generally known as "Athelstan's Tower", and has a window with a triangular head, which is certainly of Saxon style and date. In 932 Athelstan rebuilt the Monastery of Our Lady and St. Peter, staffing it with monks of the Benedictine Order, and presenting them with the reputed relics of St. Sidwell, a saint who is still somewhat of a puzzle to ecclesiologists. A few years later the monastery was plundered by the Danes, when the monks beat a hasty retreat, but returned in 968 on the entreaty of King Edgar. A mint was shortly established here, wherein the first coins were struck naming Athelstan "King of England". [Pg 11]

The Danes made continuous raids in the neighbourhood, but were decisively defeated by the West Countrymen in 1001, at Pinhoe, a few miles from Exeter. From that time until the treacherous massacre of the Danes in Wessex upon St. Brice's Day in 1002 by Ethelred, this part of the country was comparatively free from their inroads; but Gunhilda, the sister of Swegen, King of Denmark, being among the slain, this king came to avenge her death. He sailed up the Exe, burning and plundering the villages on its banks, and for four years his army marched in every direction across Wessex, and was at length induced to withdraw on being paid a *wergeld* (war tax) which was first levied on Exeter.

After the Battle of Hastings, Gytha, the mother of Harold, took refuge in Exeter, and Leofric, the bishop, offered to render homage to William as Royal suzerain; but the Conqueror would have no half-hearted submission, so Exeter closed its gates to the Normans. It held out for eighteen days, when the military science of the Normans, and particularly the skill they showed in undermining the walls, caused it to surrender. The resistance won the besiegers' respect and brought unusually good terms from so ruthless a victor as William. The lives of the garrison were spared, Gytha was allowed to seek safety by sea, and it has been said that the victorious troops were withdrawn from the city gates to prevent them from claiming the licentious privileges so generally granted to their followers by the Norman kings. [Pg 12]

As is fitting for its county town, the first entry in the Devonshire Domesday deals with Exeter, in which city, it is recorded, the king had 285 houses rendering customary dues. The generally debased character of the coinage of the time led to various expedients being adopted by the

Exchequer for securing approximately accurate payment of a specified sum of money. Among other things the entries in Domesday state that in the total—

> "This (city of Exeter) renders 18 pounds per annum. Of these Baldwin the Sheriff has six pounds by weight and assay, and Colvin has of them 12 pounds by tale for the service of Queen Eadgyth".

This entry is significant, for one pound or twenty shillings meant one pound or twelve ounces troy of silver; and when money was payable by weight twenty shillings were not taken as the equivalent of one pound unless they fully weighed one pound. In this instance it is observable [Pg 13] that the portion of the customary dues rendered for the 285 houses, which went to the Exchequer, was collected by the sheriff under the strictest rules of weight and assay, whereas the portion allotted to the widow of Edward the Confessor was received by the tale only. The authorities took care that the sheriff collected the full amount due to the Crown, but did not trouble themselves about the ex-queen's share.

It has been affirmed that it was by the Normans that the fairs of England were moulded into the shape with which we are most familiar. At Exeter, in 1276, in reply to a writ of *quo warranto*, it was satisfactorily shown that the rights of the city, its fee-farm rent and its farms, dated from pre-Conquest days. The privileges and emoluments attached to fairs in large towns were very great. During the time allotted to them the citizens were often debarred from selling anything, whereas strangers could vend their wares during the fair, but at no other period of the year. In Cossin's *Reminiscences of Exeter* (1877) we are told how "at Exeter, on the occasion of the Lammas Fair, a procession yet perambulates the city, one man bearing a pole with a gigantic stuffed glove at the top of it, the latter being subsequently hung out at the Guildhall". [Pg 14]

GUILDHALL PORCH

Many of England's reigning sovereigns have visited the city, among them being Edward IV and Richard III. Henry VII came thither on 7 October, 1497, on the suppression of Perkin Warbeck's rebellion, when that rebel had attempted to capture the city. The rebels were brought before the king, bareheaded and with halters round their necks, and after they had pleaded for mercy Henry pardoned them. On his departure, the king presented the civic authorities with a sword and cap of maintenance, both of which are still carried before the Mayor and Corporation on occasions of state.

The citizens of Exeter have always been noted for their stanch loyalty to the reigning house, with the consequence that many rights and privileges have been granted to it. The city motto, *Semper Fidelis*, was conferred by Queen Elizabeth in recognition of the contributions, both of men and money, made to the fleet that vanquished the Spanish Armada. That the motto was merited is evident when we recall the fact that, with the exception of Frobisher and Cavendish, practically the whole of the leading seamen who chased the Spanish ships along the Channel were born in

the land of the Tamar, the Tavy, and the Dart.

During the early part of the Civil War the citizens were divided in their sympathies, some supporting the Parliament and others the King; but the city soon fell into the hands of the former. [Pg 15] In 1643, however, Sir Ralph Hopton, the famous Royalist general, marched on Exeter with a force made all the more formidable for siege purposes by the cannon he had previously captured at Halton. The immediate capture of the city by the Royalist forces was expected, the *Mercurius Aulius* of 1 June, 1643, remarking that: "if the old observation be of any credit, that cats and mice doe commonly forsake a ruinous and decaying house, that Citie (Exeter) is not like to continue long in the Rebels' hands". The proud and rebellious city was assaulted and captured by the Royalist forces under Prince Maurice on 4 September, 1643, after a siege lasting sixteen days, and a full account of its fall appeared in the issue of the *Mercurius Aulius* of 8 September.

In May, 1644, Queen Henrietta Maria took up her abode in the city, at Bedford House, where, on 16 June of the same year, the Princess Henrietta was born. In the following month Charles I came to see his little daughter, and again in September, when he appointed Thomas Fuller, Vicar of Broadwindsor, in Dorset, as chaplain to the princess. The queen, who had retired to Exeter as a safe place for her confinement, soon afterwards had to leave there suddenly on the approach of a Parliamentary army in command of the Earl of Essex. Her Majesty's easiest way to France was by [Pg 16] sea, and to prevent this Cromwell had sent a fleet to Torbay to intercept her, should she attempt to leave England by that route. Finding this road closed, she made for Falmouth, from which port she got safely away.

During the siege by Fairfax the inhabitants of the city suffered considerably, owing to the food supplies being intercepted. One day a flight of larks came into the town, "which were", says Fuller, "as welcome as quails in the wilderness". The birds were so numerous that, notwithstanding the prevailing famine, they were sold for twopence a dozen. "Of this miraculous event", wrote Fuller, "I was not only an eye but a mouth witness."

The city capitulated on 13 April, 1646, among the conditions of surrender being that the Cathedral should be spared, and the garrison accorded the honours of war.

After the landing of William of Orange at Brixham, in 1688, he marched through the county to Exeter and entered the city by its western gate. He proceeded direct to the Cathedral and took his seat in the bishop's throne with his chaplain Burnet near him. A few of the prebendaries and choristers attended the service, but when Burnet began to read the Prince's Declaration, after the singing of the Te Deum, they hurriedly departed. The bishop, Thomas Lamplugh, had [Pg 17] proceeded to James on hearing that the Dutch had landed, and was rewarded with the Archbishopric of York. He afterwards assisted at William III's coronation. The Dean of Exeter had also left the city, and the Deanery was prepared for the Prince's reception. George III was the last English sovereign to stay in Exeter, and he also resided at the Deanery.

Although the Cathedral is the main attraction modern Exeter has to offer to the tourist, a walk through the historic old city will reveal the fact that, in addition to some highly interesting old churches, it possesses a not inconsiderable number of ancient buildings. At the same time there has been an appalling amount of destruction, some of it apparently of an unnecessary kind, as the recent dismantling of the beautiful old courtyard in the rear of Bampfylde House, the city residence of the Poltimore family.

The visitor who arrives at Exeter either by the Great Western or the South-Western Railway, the station of the latter being the more central of the two, can soon reach the busy and picturesque High Street by way of Queen Street, one of the broadest thoroughfares in the city. The most interesting building in High Street, and one that, in this respect, ranks next to the Cathedral, is the Guildhall, with a portico projecting over the pavement. It is probably one of the oldest [Pg 18] municipal buildings in the country, for in 1330 we find that the Guildhall was in a ruinous condition, and it was then rebuilt. Again, in 1464, it was built up anew in a more commodious and efficient manner, while the building as we see it to-day, with its façade, is the result of still further alterations in 1592. The entrance porch is separated from the inner hall by a massive oak doorway, and the hall itself, 60 feet long and 25 feet wide, is panelled throughout in oak, with a frieze consisting of shields charged with the arms of former mayors, aldermen, recorders, and of the city companies. Curious brackets, of figures bearing staves, support the roof. The judge's chair is of carved oak, and bears the name and date of the donor: "Christopher Ball, Esq., 1697". On the walls hang six large portraits, among them those of George III and General Monk, the latter by Sir Peter Lely, and over this picture hang the colours of the 4th Devons, a regiment raised in the city by the general in 1681.

Another portrait here by Lely is of the Princess Henrietta, concerning which the old records state that: "In 1671 the King (Charles II), in order to keep his promise made the last year when he visited this city in person, and as a signal testimony of his love towards the same, was pleased to send hither the effigy or portraiture, at length and richly framed of his dear sister, the Duchess of [Pg 19] Orleans (lately deceased), a princess born within this city, and for beauty was esteemed to be one of the fairest in Christendom; which said picture being placed in a fair case of timber, richly adorned with gold, is erected in the open guildhall of the said city, there to remain as a perpetual monument of his majesty's high favour towards this his truly ancient, loyal, and honourable city of Exeter".

The upper room is known as the "Mayor's Parlour", where are many more portraits, and the city sword and cap of maintenance. The scabbard of the sword, which is the one presented by Edward

IV, is still draped in crape, as it used to be for the processions on "King Charles Martyr's" Day (30 Jan.). The cap of maintenance presented to the city, together with his sword, by Henry VII, was sent up to London to be repaired, the cost for "sarcanet, damask, and pin lace" amounting to four guineas. The original cap still remains within its covering, and it appears to consist of two pieces of black felt sewn together. During the fifteenth century the Chapel of St. George and St. John was built over the Guildhall, with an apartment above for the priest who served it, the chapel being probably connected with a religious guild.

The junction of North and South Streets with Fore and High Streets was formerly known as the Carfoix, or Carfax (*quatre voyes*, i.e. four ways), where at one time many executions took place. [Pg 20] Here also stood the ancient conduit which supplied the city with water, but this was removed to South Street in 1779. At the corner, looking down Fore Street, was a fine fourteenth-century life-size figure of St. Peter, holding a model of a church in his right hand and a book in his left, his feet trampling on a demon. This has been removed from its original position and placed high up in a niche over a shop close by. On the opposite side of High Street is St. Petrock's Church, at one time almost hidden from sight by the adjacent buildings. It is a curious little church, of which portions have been assigned to the Saxon period. The parish of St. Petrock is in the centre of the city, and was one of the oldest and most important, being one of the nineteen churches to which William I ordered the provost to pay a silver penny yearly. The church was enlarged on the south side during the fifteenth century, and in the following century the Jesus aisle was added, when Thomas Chard, acting as Bishop Oldham's suffragan, reconsecrated the church. The chancel is now towards the east in what was once an aisle, the original chancel being where the north aisle is now, with the consequence that the interior of the church has a very curious appearance.

MOL'S COFFEE HOUSE

Farther up High Street, on the same side, are some picturesque houses with Elizabethan gables, [Pg 21] the interiors of many of them adorned with fine specimens of oak carving in situ. The building now occupied by Messrs. Green as a drapery establishment was at one time the "New Inn", and it is mentioned in this capacity so early as 1456 in a lease relating to the building, in which it is referred to as "le Newe Inne". In 1554 the cloth mart was established here, and early in the seventeenth century the New Inn Hall was used as the exchange where the cloth merchants met to transact their business. The house was rebuilt towards the close of the century, and the Apollo Room was added as a banqueting hall for the judges on circuit. This is now used as a showroom, but it still retains its elaborate plaster ceiling bearing the date 1695, and the original oak panelling. The frieze consists of a series of wreaths upholding shields charged with the armorial bearings of many county families, together with the royal arms and those of the city.

Farther up the street is the church of St. Stephen, mentioned in Domesday. The original church was destroyed by the Commonwealth in 1658, and rebuilt in 1664. Stephen's Bow, the adjacent archway, was always a part of the church, and above it rises the tower; beneath the church is an ancient crypt. A turning to the right close by leads to Bedford Circus, with a statue of the Earl of [Pg 22]

Devon at the entrance. In the thirteenth century a Dominican Convent was founded in this part of the city, and occupied the southern portion of the circus, together with Chapel Street and the adjoining mews. In 1558 the convent was dissolved, and Bedford House, the West-Country residence of the Dukes of Bedford, was erected. Here Henrietta Maria held her Court, and here the little princess was born. The Dukes of Bedford ceased to use this residence in the eighteenth century, and in 1773 it fell into the builders' hands, when the eastern side of the circus was built, the western side not being begun until 1826. The place to-day possesses no attractive features, and only the memories of its past history remain. The earlier excavations brought to light a great number of skulls, bones, and fragments of sculpture; while during the later building operations, especially those conducted on the site of the conventual church, a large number of carved stones were unearthed which had evidently formed part of the Dominican house. Some of these fragments were richly ornamented with painting and gilding. Another discovery was the life-size stone head of an effigy with a hood of closely set ring mail. This is now preserved in the Cathedral cloisters.

[Pg 23]

Returning to High Street, Bampfylde Street lies a little higher up. A great portion of this street is occupied by the front of Bampfylde House, built by Sir Amyas Bampfylde at the end of the sixteenth century. In later years this became the town house of the Poltimore family. Although shamefully modernized the house has retained a few interesting features. In the hall is seen a narrow window filled with old glass on which armorial bearings are displayed, while the broad staircase leads to a fine apartment panelled in oak, and having an elaborate plaster ceiling. The mantelpiece is a good piece of work and bears the arms of the Poltimores in its centre. There are one or two other good rooms and some deep cupboards, and one very small apartment is said to be a genuine eighteenth-century powdering closet. The beautiful old courtyard at the back will no longer be recognized by those who knew it a few years ago. It has been "restored".

The Church of St. Lawrence is situated on the north side of High Street, and dates from 1202. It was sold during the Commonwealth, and bought by the parishioners for £100. On the south side, and slightly farther up, is St. John's Hospital, situated near to where the old East Gate formerly stood. The hospital was founded circa 1225 by Gilbert and John Long. Bishop Grandisson was a great benefactor to it, as, in addition to increasing the number of inmates and clergy, he added "a master of grammar and twelve scholars". The foundation was suppressed in 1540, but in 1620 its restoration was planned by Hugh Crossing and carried out after his death by his widow. The institution was refounded in 1629—when only the school was revived—and is now known as the "Blue Boys' School". The playground is partly bounded by a piece of the old city wall, whence one can look down on the Southernhay Gardens and obtain a good impression of the strength of the ancient fortifications.

[Pg 24]

The seal of St. John's Hospital is an interesting one of thirteenth-century date on which is depicted the exterior of St. John's Chapel, which is shown as having a shingled roof and gable crosses; also an external arcade of three semicircular arches. Another interesting seal of the same century is that of the Hospital of St. Alexius, founded in 1170. This foundation, and the hospital of the bishops, formerly on the site of the present Vicars' College, were afterwards united with the Hospital of St. John at the East Gate. The seal shows the hospital with gable crosses, an arcaded clerestory, and three quatrefoil openings in its wall; beneath is an arcade of six arches.

[Pg 25]

High Street merges into Sidwell Street. St. Sidwell's was one of the nineteen old city parishes although without the walls. The site of St. Sidwell's Church is said to be on the spot where a saint of this name suffered martyrdom. She is one of those half-mythical British saints, said by tradition to have been beheaded by a scythe whilst praying beside a well. A church is said to have been built in her honour so early as 749. The present building has undergone repeated restorations, but some ancient pillars still remain with sculptured capitals, and there is also a representation of St. Sidwell, or Sidwella, whose attributes are a well and a scythe. To the monastery he had founded Athelstan presented some reputed relics of the saint.

At the top of Sidwell Street is St. Anne's Almshouse, one of the most interesting foundations in the city. It was originally a hermitage, but little is known about it until 1418, when it was "newly constructed", and in 1561 Oliver and George Mainwaring founded a hospital for eight poor people. The chapel is a small building that has retained its piscina and two niches for holding figures. The almshouse was fortified by Fairfax during the Civil War, and for many years the chapel was in a ruinous condition, but it was restored early in the nineteenth century. St. Anne's Day, 26 July, has been observed regularly by the inmates of the charity since its foundation.

[Pg 26]

Retracing our steps to the beginning of High Street, and proceeding up Castle Street, we reach the highest point of the city, the Red Mount, crowned by the gateway and ruined towers of an ancient castle. The fortress formed a part of the fortifications erected by Athelstan, and the Red Tower, with its triangular-headed window, may be confidently assigned to the Saxon era. During the Norman period the castle was rebuilt by Brian de Molis. In Stephen's reign it was besieged and taken from Earl Baldwin de Redvers, who was banished until the following reign, when his possessions were restored. The castle belonged to the de Redvers and Courtenay families until 1231, when Henry III presented it to his brother Richard as part of the earldom of Cornwall. In 1537 Henry VIII granted Exeter a charter giving the city the privilege of being a county with its own sheriffs, excepting Rougemont Castle, which still belongs to the Duchy of Cornwall.

ROUGEMONT CASTLE

In 1774 a large portion of the castle ruins were cleared away, when several interesting buildings were destroyed, among them the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin, to make room for the present Assize Court, a plain building with no pretensions to architectural beauty. On the right of the castle yard is a little path leading to the top of the walls, whence a comprehensive view of the city and the neighbourhood can be obtained. Looking straight across the valley, beyond the county jail, one can see the site of the ancient camp of the Danes, against whom Athelstan built [Pg 27] his fortifications, now occupied by the reservoir. At the foot of the wall are the Northernhay Gardens, a favourite resort with youthful Exonians. From Northernhay the old walls can easily be traced westwards, and crossing Queen Street we may proceed down the narrow Maddocks Row to find the wall pierced by the only archway now remaining. Continuing westwards we cross North Street, where the old North Gate stood until it was demolished in 1769. Entering Bartholomew Street East we are on the ramparts again, and from the bastion near All-Hallows-on-the-Walls Church we may look down upon the old Bartholomew burying-ground, consecrated in 1639, and used as the principal city cemetery for nearly two hundred years. The Church of All-Hallows-on-the-Walls is a modern one that stands on the site of a more ancient edifice. From this point one can see the tapering spire of St. Michael's Church, in the grounds of Mount Dinham, where are the almshouses erected and endowed in 1860 by John Dinham. Here are forty free cottages and episcopal charity schools, the latter founded originally in 1709 by Bishop Offspring Blackall.

Continuing along the bastion the limit of the northern wall is soon reached. Many of the old streets in this quarter of the city are worth visiting, for in the narrow thoroughfares are some [Pg 28] interesting old houses. In St. Mary Arches Street is the church of the same name, shut in by houses. It is one of the old parish churches of Exeter, and one that takes part of its name from the fine Norman pillars and arcade of the nave, which is the oldest in the city. In the south aisle is a chantry containing the altar tomb of Thomas Andrews, mayor in 1505 and 1510; and who died in 1518. Mint Street, as its name implies, was associated with the mint established there by permission of William III. The coinage minted there may be recognized by the letter E placed beneath the king's head. Bartholomew Street brings us to Fore Street, a narrow and very steep thoroughfare, within which is the fine front of the Tuckers' Hall, belonging to the Incorporated Guilds of Weavers, Fullers, and Shearmen, chartered in 1490. Close at hand are steps leading down to Exe Island, which was for many years a subject of dispute between the Earls of Devon and the citizens; but on the attainder of Henry, Marquis of Exeter, in 1558, the property reverted to the Crown. On the conclusion of the Prayer-Book Riots the island was granted to the city by Edward VI, as a reward for the services it had rendered the authorities. Most of the old portions of the island have been destroyed, many of them in recent years, but an interesting specimen of a Tudor house remains with a covering of slates somewhat resembling scale armour. Shields [Pg 29] appear in the ornamentation, one of them bearing the Tudor rose. At one time this style of wall covering was very common in Exeter, but the example in Exe Island is the only one now

remaining.

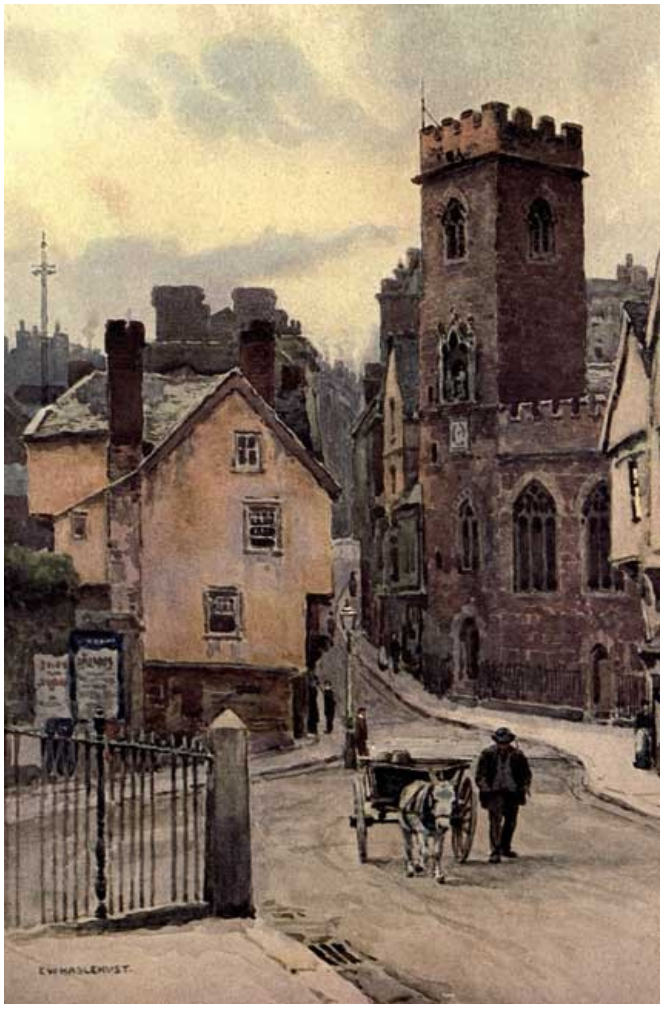
On the south side of Fore Street stands St Olave's Church, where, according to Domesday, a church with the same dedication existed before the Conquest. It is said traditionally to have been built by Gytha, Harold's mother, in order that masses might be said for the souls of her son and Earl Godwin. William I gave the church to the monks of Battle Abbey, in whose possession it remained until the Reformation. More than a century later St. Olave's was lent to the French Huguenot refugees, many of whom settled in Exeter where they established an important woollen industry. The present church bears few indications of antiquity, beyond some Norman arches and a little early carving in the tower.

At the lower end of Fore Street is West Street, marking the western limit of the old walls. A right-hand turn leads to St. Edmund's Church, built in the thirteenth century at one end of the old bridge, when it was known as *St. Edmund Super pontem*. In 1831 the original structure was pulled down and the present building begun. It is said to stand upon some of the arches of the [Pg 30] ancient bridge. Turning eastwards we reach the foot of Stepcote Hill, and the church of St. Mary Steps. A remarkable exterior feature is the old clock and figures, known locally as "Matthew the Miller". The dial is enriched with basso-rilievos representing the four seasons, and in a niche just above is a small effigy of Henry VIII in a sitting posture, who nods his head as each hour is struck. On each side is a military figure, their morions crowned with feathers, javelins held in their right hands, and small hammers in their left hands, with which they alternately strike the quarter hours on two small bells at their feet. The name of "Matthew the Miller" is said to have originated from the punctuality of a miller of that name who was so regular in going to and from his mill that people set their clocks by him. The church contains a fine chancel screen, with twenty-eight panels of painted saints, which was removed from the church of St. Mary Major. The font is a good one, of Norman date. Just opposite St. Mary Steps stood the West Gate of the city, which was taken down in 1814.

The Westgate quarter formed part of the manor of Exe Island, and was inhabited chiefly by weavers, fullers, dyers, and those whose occupations required a copious supply of water. The whole of this district is intersected with narrow lanes and passages, beneath and around which [Pg 31] are many streams diverted from the river to work the mills.

A few old gabled houses with overhanging upper stories still remain in this district, but they are in a very dilapidated condition, as will be noticed by anyone who traverses one of the numerous byways that lead to South Street, at the lower end of which is Magdalen Street, where are two very interesting hospitals—"Wynard's" and the "Magdalen". The former was founded in 1430 by William Wynard, sometime Recorder of the city, for the habitation of a priest and twelve poor men. The attached chapel was dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and the hospital was called "God's House". The founder left many lands and tenements to provide funds for the establishment. The master might not be absent more than once or twice in the year, and his total holidays in the twelve months were never to exceed three weeks and three days. He was also required to teach from three to nine boys, starting them with the alphabet, and going on to the "great psalter of the holy David". The foundation passed eventually into the possession of William Kennaway, who built a vault within which he was buried.

The hospital to-day is one of the secular buildings of Exeter most worth visiting, with its gabled houses, dormer windows, and garden plots. An archway leads into the courtyard, around which [Pg 32] on three sides are grouped the houses of the twelve pensioners; the chapel occupies the fourth side of the quadrangle.



ST. MARY STEPS

The Magdalen, or Leper, Hospital, just without the South Gate, was founded sometime before 1135, for in 1136 we find that Bishop Bartholomew permitted a continuance of the ancient right by which the lepers were allowed to collect food twice a week in the market, and alms on two other days, to all of which the healthy members of the community naturally objected. In 1244 Bishop Bruere resigned the guardianship of the leper hospital to the corporation, and was given in its stead the mastership of the hospital of St. John. One of the mayors of Exeter, Richard Orange, was a great patron of the lazar house, and when he himself contracted leprosy he took up his abode in the hospital, where he died and was buried in the chapel. Even so late as the sixteenth century there would appear to have been lepers in Exeter, for we find that in 1580 no one was to be admitted to the Magdalen Hospital except "sick persons in the disease of the leprosy".

In South Street is College Hall, or the Hall of the College of Priest-Vicars or Vicars Choral, a fine oak-panelled apartment. The original hall was built by Bishop Brantyngham about 1388, and access was then gained to it from the Close; the houses of the priest-vicars being arranged on [Pg 33] each side of a green. All this has now disappeared with the exception of the hall, which was rebuilt in the fifteenth century. At one end is a gallery upon the upper panels of which are paintings representing former bishops of the diocese, beginning with Leofric. On the carved mantelpiece is the date, 1629, and the owls which constitute the punning, or allusive, arms of Bishop Oldham. Near the hall a road leads into the Close, passing the church of St. Mary Major, a modern building replacing a beautiful old one which appears to have been needlessly destroyed. On the eastern side of the Close is a picturesque Elizabethan building known as Mol's Coffee House. At the time of the Armada it was a private residence. In 1596 the original house was pulled down and the present building erected. On the introduction of coffee into England it was opened as a Club and Coffee House by an Italian named Mol. As such it was a well-known and popular resort with the citizens of Exeter and the squires of the neighbourhood until 1829. It is now used as a shop by a firm of fine-art dealers, but the fine "Armada" room upstairs is willingly shown to all visitors who express a wish to see it. It is a good panelled room with low windows, and an elaborate frieze of shields bearing the arms of many ancient Devonshire families, among them being those of Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, and General Monk. Adjoining Mol's [Pg 34] Coffee House is the very small Church of St. Martin, now but rarely used for divine service. On the Catherine Street side of the church is a building, formerly an almshouse, which has an attached chapel of much interest dedicated to St. Catherine. The chapel is conjectured to have been built by the Annuellor monks, whose college originally stood on the site of Mol's Coffee House, where traces of it may still be seen in the cellars. The narrow passage of St. Martin's Lane, known to the present-day citizens as "Luxury Lane", on account of its shops, leads direct from the busy High Street to the Cathedral Close.

THE CATHEDRAL

The present cathedral church of the diocese of Exeter may be said to be the third building that has stood on the site. Nothing remains of the Saxon church elevated to the dignity of a cathedral when the bishopric was removed from Crediton, and of the Norman church erected by Warelwast, a nephew of the Conqueror, only the two massive towers are standing, the remainder of the building belonging almost entirely to the late Decorated style, of which it is one of the most beautiful examples we possess. [Pg 35]

The city of Exeter does not appear to have been divided into parishes until the year 1222, in pursuance then no doubt of Archbishop Langton's Constitution of the same year. The Cathedral itself was first constituted a parish by being placed under the charge of a single dignitary, the dean, by Bishop Briwere, in 1225.

Four years after he ascended the throne in 1042, Edward the Confessor gave the united bishopric of Crediton and Cornwall to his chaplain, Leofric, who, observing that Crediton was an open town, difficult to fortify against the Danish raiders, obtained from Pope Leo IX permission to remove the episcopal see to Exeter, when the Benedictine minster of St. Mary and St. Peter became the cathedral church of the diocese.

Although no part of this church remains, an ancient seal of the Cathedral is of special interest as showing some of the architectural features of the Saxon church. It depicts the west front with two towers, the northern square and the southern circular, the latter surmounted by a cross, and pierced by three round openings in the walls. There are two porches, one in the centre the other in the north tower, and the walls show indications of characteristic Saxon masonry. On the central roof is a large flêche or turret of two stages carrying a weathercock on a very tall shaft. [Pg 36]

Of the succeeding church the only contemporary pictorial representations we have are those on early, and somewhat imperfect, seals dating from the end of the eleventh century. The first has a church with cresting of fleurs-de-lis on a hipped and tiled roof, two gable crosses, flanking pinnacles, an arcaded clerestory, and a double door with ornamental hinges, on each side of which is a quatrefoil opening. The second seal shows an arcaded building standing on a stone plinth of four courses, and flanked by towers with conical roofs and ball finials. The roof is surmounted by a large fleur-de-lis, and exhibits an unusual form of tiling. A third seal (1194-1206) shows the west front of the Cathedral with two western towers and a central porch, and a large roof turret. Another view of the west front occurs on the seal of the Archdeacon's official, 1267, and in this example there are three pointed towers, the central one carrying a cross, the others being capped with flag vanes. In the doorway stands a figure of the official. The two Norman transeptal towers still standing give the Cathedral a unique appearance, this arrangement being found nowhere else in England, save at the highly interesting and not far distant Collegiate Church of Ottery St. Mary. [Pg 37]

Having thus briefly sketched from pictorial evidence the architectural characteristics of the predecessors of the present Cathedral, we may begin our tour of the building. Exeter is known as a Cathedral of the Old Foundation, as in pre-Reformation days it was served by secular canons, and as such it was not refounded by Henry VIII; so that there has been no break in the continuity of its ecclesiastical history since its original institution in the days of Leofric. With the exception of Carlisle, which was served before the Reformation by Augustinian or Austin canons, all the cathedrals of the Old Foundation were served by secular canons. It must be remembered that although nearly the whole of the architectural merit of the Cathedral lies in the interior, and particularly in the magnificent stone vaulting of the roof, which is the high-water mark of vaulting on a large scale in England, there are several portions of the exterior that are worth noting. Externally the great defect of the building is the low elevation of the body, and the want of a central tower to counteract the heavy effect produced by solid square towers at each transept.

The west front, with its low, embattled screen of figures, is not a very happy architectural composition, and is not to be compared to the west fronts of Lincoln and Peterborough, where the figure sculpture is earlier and better executed than at Exeter. The one redeeming feature of an otherwise unimposing west front, is the Decorated tracery of the great window, now filled with modern, and not very satisfactory, glass in memory of Archbishop Temple, who was Bishop of Exeter from 1869 to 1885. [Pg 38]

THE CATHEDRAL FROM THE PALACE GROUNDS

The elevation of this front consists of three stories: the basement screen, containing three portals; above this is the west wall of the nave; and above this again is the nave gable, in which is inserted a smaller window of the same character as the larger one. The apex of the gable has a canopied niche, within which is a much-restored effigy of St. Peter. The sloping walls built on each side, as if purposely to conceal the buttresses of the nave and its aisles, give this portion of the church an awkward perspective, and tend to diminish the apparent height of the whole façade. The screen itself was the last important addition to be made to the fabric by Bishop Brantyngham (1370-94), and it is little more than a low stone scaffolding for holding the rows of figures of saints, kings, and other distinguished persons which fill the niches. An attempt to identify these sixty-five individuals, with the aid of early drawings and still earlier documents, may be said to have established the identities of the majority of the effigies, although they have suffered so much from rough treatment, restoration, and weathering that many of the saintly [Pg 39] emblems and regal attributes are difficult to decipher at the present time. Two of the figures, which were broken with falling, were replaced by new and very indifferent figures by Mr. E. B. Stevens.

Some years ago it was found that the whole of this embattled screen was merely a stone veil erected for the purpose of protecting the original west front. One or two stones were removed, a little to the right of the north door of the west entrance, and the inner mouldings exposed. Within the thickness of the wall is a little chapel dedicated to St. Radegund, in which Bishop Grandisson prepared his tomb.

The north side of the Cathedral can be viewed in its entirety from any part of the well-kept lawns, beneath which lie the bones of the citizens of seven centuries, but no stones mark their resting places. The most noticeable feature on this north side is the sturdy Norman tower, corresponding to its fellow on the south side, the original purposes of which are still a matter of much discussion among antiquaries. Built by Bishop Warelwast in the twelfth century, they stood as two distinct and independent towers, until Bishop Quivil, during the rebuilding of the Cathedral in 1280-91, ingeniously opened up the inside walls, supporting the remaining portions of the walls upon arches, thus forming the interiors of the towers into transepts. The exterior of the northern tower is plain walling for part of its height, when it is divided into four stages by horizontal bands, each [Pg 40] stage containing elaborate Norman arcading, ornamented with zigzag moulding. It is surmounted with an embattled parapet with a turret at each angle. In the north wall a fine Decorated window was inserted by Quivil for the purpose of lighting his newly made transepts. To make way for this window a portion of the arcading of the first stage was cut away. The towers are similar to each other, and they were formerly capped with spires. In 1752 the spire on the north tower was taken down, that on the south tower having been removed at a much earlier date. Just below the window, on the face of the north tower, are the masonry marks of the gable of a house. This was

the old Treasurer's House, wherein Henry VII was lodged when he came to Exeter to put down Perkin Warbeck's rebellion.

Near the north tower is the projecting north porch with its embattled parapet. On the eastern side of the interior are the fragments of what was once a Calvary, and on the central boss of the roof is a representation of the Agnus Dei.

An apartment above is known as the "Dog Whipper's" room, a relic of those days when an official was appointed whose duty it was to keep stray dogs out of the sacred building. [Pg 41]

On the exterior of the clerestory wall immediately above the porch is a projection which marks the Minstrels' Gallery, and is lighted by a window. Along the whole length of the Cathedral, from the west end of the nave to the east end of the choir, are the flying buttresses that counteract the thrust of the heavy roof vaulting of the interior.

At the extreme eastern end of the Cathedral the Lady Chapel and its sister chantries can be seen to great advantage with their windows filled with tracery. The great Perpendicular east window is partially hidden by the more easterly portions of the fabric, but it contains some fine old glass, on which are full-length representations of nineteen saints and patriarchs, and many armorial bearings. The full beauty of the glass can only be seen from the interior. The south side of the Cathedral is very similar to the northern one, except that the portion east of the tower is hidden from view by the episcopal palace.

Once inside the nave, which should be entered by the western portal, the dullest eye cannot fail to perceive the uniform character of the work, a quality which gives to this Cathedral a congruity of structural forms and an architectonic value that is lacking in buildings which exhibit the styles of various periods. Here we see the complete architectural expression of one master mind, although the edifice was erected under the supervision of successive bishops. The present [Pg 42] Cathedral was begun by Bishop Bronescombe (1258-80), to whom is due a portion of the Lady Chapel. His successor, Quivil (1280-91), furnished designs for the entire rebuilding of the church, and how faithfully his successors adhered to these plans is proved by the fact that a great deal of this Decorated building was erected at a time when the Perpendicular style was in full swing all over the country. With the exception of the great east window, which is of the Perpendicular period, the whole of the interior is of the purest Decorated work, and is the finest, as it is the most complete, example of this style on a large scale in the country. Exception has been taken to the lack of height in the nave, due to the low spring of the vaulting, and there is some justification for the criticism. The vaulting, however, is exceedingly beautiful, and the long line of unbroken roof stretching from the west end of the nave to the east end of the choir is so charming a feature that when inside the building we no longer regret the absence of a central tower.

THE SANCTUARY, EXETER CATHEDRAL

The bosses that unite the vaulting ribs represent a variety of subjects, the last but one, near the west window, depicting the martyrdom of Becket. The corbels from which the vaulting shafts spring are mostly sculptured heads of the Plantagenets; those on each side of the Minstrels' [Pg 43] Gallery depict Edward III and Queen Philippa. This gallery cuts into the triforium on its north side, and contains niches in which are sculptured angels with musical instruments. Until the middle of the last century it was customary for the surpliced choir to sing the Gloria in Excelsis from the gallery on Christmas Eve.

The Gothic arches of the nave, large and beautiful, rest upon massive clustered piers of Purbeck marble. The development of these piers as the building progressed westwards is clearly seen. Between the Lady Chapel and the choir is a pier of four shafts, then one of eight, which eventually develops into one of sixteen shafts, repeated throughout the length of the nave. Although the tracery of the aisle windows is very varied in design, each window on the north side has its counterpart on the south side, and some of the tracery of these windows has a marked tendency to the flamboyant, thus showing the lateness of much of the work at Exeter, for what is called the flamboyant style is contemporary in France with our Perpendicular work, which is a purely English style unknown on the Continent.

The choir screen was put up by Bishop Stapledon (1465), but its height and effectiveness are sadly marred by the great organ placed upon it. Until comparatively recent years an altar stood on each side of this screen. The great west window of the nave, the beautiful tracery of which has [Pg 44] already been alluded to, was due to Bishop Grandisson (1327-69). The font at the western end of the south nave aisle was made specially for the baptism of Princess Henrietta, while the nave pulpit, erected in 1877, to the memory of Bishop Patteson of Melanesia, "is", says the Rev. Baring-Gould, "much of a piece with the stuff turned out by clerical tailors and church decorators who furnish us with vulgar designs in illustrated catalogues".

The transepts, as we have seen, were bored by Quivil through the two Norman towers built by Warelwast, and in consequence are of small dimensions. In the north tower is the great bell called "Peter", which was brought from Llandaff by Bishop Courtenay towards the end of the fifteenth century, and which weighs 12,500 lb., the only heavier bell in this country being great "Tom of Oxford", the weight of which is 17,000 lb. "Peter" was rung formerly by the united exertions of twenty-four men using two ropes and double wheels, but it was cracked on 5 November, 1611, from a "too violent ringing in commemoration of the Gunpowder Plot".

In 1752 the bell was placed in the lower part of the tower, and so fixed in a massive framework of timber that it cannot now be rung; it is, however, used as a clock bell, and the sound of its deep [Pg 45] notes can be heard at a great distance. The old clock in the same transept has been regarded as the gift of Bishop Courtenay, but this is doubtful, as from entries in the fabric rolls it seems that the clock was constructed more than a century before that prelate presided over the see. If so, the clock would date from about 1317. This ancient clock is very remarkable, being constructed upon the idea that the earth and not the sun was the centre of the solar system. It shows the hour of the day and the age of the moon. The dial is about seven feet in diameter, and on it are two circles, one numbered from 1 to 30 for the age of the moon, the other numbered from 1 to 12 twice over, for the hours. In the centre of the dial a semi-globe is fixed representing the earth, around which a smaller globe indicating the moon revolves monthly, and by turning on its axis as it revolves, shows the various lunar phases. Between the two circles is a third globe representing the sun, with an attached fleur-de-lis which points to the hours as the ball revolves around the earth. In 1760, more works were added—to show the minutes, which are painted in a circle. The works of the clocks have been renewed many times, and are now placed in the disused chantry of Sub-Chanter Sylke, situated in the northeast corner of the transept, just below the ancient clock. [Pg 46]

On the eastern side of this transept is St. Paul's Chapel, now used as a vestry.

OLD COURTYARD IN THE CLOSE

The south transept, that corresponds with the northern one, is formed from the lower part of the south tower, which contains a fine set of bells, although only ten of them are now rung. There are some interesting monuments in this transept. Here are the great Courtenay tomb, originally occupying a place in the nave; the Elizabethan tomb of Sir John Gilbert, brother of Sir Humphrey Gilbert and half-brother to Sir Walter Ralegh; and the monument to Sir Peter Carew. A niche in the wall holds a few fragments of sculptured stone saved from the tomb of Leofric, first Bishop of Exeter, who was buried in "the crypt of his own church". A marble slab against the south wall is believed to be the resting place of "Bishop John the Chanter" (1186-91). A small door in this transept leads to the Chapel of the Holy Ghost and to the Chapter House.

On the roof of the south choir aisle are bosses carved with representations of the heads of Edward I and Queen Eleanor. This aisle contains many interesting effigies, among them two of those of unknown knights, considered to commemorate Sir Humphrey de Bohun and Sir Henry de Ralegh. The body of the latter knight was the cause of a contention, between the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral and the Dominican Friars, in the year 1301. The quarrel was a bitter [Pg 47] one, and lasted for five years. The Dean and the Chapter affirmed that from time immemorial, and by special arrangement with the friars, they had the right to have all bodies which were intended to be buried in the Dominican church, with the exception of those which belonged to the convent, brought to the Cathedral with the usual wax and offerings for the first mass. The friars refused to allow Sir Henry Ralegh's body to be taken to the Cathedral, and they claimed the wax and offerings. After a lengthy dispute the executors and friends of the knight took his body to the Cathedral, where the usual mass was celebrated, after which the body, with the bier and pall belonging to the friars, was carried back to the convent doors. The friars now refused to readmit the body, upon which the executors took it again to the Cathedral, "and after keeping it for a day and a night, and the friars still refusing to receive it, they carried it to be buried in the Cathedral, as it could not be left longer unburied owing to the stench (*fetare*)".

On the south side of the aisle is the Chapel of St. James, which was built by Bishop Marshall and restored by Quivil in the early Decorated style. The vaulting and the windows are similar to those of the choir aisles. Over it was formerly the muniment room, but in 1870 the archives were [Pg 48] removed to the Chapter House for greater safety. During some excavations a crypt was found beneath the chapel with a finely groined roof. The crypt now contains the machinery used for blowing the organ. The next chapel on the south side is the chantry of Bishop Oldham, or St. Saviour's Chapel, richly decorated with carvings, among which the "owl" of the bishop, forming part of the rebus of his name, is prominent. His armorial bearings are also charged with the three owls. The effigy of the prelate rests beneath an ogee arch, and is lavishly coloured, although the original work has been restored by Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in memory of Bishop Oldham, who contributed 6000 marks to the collegiate foundation. On the south side of the Lady Chapel is St. Gabriel's Chapel, built by Bishop Bronescombe in honour of his patron saint. Here lies the

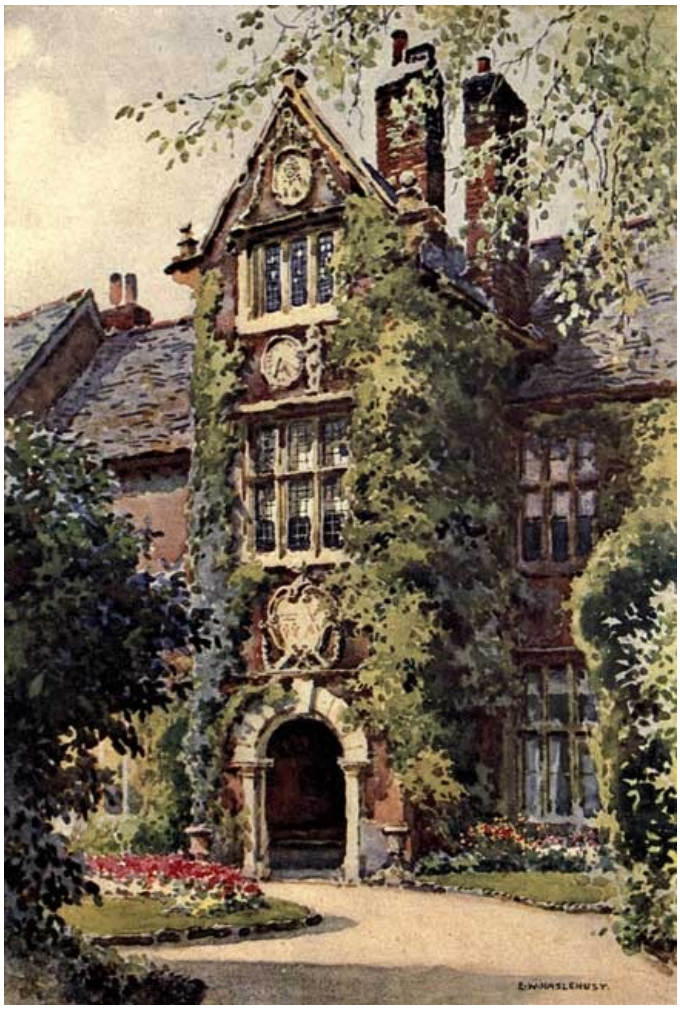
effigy of the bishop in a carved and richly gilded tomb.

The Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene, originally built by Bronescombe, was altered by Quivil. It has a Perpendicular screen and some fifteenth-century glass in the east window. Close by, on the north side of the north choir aisle, is Sir John Speke's Chantry, or St. George's Chapel, of Perpendicular work and containing the effigy of the knight. When the Cathedral was divided into two parts, in Puritan days, a doorway was made where the altar now stands, leading into "East Peter's". On the north side of the choir aisle is St. Andrew's Chapel, corresponding with that of St. James on the south. By the north wall is the large sixteenth-century monument of Sir Gawain Carew, his wife, and his nephew, Sir Peter Carew (1571). The effigy of the last-named is cross-legged, and so late an example of this disposition of the lower limbs supports the now generally accepted archæological fact that the cross-legged attitude had no particular reference to the romantic wars of the Crusades.

[Pg 49]

Other interesting monuments in this aisle are the cross-legged effigy of Sir Richard de Stapledon, half-brother to the bishop, and that of Bishop Stapledon. The latter, although in the choir, is seen to better advantage from below. A story runs to the effect that while Sir Richard was riding one day in London with his brother, a cripple laid hold of his horse by one of the fore legs, throwing both horse and rider to the ground, and causing the knight's death, hence the name "Cripplegate". Bishop Stapledon was Treasurer to Edward II, and held London against Queen Isabella. The bishop was taken prisoner, and condemned to death at a mock trial. He was beheaded at Cheapside, and his body cast on a rubbish heap, whence it was eventually taken to Exeter and accorded an honourable burial.

[Pg 50]



THE ABBOT'S LODGE

No examples of miserere carvings are known in English churches before the thirteenth century, and the set at Exeter are probably the earliest we have, the character of their foliage denoting the Early English period. They are thought to have been the gift of Bishop Bruere (1224-44). The complete set numbers forty-nine, and among the subjects represented are a merman and a mermaid, an elephant, and a knight slaying a leopard.

The choir stalls, carved to illustrate the *Benedicite*, the pulpit, and the reredos are all modern, having been erected from designs by Sir Gilbert Scott. The lofty tapering bishop's throne, an essential feature of every cathedral church, is the most remarkable of the choir fittings. It has been ascertained from the fabric rolls that it was the gift of Bishop Stapledon (1465), and the exact sum paid for the work and timber was just under thirteen pounds, a considerable sum of money when its modern equivalent is calculated. The throne consists of a series of pinnacles and niches, rising in diminishing tiers until the crowning pinnacle almost reaches to the clerestory window. There is not a single nail in the whole of this canopied seat, although it rises to a height of more than sixty feet from the choir floor. It has been taken to pieces on at least two occasions; once by the son of Bishop Hall, when it was hidden away during the Civil Wars to save it from

[Pg 51]

Cromwell's troopers, and a second time by Sir Gilbert Scott, for the purposes of cleaning. It is highly probable that the oak of which it is made came from Chudleigh, some ten miles away, where the bishops of Exeter had a palace, of which fragments remain in Palace Farm.

The beautiful stone sedilia was due to Stapledon. Above the seat are three arches 10 feet in height, surmounted by elaborately designed tabernacle work. The arches spring from three carved heads reputed to be those of St. Edward the Confessor, Leofric, and Edith.

The Lady Chapel is at the eastern end of the choir, from which it is separated by a broad ambulatory, and within it are the tombs of Bishops Stafford, Bronescombe, Simon of Apulia, and Bartholomew, as well as the tomb of Sir John Doddridge. A plain slab marks the resting place of Bishop Quivil, the stone bearing an incised cross and around it the inscription—

"PETRA TEGIT PETRUM
NIHIL OFFICIAT SIBI TETRUM".

The large number of interments in Lady Chapels was due to the perfectly natural desire of our forefathers to be laid to rest in the chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. [Pg 52]

The cloisters stood formerly on the south side, in front of the Chapter House. They were so sadly mutilated by the Cromwellian troopers that houses were erected and a weekly market held on the site. In 1887 a portion of the ruinous cloister was restored, so that a new cathedral library could be placed above it for the purpose of housing the valuable libraries bequeathed to the Cathedral, no more space being available in the Chapter House. An interesting manuscript, preserved in the library of the Devon and Exeter Institution, contains many references to the city which have not been recorded by other historians. With reference to the cloisters the unknown author of this manuscript says:

> "1657. The Cloysters neer to Peters churche was converted into the serdge markett, which was before in Southgate street.
>
> "1660. The wall which divided East & West Peters was taken downe in Decembe^{r} and in the month following the serdg markett was removed out of the Cloystures, and carried againe into Southgate street whear it was before. Also the uniting of severall parishes into one was againe made void & each parrish to enjoy her owne priviledges and lyberties as before."

When Daniel Defoe visited Exeter, in 1723, it had the largest serge market in England, next to Leeds.

Although the Close has not succeeded in retaining any of its gates it is interesting by reason of the few old houses that still surround it, whilst behind their gabled roofs rises the double-towered [Pg 53] Cathedral, completing the picturesqueness of a really charming scene, of which the prevailing tone is a dark grey, stained and almost blackened by weathering and by age. In the fourteenth century the Close at Exeter was enclosed with walls, and until comparatively recent times it was built over. The well-kept Close is peculiar to England.

The Bishop's Palace dates from about 1381, and is supposed to have been either built or enlarged by Bishop Courtenay. It was in a very ruinous condition when Bishop Philpotts set to work to restore it, when many old fragments of masonry were let into the new work. The fine archway leading into the cloisters was put up at this time, and the large oriel window of the library came from another old house in Exeter. Within the hall of the Palace is an ancient chimney-piece erected about 1486, upon which are sculptured the Courtenay arms and badges, the arms of England, and the emblem of St. Anthony. During the Commonwealth the Palace came into the possession of a sugar baker, and the succeeding bishop was content to leave him undisturbed. The next occupant of the see, however, turned the sugar baker out of the house, which he occupied himself. Several traces of the sugar refinery were discovered when the Palace was restored by Bishop Philpotts. The Palace Gardens are very extensive, and are bounded on the [Pg 54] south side by the remains of the city wall, upon which is now a pleasant walk. Near the centre of the wall is a curious building generally known as the Lollards' Prison, although whether it ever was used for this purpose is a matter of conjecture. One of the finest views of the Cathedral is that obtained from a corner of the lawn in the Palace Gardens.

THE EXE

THE EXE AT TOPSHAM

After leaving the peaceful atmosphere of the Cathedral the noise and distractions of the modern city grate upon us; the return to the twentieth-century commonplace after the fourteenth-century refinement is too sudden, there being no intermediate stage between the one and the other, between the gloom of the great church and the glare and feverish hurry of a prosperous city. This being so, we cannot do better than seek a measure of quietude and repose along the banks of the Exe, a river which, rising on Exmoor, gives name to Exeter, Exminster, and Exmouth. Although rising in Somerset, the river may fittingly be claimed as a Devonian one, as it enters the county a [Pg 55] little below Dulverton, where it receives the waters of the Barle. At the beginning of its career the Exe flows through a country of great beauty and much romantic interest, which has been immortalized by R. D. Blackmore in *Lorna Doone*.

This land of Exmoor is a heathery plateau that rivals in everything but extent the sister moorland which gives birth to that prince of English rivers, the Dart.

Dartmoor is larger, wilder, and grander in the bold contours of its cloud-capped tors, but the wildness of Exmoor is blended with a sweet and gentle charm which is all its own. It presents us with a panorama of misty woods, gleaming water, and glowing heather; a combe-furrowed moorland clothed with scrub oaks and feathery larches. After leaving this forest shrine the Exe enters Devonshire, where, after flowing through richly wooded and fertile valleys, it sweeps past the ancient town of Tiverton, where it is swelled by the waters of the Loman. Three miles from Tiverton it reaches Bickley Bridge, beyond which it is the recipient of the Culm, the largest of all its tributaries. Along the greater part of its course to this point its silver streams thread their way between sloping hills crowned with hanging woods, and by scenery of the true Devonian order. At Cowley Bridge, two miles above Exeter, the river is joined by the Creedy, which, coming from the [Pg 56] north-west, flows through and gives name to *Creedy-ton*, or Crediton. The course of the Exe, from its source on Exmoor to the sea at Exmouth, is estimated at about seventy miles. It is a pure pellucid stream until joined by the Creedy, which imparts to it a reddish colour from the soil through which the latter flows.

The importance of the river to Exeter, especially before the waterway was obstructed by Isabella de Fortibus, Countess of Devon, cannot be overestimated, and in old books many of the now flourishing ports on the south coast are described as "creeks under Exeter". From ancient records it seems certain that an arm of the sea extended to the very walls of the city, and from the facility thus afforded to commerce, Exeter, at a very early period, became the great trading port of the West Country. Of the various trades carried on here those of the woollen and its allied industries were the most numerous. It was also one of those favoured English ports to which licences were granted in 1428 for the embarkation of devout persons and pilgrims who were visiting the great Continental shrines, and particularly that of St. James at Compostella. Before they were permitted to leave this country these mediæval devotees were required to swear a solemn oath that they would "not take with them anything prejudicial to England, nor to reveal [Pg 57] any of its secrets, nor carry out with them any more gold or silver than what would be sufficient for their reasonable expense".

As civilization increased trade and commerce, both foreign and domestic, kept pace with the growth of the city, and in the reign of Elizabeth the wool merchants of the county and the woolstaplers of its capital had risen to fame and opulence. In the year 1560 Queen Elizabeth granted the traders of Exeter a charter of privileges, and letters patent were issued forming them into a company under the name of a "Socitie of Marchante Adventurers of the citie of Exeter". The possession of the charter induced the citizens to commence the spirited undertaking of cutting a canal to Topsham, a work that was begun in 1564, and which constitutes one of the earliest examples of canal navigation in the country. "But why", it may be asked, "did the need for cutting a canal arise when the river flowed up to the heart of the city?" The need arose in

consequence of the obstruction of the natural waterway near Topsham, by Isabella de Fortibus, Countess of Devon, with the result that no ships could proceed beyond Countess Weir, at Topsham, 4 miles below Exeter. The first obstruction was placed in the river by Isabella de Fortibus, about the year 1284, owing to a dispute she had with the merchants of the city [Pg 58] concerning various dues. The merchants appealed to Henry III, who ordered the obstruction to be removed, but so powerful were the Earls of Devon in those days that no steps were taken to restore the navigation of the waterway. In 1312 the river was still further obstructed by Hugh Courtenay, Earl of Devon, the first member of the Courtenay family to hold the earldom. Tradition states that the motive for the earl's action was the displeasure he felt towards the mayor and citizens of Exeter on the following occasion. His steward was sent into the city to buy fish, and the bishop's steward having been sent for the same purpose, the two servants met in the market on a day when there were only three kettles of fish for sale. Each of the stewards wanted the whole of the supply, and after a quarrel the mayor was sent for to decide the issue, which he did by giving each of the stewards one basket and retaining the third for the use of the citizens. The mayor was in the service of the earl, who, hearing of the decision, visited the city and sent for the mayor. The latter summoned the citizens to meet him at the Guildhall, where he explained to them the cause of the earl's displeasure and requested them to accompany him. According to Tyacke, the Exeter historian, "being come to the Earl's house, the mayor was conducted to his lodging chamber and the door closed on him; and finding that none of his speeches would satisfy [Pg 59] the Earl, who stormed at him, he took off an outer coat he then wore (it being the Earl's livery), and delivered it to him again; at which the Earl fell into a greater passion. The commons attending at the door, doubting the mayor's safety, knocked, and demanded their mayor. Being several times denied they attempted to break open the door, which the Earl apprehending and fearful of what might ensue, entreated the mayor to pacify the people, which was soon done, and they all peaceably returned. And though the Earl then, to avoid the fury of the people, seemed pacified, he could never afterwards show a good countenance to the city."

COUNTESS WEIR

In order to revenge himself on the citizens he built a quay at Topsham, and compelled all merchants and captains of ships to unload their cargoes and convey them by wagon to the city, to the inconvenience of the merchants and his own profit. He also took from the citizens their rights of fishing in the river, and oppressed them in various ways. Some years later Edward Courtenay, nephew of Hugh, still further blocked the waterway by erecting two other weirs, under the pretext of building some mills. Many complaints were made to the king, and various writs were issued against the earls, but no one dared to enforce them. For four hundred years the feud [Pg 60] continued over what was apparently the destination of a kettle of fish, although in later days there is no doubt that the earls' motives were to increase the income of their own port of Topsham at the expense of Exeter. On the receipt of Queen Elizabeth's charter in 1560 the citizens at length decided to construct a canal to Topsham. This was begun in 1564 and completed in 1697, and it is one of the earliest examples of canal navigation in the country. Topsham is now a little port, whose shipping trade is confined to small coasting schooners and fishing smacks. The Church of St. Margaret is very large, and, with the exception of the tower, has been almost entirely rebuilt. Near Topsham the Exe is joined by the little River Clyst, and just below the confluence the Exe expands until it is more than a mile in width. From the Clyst many villages take name, as Clyst St. Lawrence, Broad Clyst, Honiton Clyst, Clyst St. Mary, and Clyst St. George. The last two are near Topsham and were the scene of a struggle during the Prayer Book Riots. In Devon the insurrection started on Whit-Monday, 1549, at Sampford Courtenay, the day following that on which the Act altering the Church service came into force. The people of the village insisted on the priest saying the usual mass instead of the prayers given in the [Pg 61] appointed Book of Common Prayer. The rebellion spread rapidly, and ten thousand men marched on Exeter, with a good sprinkling of old Devon families in their ranks; but they were

undisciplined and were quickly dispersed by Lords Grey and Russell. Although demoralized, the rebels assembled at Clyst St. Mary, which they fortified. From here they sent word to the king demanding the continuance of their former Church services, but the king's reply was an army under the command of Lord Russell, and after a brief resistance Clyst St. Mary was burned to the ground and the rebels scattered, to be again beaten and their leaders taken on Clyst Heath. The vicar of St. Thomas's Church, Exeter—at that time situated outside the walls—one of the leaders, was hanged from his own church tower.

On the west bank of the Exe, almost opposite Topsham, are Powderham Park and Castle, the latter supposed to have been built originally by Isabella de Fortibus. It has been conjectured, and is indeed highly probable, that a fortified building or earthwork of some kind occupied the site at a much earlier date, possibly as early as the Danish invasions. In later times the manor belonged to the Bohuns, and it came into possession of the Earls of Devon through the marriage of Margaret de Bohun with Hugh Courtenay, the third earl. In 1645 the castle was besieged, [Pg 62] unsuccessfully, by Fairfax, but in the following year it was taken by Colonel Hammond. Until about the middle of the eighteenth century it remained strongly fortified, but at that time it was subjected to many alterations. The oldest part of the present castle dates from the time of Richard II, but the whole fabric has undergone so many restorations that it presents a great variety of architectural styles. The fine modern hall contains a fireplace which is a replica of the one at the Palace, Exeter. The park is a delightful stretch of greensward, studded with ancient oaks, and it extends for many miles around the building. In one corner of the park is the little church of St. Clement, a Perpendicular building of red sandstone, and within which are several memorials of the Courtenays. These include a recumbent effigy popularly supposed to represent the renowned Isabella, although this lady is known to have been buried at Bromnor Priory, Wilts. It is the opinion of some authorities that this monument is a cenotaph to Elizabeth, daughter of Edward I, and wife of Humphrey de Bohun, whose daughter, Margaret, married Hugh Courtenay. On the highest ground of the park is the Belvidere, erected in 1773, a triangular tower with a small hexagonal turret at each corner. It is 60 feet high, and from the summit the view comprises the city of Exeter, the broad estuary of the Exe, the village of Lympstone, and the little town of [Pg 63] Topsham, where the spars of the ships appear to mingle with the trees on the river's banks. Looking inland we may see the well-wooded country stretching away in a succession of hills and combes, until the view is bounded by the stone-capped heights of Dartmoor in the far distance.

The parish of Woodbury, on the east bank of the river, contains several small villages and a large stretch of common. Woodbury Castle is a well-known earthwork on the top of a high hill; it is probably prehistoric in origin, although afterwards occupied by the Romans. The church of St. Swithin at Woodbury has a chancel in the Decorated and a tower in the Perpendicular styles. The beautiful screen has been modernized and consequently spoiled, but some good monuments may still be seen. Nutwell Court, overlooking the estuary, is a modern mansion on the site of a castle which had been converted into a dwelling house so early as the reign of Edward IV. It is now the home of the Drakes, of the same family as the famous sailor of Elizabethan days. Among the relics preserved here are the cups given to Sir Francis Drake by Queen Elizabeth on his return from the memorable voyage round the world in the *Pelican*. Here also is a portrait of Sir Francis by Zucchero. [Pg 64]

Exmouth, although a modern watering-place, has a few points of interest, being one of the oldest seaside resorts on the south-west coast.

In the time of King John it was an important port, and it supplied ten ships and one hundred and ninety-three seamen for Edward III's expedition to Calais. The principal part of the present town is very modern, but it is very pleasantly situated. The greater part of the town is included in the parish of Littleham, whose church, dedicated to St. Margaret and St. Andrew, is of Early English and Perpendicular architecture. The Spratshayes aisle was probably built by the Drakes of Spratshayes. The screen, dating from about 1400, has richly undercut cornice bands, the Stafford and Wake knots being freely introduced among the carvings. There are many delightful walks around Exmouth, both along the coast and inland, the view from Beacon Hill being very fine and including a large strip of the eastern and the western coastlines that border the blue waters of the English Channel.

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