

Winchester eBook

Winchester

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Page 1

Title: Winchester

Author: Sidney Heath

Release Date: April 25, 2005 [EBook #15706]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

*** Start of this project gutenberg EBOOK Winchester ***

Produced by Ted Garvin, Martin Pettit and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>.

WINCHESTER

[Illustration: *The close gate*]

WINCHESTER

Described by Sidney Heath

Pictured by E.W. Haslehust

[Illustration]

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[Illustration]

WINCHESTER

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Few of our English cities are more strikingly situated than the once royal city of Winchester, which lies on the slopes and along the bed of a chalk valley watered by the River Itchen. The greater part of the present city is situated on the right bank of the river, while the best general view of it is justly considered to be that obtained by looking across the Vale of Chilcomb, from the road to Portsmouth. Of the Itchen valley, with its rich meadows and tranquil stream, William Cobbett was an enthusiastic admirer. "There are few spots in England", he exclaims, "more fertile, or more pleasant, none, I believe, more healthy. The fertility of this vale and of the surrounding country is best proved by the fact that, besides the town of Alresford, and that of Southampton, there are seventeen villages, each having its parish church, upon its borders. When we consider these things, we are not surprised that a spot situated about halfway down this vale should have been chosen for the building of a city, or that that city should have been for a great number of years the place of residence for the kings of England."

To-day the beautiful river winds in and out of the ancient streets, and among the meadow lands, much as it did when Cobbett penned his *Rural Rides*, although many charming examples of domestic architecture, which then graced what was probably the most attractive High Street in England, have been demolished or restored beyond recognition. As it flows through the city proper, the river is divided up into a number of small streams abounding in trout; but after a brief course these rivulets unite just below the city, from whence the waterway is said to be navigable all the way to Southampton. The bridge at the foot of the High Street marks the former limit of the navigability of the river, and is the reputed site of the legend concerning St. Swithun and the old woman to whom the saint restored her eggs.

Before the advent of the railway, that great destroyer of our ancient waterways, the Itchen was crowded with barges making their way from the maritime port to the inland city; for, like so many of our old British settlements, the site of Winchester was determined by the natural conditions of the land which could be utilized for the purposes of defence. Although every lock on the Itchen is now in ruins or choked by weeds, and the last of its fleet of brown-sailed barges is derelict, this is essentially a city whose origin goes back to the days when those who, coming cautiously up from Southampton Water, reached at length the practical part of the valley, where they built their stronghold under the shelter of the downs, yet within easy reach of the sea. It was by means of barges that much of the stone was brought for the building of the numerous churches and monastic buildings. This was brought from the Binstead Quarries in the Isle of Wight, from the Purbeck Quarries in Dorset, and possibly from Portland as well.

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There is ample evidence that Winchester was a British city (Caer-Gwent), and the Venta Belgarum of Roman days, when it was connected by roads with the other Roman cities of Andover, Silchester, Porchester, and Salisbury. With the taking of the town by the Saxons in 495 it became known as Wintanceastre, and here, after the final subjection of the Britons, the capital of Wessex was established. If the claim of Canterbury to be the "Mother City" of the Anglo-Saxon race be granted, few will deny to Winchester the honour of being her eldest and her fairest daughter. A royal city was this when Birinus, the apostle of Wessex, came hither in 634, on his way to the Oxfordshire Dorchester, to baptize the King of the West Saxons; and in 679 the episcopal see was established, a cathedral built, and a monastic house attached to it. It was from Wintanceastre that Egbert sent forth the decree which gave the name of Anglia to his kingdom; and here, by the tranquil waters of the Itchen, Alfred (with his friend, adviser, and tutor, St. Swithun), Athelstan, and Canute held their Courts, and directed their policies.

It was during the reign of Athelstan that the redoubtable Guy, Earl of Warwick, returning to England in the garb of a palmer from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, found the Danes besieging Winchester in great force, and King Athelstan unable to find a champion willing to meet the Danish giant, Colbrand, in order to decide the issue by single combat. The Earl, retaining his disguise as a palmer, begged the king to let him appear as the English champion.

[Illustration: *The city bridge*]

This singular combat, which was to decide the fate of the city, commenced by Guy breaking his spear on the giant's shield, and the Dane cutting the head off the Earl's horse. Guy then fought on foot, and, beating the club out of his opponent's hand, cut off his arm. So the duel waged until night, when the Dane, faint from loss of blood, fell to the ground, and his head was cut off by the English champion. Having settled the affair to the honour of his country and his own satisfaction, the Earl made himself known to the King, under an oath of secrecy, and returned thanks in the cathedral for his victory. He then retired to a hermitage beside the Avon, and passed the remainder of his life in the cave which still bears his name, and probably contains his bones.

Several modern antiquaries are very sceptical about the whole story, and labour hard to prove that Guy was a mythical figure, and his deeds nothing but legendary lore. There is always some truth in these old legends, in spite of the frills and embellishments added by the later chroniclers, and the history of our land would be poor reading indeed if we banished the romantic legends merely because they are not confirmed by such dry-as-dust evidence as alone will satisfy a certain section of scientific compilers, whose minds can perceive neither truth nor beauty underlying ancient legends and traditions. The fact that they cannot be proved to have happened is more than half their charm, and our garden of romance, with its beautiful flowers of chivalry, is infinitely better to live with than the dry and parched fields given over to the cultivation of nothing but facts.

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The defeat of the Danish giant is said to have been achieved in a meadow to the north of the city, named from that occurrence “Danemark Mead”; and we are told also that the Dane’s sword was to be seen in the Cathedral treasury down to the reign of James I. Be this as it may, we do know that in the eighth year of Edward I a writ of right was brought by the King against the Abbot of Hyde, to recover land usurped in the north suburb of the city, called “Denemarche”, and judgment was given for the crown.

The appearance of the city in Saxon days has been described thus by Dean Kitchin: “The three Minsters, which filled up the south-eastern corner of the city, were for long the finest group of churches and dwellings in all England. Wolvesey Palace, at once the school, the court of justice, and the royal dwelling place, formed the bulwark against the dreaded invasions of the Dane; inwards from Wolvesey precincts came the strong enclosure of St. Swithun’s Convent, a second fortress, which protected the church, and behind both, sheltered by their strong walls and by the river and the marshlands to the north, were the growing buildings of the Nuns’ Minster, and the new Minster. And up the rising towards the west, on either side of the ancient Roman road from the eastward gate of the city, the houses of the citizens began to cluster into a street, with here and there a stone-built dwelling, and the rest made of that ‘wattle and dab’ construction, of which from time to time examples are still laid bare in the city.”

Although many historical persons flit across the scene throughout the centuries, the personal associations of Winchester are dominated by the outstanding figures of Alfred, St. Swithun, and the great clerical craftsman, William of Wykeham, the builder of much of the cathedral, and the founder of St. Mary’s College, Winchester, and New College, Oxford—the former of which, although of later foundation, was intended as a stepping-stone for the latter.

With the Norman Conquest, and the rapid rise of Westminster, the days of Winchester as the seat of government were numbered, although it was much favoured by the early Norman kings, possibly owing to its proximity to such hunting grounds as the New Forest Cranborne Chase (where King John’s hunting lodge still stands), and the Royal Warren of Purbeck.

William I had his great palace near the cathedral, and it was to Winchester that the body of William Rufus was brought on a cart, after his ill-fated death in the New Forest.

Then the Domesday Book—if not compiled at Winchester—was kept there for many years, when it was called “The Book of Winton”. In the seventh year of Henry II a charge appears in the Pipe Roll for conveying the “arca”, in which the book was kept, from Winchester to London.

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There is naturally much in the life-history of St. Swithun that is incapable of proof. He was possibly born in the neighbourhood of Winchester about the year 800. He became a monk of the old abbey, and rose to be head of the community, when he gained the favour of King Egbert, who entrusted him with the education of his son Ethelwolf. There is an authentic charter granted by Egbert in 838, and bearing the signatures of Elmstan, *episcopus*, and Swithunus, *diaconus*. On the death of Elmstan, in 852, Swithun was appointed his successor in the see, when, in addition to erecting several churches, and building a stone bridge over the Itchen, he appears to have enlarged and beautified the Saxon cathedral built by Kynewalch when Winchester became the seat of a bishopric in 679. The site of this Saxon church is considered to have been a little to the north of the present cathedral, which is a Norman building commenced by Walkelin a few years after the Conquest.

St. Swithun is best known to-day in his capacity of weather prophet. In his humility he is said to have desired to be buried outside the church, so that the foot of the passer-by, and the rainwater from the eaves, could fall upon his grave; and here his body lay for more than a century. When his remains were eventually translated, a chapel was erected over the site of his grave at the north-east corner of the church, and faint traces of this building may still be seen. King Edgar provided the richly jewelled shrine into which the relics of the saint were translated by St. Ethelwold, on July 15, 980, when the relics of Birinus were enshrined at the same time, although these had already been translated from Dorchester to Winchester by Bishop Hedda as early as the seventh century. The shrine attracted an immense number of pilgrims until that of Becket at Canterbury rose into prominence. The skull of St. Swithun is said to have been taken to Canterbury by St. Elphege in the eleventh century, and an arm of this patron saint of Winchester was one of the most treasured possessions of Peterborough. What remained of these much-disturbed relics were re-translated by Bishop Walkelin from the old to the new cathedral, but in 1241 the shrine was broken by the vane of the tower falling through the roof.

At the Reformation the shrine was destroyed, as is recorded in the commissioners' letter, dated September 21, 1538:—

“About three o'clock this Saturday morning, we made an end of the shrine here at Winchester. There was no gold, nor ring, nor true stone about it, but all great counterfeits; but the silver alone will amount to 2000 marks.”

The popular tradition regarding St. Swithun's Day, July 15, is to the effect that, as it rains or is fair on this day, the ensuing forty days will be either wet or dry.

“St. Swithun's Day, if thou dost rain,
For forty days it will remain:
St. Swithun's Day, if thou be fair,
For forty days 't will rain nae mair.”

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The tradition is said to be due to the saintly request being disregarded, with the result that, when his remains were about to be translated, a heavy rain burst forth, and continued without ceasing for the forty succeeding days. This was interpreted as a divine warning, so that, instead of disturbing the saintly bones, a chapel was erected over them. As a matter of fact, Professor Earle and other authorities assure us that the legend is fictitious, and that the translation was attended by the utmost eclat and success, and blessed with fine weather.

[Illustration: *Winchester cathedral from the deanery gardens*]

Foreign pilgrims coming from Normandy and Brittany, on their way to the shrine of St. Swithun, or to that of St. Thomas of Canterbury, would land, many of them, at Southampton, and journey to Winchester, there to await other bands of pilgrims bound for the great Kentish shrine. This was the route taken by Henry II when he did penance before the tomb of the murdered Becket, in July, 1174. Although clearly seen in the wold of Surrey and the weald of Kent at the present time, it must be confessed that but faint traces of the Pilgrims' Way remain in Hampshire, although early chroniclers speak of an old road that led direct from Winchester to Canterbury. The great concourse of pilgrims to St. Swithun's shrine caused Bishop Lucy to enlarge much of the church, and in the reign of the first Edward the building still known as the Strangers' Hall was erected by the monks of St. Swithun for the poorer class of pilgrims, who here found food and shelter for the night. On their departure they repaired to the doors of the Prior's lodging—the three beautiful arches of which now form the entrance to the Deanery—where they were given alms and fragments of food to sustain them on their journey.

The associations of Alfred with this ancient Wessex capital are many and various. He founded the famous Abbey of Hyde, situated without the city gates, known for long as the New Minster, and first removed from its original site near the cathedral in the twelfth century. That Alfred's remains were laid to rest somewhere within, or just without, the walls is beyond question, although the exact spot has not yet been definitely located. When the Benedictine monks of Hyde obtained a charter from Henry I in 1110, giving them leave to erect a new convent and church in the green meadows outside the north gate, they are said to have taken to their new home the wonder-working shrine of St. Josse, the silver cross given by Canute, and the bones of Alfred.

At the Reformation, Thomas Wriothesley wrote to Cromwell saying:—

“We intend both at Hyde and St. Mary to sweep away all the rotten bones that be called relics; which we may not omit, lest it be thought we came more for the treasure than for the avoiding of th' abomination of idolatry”.

So the resting-place of the noblest of English kings remains unknown; but a passing antiquary is said to have carried off a stone marked with the words, "AELFRED *Rex*, DCCCLXXXI", and this stone may still be seen at Corby Castle in Cumberland.

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Of Hyde Abbey nothing but an old gateway near St. Bartholomew's Church, and some slight fragments of wall, remain; but a considerable portion was standing until the ruins were pulled down to provide the site for a new Bridewell, which has vanished in its turn. The property has now come into the hands of the Corporation, and scientific excavations have been commenced. Strong hopes are entertained that Alfred's tomb may be found, although the iconoclasts of the Reformation and the Magistrates of later days have made the task a difficult, if not an impossible one. In 1901 Alfred's thousandth anniversary was celebrated at Winchester, and on September 20 of that year Lord Rosebery unveiled Hamo Thorneycroft's magnificent bronze statue, standing in the Broadway, and bearing on its granite pedestal the single word, eloquent in its simplicity:—

AELFRED.

Interesting and important as are the associations of Alfred and St. Swithun with this ancient capital of Wessex, the *genius loci* is William of Wykeham, one of the most remarkable men the world has ever produced. The more we study his life and character the more we are amazed at the versatile nature of his splendid gifts. Born, like Wolsey, the only other clerical architect with whom he can be compared, of humble parents, in the sleepy little village of Wickham, in the autumn of 1324, he early attracted the attention of Sir John Scures, the lord of the manor of Wickham, and Constable of Winchester Castle. By Sir John's influence he became a scholar at the Priory School, the "Great Grammar School of Winchester", then situated just outside the west wall of the priory enclosure. Taught by the brethren of St. Swithun's, he was eventually recommended to Bishop Edington, who appears to have appreciated the great talent for architecture shown by young Wykeham. Edington himself was no mean builder, and he had already begun to rebuild the west front of the cathedral, and to transform the nave from the Norman to the Perpendicular style, a transformation that was to be completed by Wykeham when he succeeded his old master in the episcopacy.

In Wykeham's twenty-third year Edward III came to Winchester, and he, having heard of the clever young architect, wished to test his skill in the warfare then being waged against Scotland and France, and particularly in the new fortifications of Calais. On taking service with the King, plain William Wykeham became Sir William de Wykeham, and as Surveyor of Works he superintended such buildings as St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, and the castles of Dover and Queensborough. In 1356 he was in charge of Windsor Castle, which, as his birthplace, Edward wished to beautify by many additions. It has been said that the Round Tower Wykeham built at Windsor made the fortune of its designer. We now find Wykeham Warden of all the royal castles, and sub-dean of the church of St. Martins-le-Grand, on the site of which is the General Post Office; and as a public notary he was present at the signing of the Treaty of Bretigny.

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Possibly owing to the dearth of clergy caused by the Black Death, Wykeham, after the laying-on of hands by his old master, Bishop Edington, became an acolyte in the December of 1361, a sub-deacon in the March following, and priest in the June of 1362. A few years later, when Edington was laid to rest within his cathedral, a sharp controversy arose between the King and the Pope as to who should succeed. The differences, which need not be discussed here, being eventually settled to the satisfaction of both parties, Wykeham was offered the vacant see, when he said to the King:

“Sire, I am unworthy, but wherein I am wanting myself, that will I supply by a brood of more scholars than all the prelates of England ever showed”.

And how worthily he fulfilled his promise is a matter of history.

To quote the authors of *Historic Winchester*:

“There was a great stir in the old city when the day of Wykeham’s enthronement arrived. It was the 9th of July, and the town would be looking especially beautiful in its bower of trees; an outrider had announced the bishop before he entered the city, probably by the north gate, and either here or at the entrance to the close he was met by the Archdeacon of Northampton, William Athey by name, who was commissioned to enthrone him: having saluted, the Archdeacon alighted from his palfrey, which according to the custom at that time was with all its trappings taken possession of by this ecclesiastic.... The bishop’s robing most probably took place at the priory close by, from whence the procession, forming in the cloisters under the direction of Hugo de Basyng, prior of St. Swithun’s, would pass to the west door, where it would be joined by the heads of the other monasteries in and near Winchester—Thomas de Pechy, Abbot of Hyde, holding highest rank amongst them. Next would follow long lines of monks clad in their robes of brown, black, white, or grey, according to their order, and then many a layman, gathered in from the country round to honour both Church and State on this occasion. The great procession, gorgeous with embroidered cope and many a rich vestment, with episcopal staff and crozier both of prior and abbot carried aloft, must have formed an imposing spectacle as it filed up the long nave of the cathedral, thronged, doubtless, to overflowing by many citizens—for unusual interest would be evinced by Winchester in this enthronement of one long known to them, now Chancellor of England and certainly, next to the King and Archbishop, the greatest man in the country.”

As bishop, Wykeham found plenty to do, apart from his ecclesiastical duties, in repairing his various palaces, and in housing the predecessors of his Winchester scholars in a house on St. Giles’s Hill, until such time as he could give them fitting buildings and a chapel of their own. But before Wykeham could see his schemes take an architectural form, he was

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to suffer the loss of royal favour owing to the death of the Black Prince and the rise into power of his enemy, John of Gaunt. The bishop was charged with the misappropriation of a small sum of money, and, judgment being given against him, the temporalities of the see of Winchester were seized, and he was forbidden to come within twenty miles of the Court. He retired to Waverley Abbey, of which some picturesque ruins remain, near Farnham; and although on the King's jubilee pardon was granted to all offenders, a special exception was made in the case of "Sire William de Wykeham".

[Illustration: *Wykeham's chantry*]

This was more than the heads of the Church could stand, especially as the original charge was an unjust one; so at the ensuing meeting of Convocation, Courtenay, then Bishop of London, declared boldly that unless their favourite bishop was reinstated in office, no money would be forthcoming from the clergy. In less than a month the pressing need of funds caused the King to send a messenger to Waverley and beg Wykeham to return to his house at Southwark. This was the first step, which, however, did not mean an immediate return to the temporalities, as these had been settled on the youthful heir apparent, Richard; but the people took up Wykeham's cause, and on June 18, 1377, in the presence of the little Richard, his uncle, and the King's council, Wykeham promised to fit out three galleys for sea, in return for the temporalities of Winchester. Two days later Edward III died, forsaken by his mistress, Alice Perrers, and estranged from the one man who had served him so long and so faithfully.

The architectural genius of Wykeham as exhibited at St. Mary's College and the cathedral at Winchester, and at New College, Oxford, originally founded as "St. Maries' College of Winchester at Oxenford", marks a very decided epoch in the development of English architecture. His works, in an architectural style found nowhere but in England, are the outcome of a mind free from triviality, and full of common sense. His buildings are admirably suited to their purpose, and at first sight they appear to be so simple in design that it has been suggested that Wykeham cared more for the constructive than the artistic side of building. It is true that he considered sound construction and good proportions of greater importance than a profusion of detail, yet such ornament as is found in his work is highly effective and most carefully studied. To this bishop-architect we undoubtedly owe much of the dignity and simplicity which mark the Early Perpendicular buildings, qualities which make the style such a contrast to the exuberance of that which immediately preceded it, or the over-elaboration of the Tudor buildings that followed it.

With few exceptions, practically the whole of Wykeham's work, both here and at Oxford, remains much as he left it; so that, good bishop, wise administrator, generous founder, and pioneer educationist though he was, it is mainly as a munificent builder and

architectural genius that his fame has lived in the past, and will continue to live in the future.

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Here for the moment we must leave the great prelate of Winchester and begin our perambulation of the city that received him as a youth, welcomed him as a bishop, mourned him when dead, and that still bears on the long nave of its cathedral, and on its famous college, the impress of his manly, robust, and essentially English mind.

By way of a footpath leading from the London and South-Western Railway station, the upper part of the famous High Street can be reached, although the thoroughfare now possesses but few features of interest until we arrive at the old West Gate, a reminder, if such were needed, that Winchester was a heavily fortified and strongly walled city. On the right is Castle Hill, the site of the ancient castle wherein Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, was imprisoned and Matilda besieged, and from whose courtyard William Rufus set out on the hunting expedition to the New Forest which was attended by such fatal consequences. All that now remains of this stronghold is the fine old hall built by Henry III.

For some time this apartment was used as the County Hall, and here Judge Jeffreys opened his Bloody Assize before proceeding to Dorchester, Exeter, and Taunton. Alice Lisle was the widow of John Lisle, who had been Master of St. Cross Hospital, and member for Winchester in the Long Parliament. Although the men of Hampshire had taken no part in Monmouth's Rebellion, many of the fugitives had fled thither, and two of them, John Hickes, a Non-conformist divine, and Richard Nelthorpe, a lawyer, found refuge in the house of Alice Lisle, where they were eventually discovered. At her trial, Alice Lisle stated briefly that, although she knew Hickes to be in trouble, she was quite ignorant of the fact that he had participated in the rebellion. When the jury said they doubted if the charge had been made out, Jeffreys was furious, and after another long consultation they returned a verdict of "Guilty". The next morning the judge pronounced sentence, and ordered the prisoner to be *burned alive* that same afternoon. When remonstrances had poured in from all quarters, Jeffreys consented to the execution being postponed for five days; and the sentence was eventually commuted from burning to hanging. So the first victim of Monmouth's ill-fated rebellion was hanged on a scaffold in the market-place of Winchester.

A striking object hanging at one end of the hall is the top of the reputed Round Table of King Arthur, painted in radiating white and green sections, with a portrait of the famous king inset, crowned and robed, and the Tudor rose in the centre, while around the circumference are the names of the knights in old black-letter characters. Doubtful though it is that the table is the actual one that figures in the Arthurian legends, yet it is certainly of great antiquity, and has been frequently referred to by more than one writer of mediaeval days. It has been conjectured that it may be nothing more than the wheel of fortune which Henry III commanded to be made for the castle. In later years another palace was started here by Charles II, the only portion that was completed being now used as barracks.

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Beyond the West Gate is an obelisk, set up in commemoration of a visitation of the Plague in 1669, when the country people brought their produce and left it outside the gate to be taken in by the city dwellers, who deposited the money for the goods in bowls of vinegar, whence it was abstracted by pincers, to avoid infection. The stone on which the exchanges were made is incorporated in the base of the obelisk.

The West Gate is the only one that remains of the principal entrances to the city, as King's Gate, with the little church of St. Swithun perched on top, was of secondary importance. This West Gate escaped the fate that has overtaken so many of our old city gates owing to its having been used for some time as a smoking room for the adjacent hotel. This apartment above the crown of the gateway arch is, like that over the West Gate of Canterbury, used for the purposes of a museum, wherein are deposited such interesting relics as the Winchester bushel, cloth measures, and ancient instruments of punishment. At one time the room was used as a prison, and the walls are covered with names or marks made by those who were incarcerated here.

The gate is of fourteenth-century date, the two panels with armorial bearings seen on the western side of the archway being later insertions. Through the gateway a delightful view is obtained of the picturesque High Street, with many a high-pitched gable rising above the masses of irregular architecture; while an ancient clock on a wooden bracket juts out from the old Queen Anne Guildhall, which has a statue of Her Majesty over the entrance, the Curfew Tower rising on one side of the building. A new Guildhall of greater architectural pretensions has been erected in the Broadway, the original one being now used as a shop.

[Illustration: *The butter cross*]

From the West Gate the High Street slopes down to the Itchen. On the right stands the old Butter Cross, in rather a cramped position. Two reasons have been given for its name: one, that during Lent, those wishing to eat butter could do so by consuming it by the cross; the other, and more probable, explanation is that here came farmers wishing to dispose of their butter, which they exposed for sale on the steps of the cross. The structure is of fifteenth-century date, but has been much restored, the only original figure on it being that of St. Amphibalus. Just beside the cross is the interesting little opening that leads into the Close, and in which is the entrance to St. Lawrence Church, of which nothing is visible from this point but the doorway, and the tower rising above the surrounding houses. This church has been said to be the Mother Church of the diocese of Winchester, an idea that may have owed its origin to the fact that before proceeding to the Cathedral to be enthroned the bishops designate enter this ancient church to robe and "ring themselves in". Only the other day, May 6, 1911, Dr. Talbot followed this old custom, and the people listened eagerly for the number of rings, as these are supposed to denote the number of years the bishop will be at the head of the diocese. It may be of interest to chronicle that Dr. Talbot rang nine times.

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Near the church at one time was an open space called the Square, where were situated the Pillory and Whipping Post. The palace of William I is said to have occupied this site, and St. Lawrence's Church may possibly have been the private chapel of the royal residence. A fragment of Norman masonry gives a certain amount of probability to the supposition, while at the beginning of last century some workmen excavating in Market Street came across the foundations of an ancient tower, of great thickness and strength. The present arched and narrow entrance from High Street leads to the fine avenue of limes that forms the principal approach to the west front of the Cathedral, begun by Edington *circa* 1360, the severe simplicity of which has been much criticized, Ruskin assailing it furiously in the *Stones of Venice*. On the apex of the gable is a canopied niche containing a statue of Wykeham.

The present edifice is thought to stand approximately on the site of the earlier Saxon church restored by Ethelwold in 980, in which Queen Emma underwent the "fiery ordeal" by walking blindfold and barefooted over nine red-hot plough-shares, thus proving her innocence of the charges brought against her, and furnishing her accusers with an example of what female chastity is able to accomplish. The main portion of the structure as seen to-day was begun by Bishop Walkelin about 1079, and completed some fourteen years later. It is the longest of English churches, measuring externally 566 feet, and internally 562-1/2 feet, being a few feet longer than St. Alban's, which has the same plan; although we must remember that when the nave of Winchester terminated at the west in two large towers the whole mass was 40 feet longer than at present.

The vista of the whole block of masonry, with its stumpy tower and heavily buttressed walls, conveys the idea of immense strength rather than of gracefulness; while its situation at the bottom of a hill, and near the bank of the river, is one of great charm.

It is when the nave is entered that the full beauty and vast proportions of the Norman church are revealed, for this is in essence a Norman building encased with Perpendicular details and additions. As Wykeham's alterations were merely added to the original piers, the stateliness of the whole remains. Full credit, of course, must be given to Wykeham for the wonderful skill he showed in this work of transformation, and in removing the heavy triforium, although the grandeur of the nave as a whole is due to the combined work of Walkelin and Wykeham. This alteration of styles in the nave was begun by Edington, continued by Wykeham, and completed by his successors in the see—Cardinal Beaufort and Bishop Waynflete—who built the stone vaulting of the roof. The tower at the intersection of the transepts is the second of its kind, the first, built by Walkelin, having fallen in 1107, owing, says tradition, to the wicked Red King having been buried beneath it. Of its rebuilding there are no records.

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So many detailed architectural histories of the building have appeared that its principal features must be familiar to every lover of our national architecture. There are, however, one or two features about this cathedral that should be noted. Apart from its great length, which is greater than any church in the world, with the exception of St. Peter's at Rome, it is remarkable for its parclose screens, with the mortuary chests upon them; and for the beauty and number of its chantries, in which it is richer than any other English cathedral. They are said to have been saved from destruction during the Civil War by the Parliamentary colonel, Fiennes, an old Wykehamist; and certain historians describe the dramatic incident of the colonel standing with drawn sword to protect the chantry of the founder of his Alma Mater from the iconoclastic tendencies of his troopers. The chantries number seven, and were built as chapels by bishops for their last resting-places. Within these chantries are the tombs of Edington, Wykeham, Waynflete, Beaufort, Gardiner, Langton, and Fox, all of whom were bishops of the diocese. Fox's chantry was carefully restored by Corpus Christi College, Oxford; and that of Waynflete by Magdalen College, as a mark of reverence and esteem for the memory of their respective founders.

The first to be seen on entering the nave from the west is that of Wykeham, whose faith in the solidity of Norman building was so great that he did not hesitate to cut away more than a third of the two nave pillars between which it is placed. Within the chapel, said to have been built on the site of an altar to the Virgin, is the effigy of the bishop-builder, with flesh and robes coloured "proper", as the heralds say; and at his feet are the figures of his three favourite monks, to whom he left an endowment for the celebration of three masses daily in his chantry, while each was to receive one penny a day from the prior. The effigy lies on an altar tomb, in episcopal attire, the head-pillow supported by two angels. Five bays farther on is Edington's chantry, but without effigy, as also are those of Fox and Langton. Of the seven chantries those of Fox and Beaufort are usually considered the most beautiful.

The proud Cardinal Beaufort, founder of the "Almshouse of Noble Poverty" at St. Cross, is represented by Shakespeare as dying in despair:

"Lord Cardinal, if thou think'st on Heaven's bliss
Hold up thy hand: make signal of thy hope.
He dies, and makes no sign!"

Dean Kitchin writes: "One cannot look at his effigy, as it lies in his stately chantry, without noting the powerful and selfish characteristics of his face, and especially the nose, large, curved, and money-loving. The sums Beaufort had at his disposal were so large that he was the Rothschild of his day. More than once he lent his royal masters enough money to carry them through their expeditions."

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The mortuary chests are certainly among the most interesting things possessed by any English cathedral. They are supposed to contain the bones of Kings Eadulph, Kinegils, Kenulf, Egbert, Canute, Rufus, Edmund, Edred, Queen Emma, and Bishops Wina and Alwyn. They no doubt got much mixed up when removed from the crypt by Henry de Blois, and again when the chests were broken open by the Parliamentarians, so that a detailed identification has been made impossible. It is now generally acknowledged that the bones of Rufus are in one of these chests, and that the so-called Rufus tomb in the retro-choir is the burial place of some great ecclesiastic. Such at any rate is the opinion of Dean Kitchin, who has done so much to elucidate the past history of the city and its Cathedral.

When one of these boxes was taken recently out of its enclosing chest and examined, it was found to have a roof something like a low gable, which was decorated with painting about a century later than the time of de Blois. On the outside appeared the words in Latin: "Here are together the bones of King Kinegils and of Ethelwolf". Four of the Italian chests that held the inner boxes were the gift of Bishop Fox. The other chests have revealed five complete sets of human bones, and among the remains in another were the bones of a female, possibly those of Queen Emma.

[Illustration: ENTRANCE TO THE DEANERY]

The visitor will not fail to have pointed out to him by the well-informed vergers the innumerable features of interest, such as the Lady Chapel, the retro-choir, the Holy Hole where the relics were kept, the black oak stalls of the choir, the fine pulpit given by Prior Silkstede, and the magnificent screen begun by Beaufort and completed by Fox. The monuments, apart from those contained in the chantries, are many, and include one surmounted by a beautifully wrought cross-legged effigy, which has not yet been identified. There are memorials or tombs of James I and Charles I, by le Suer, who wrought the statue of the latter at Charing Cross; Dr. Warton, Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and headmaster of Winchester; Jane Austen; and William Unwin, the intimate friend of Cowper. A flat stone, with an inscription by his brother-in-law, Ken, marks the resting-place of Izaak Walton, "whose book", a modern writer tells us, "makes the reader forget for the time the cruelty of his sport".

The curiously carved font, whereon are depicted symbolical figures and incidents from the legendary life of St. Nicholas of Myra, bears much similarity to three others found in Hampshire—at St. Michaels', Southampton; East Meon; and St. Mary Bourne. They are all of the same era, and possibly the work of the same hand, being among the most interesting of our Norman fonts. The material of which they are made has never been settled, some authorities defining it as Tournai marble, others as basalt, and yet others as nothing more than slate.

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The roll of bishops is a remarkable one, and the see has had eleven who were also Lord Chancellors, the last being Wolsey in 1529.

As we have seen, Winchester continued in favour with the reigning houses long after it had ceased to be a royal residence. Here Henry I was married to the Saxon Matilda, and here in the closing years of his life the aged Wykeham married Henry IV and Joan of Navarre; and here, too, came Philip of Spain and Henry VIII's sad daughter, Mary of England, to be wedded before the high altar, the chair on which the royal bride sat being still shown to visitors.

For the architectural student the plan of the cathedral is not the least interesting feature of the building, for although it has an ambulatory which is semicircular internally, the plan is in other respects rather exceptional. It is what architects call a periapsidal plan, meaning that its eastern termination contains a processional aisle or ambulatory, designed mainly for the purpose of allowing a procession to pass round the high altar without entering the presbytery. In the crypt of Winchester Cathedral the plan of the early Norman church may be seen *sui generis*. A rather exceptional feature is that the eastern ambulatory is semicircular within but rectangular without, although the long chapel that projects from this ambulatory has an apsidal, not a rectangular, termination.

To the receptive mind all our ancient cathedrals, and a few of our modern ones, possess a subtle atmosphere of their own, indescribable but plainly felt, both within and without their walls. In such an atmosphere we lose sight of the Winchester of to-day. It becomes ancient, ecclesiastical, historical, learned, and romantic. Here we return in imagination to the scenes of the Middle Ages, when love was attested by chivalrous deeds of arms done in honour of bright eyes, and poetry sounded its lyre in praise of him who had been most devoted to his Church, most faithful to his mistress, and most loyal to his king. As a whole, this Cathedral of Winchester is a vast building, simple almost to a fault, yet one that possesses a solemn repose unspeakably restful to mind and spirit—a sense of undisturbed harmony and refined yet massive simplicity. Towards eventide the shadows of the turrets and pinnacles creep, day by day, over the surrounding bands of greensward, their cool greys advancing inch by inch until they reach the spacious pavements, whereon they cast the symbols of our Christian faith in ruddy trefoil-headed slants of glory.

Whatever else is omitted from the history of the Cathedral, mention must be made of the valiant efforts that have been and are still being made to preserve the stability of the structure. A few years ago the east end showed signs of subsidence, and ominous cracks appeared in the north transept, a part of the old Norman church. An examination of the fabric proved that herculean tasks were essential to save this portion of the edifice.

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It was agreed that only by extensive underpinning could the work be accomplished. It has been very costly, and funds are most urgently needed to complete the preservation, not only of the eastern end, but of the whole Cathedral. The cradle of woodwork erected to give temporary support to the eastern superstructure cost over a thousand pounds to fix, and up to date many thousands of pounds have been spent on the work. It was not until these temporary supports had been fixed and excavations begun that the magnitude of the task was fully revealed. The Cathedral was found to have been built on an old "water-bed" having a foundation of peat, the distance between the ground level and the firm gravel beneath the peat being 27 feet. The only hope of saving the east end was to remove the peat and fill in the spaces with concrete and cement. With the removal of the peat, however, there was so great an influx of water that pumping was of no avail. Two of the best divers in the kingdom were then procured, and by working on their backs and sides in 15 feet of muddy water they succeeded in laying the concrete bed. Owing to the same cause, the remainder of the structure will, sooner or later, have to be treated in the same way, and the thorough restoration of the west front cannot be long postponed. The difficulty of the work is realized when we consider that it takes a whole month to underpin 4 feet of foundation. Owing to the cramped space and the darkness three weeks are spent in excavation; after which the divers require a week to place the concrete and cement in position. That so national a heritage will be saved, for the delight of our own and the instruction of future generations, must be the wish of all true lovers of the great building achievements of the past.

The cathedral precincts are in excellent keeping with the repose and beauty of the building to which they form the court, and are full of historical memories. The palace of the Conqueror reached from Great Minster Street to Market Street, from High Street to the Square; and eastwards rose the "New Minster", and the Nuns' Abbey of St. Mary.

To-day the greater part of the Close, with the Deanery and the various canonical residences, lies on the south side. Only a few slight fragments remain of the cloisters, the destruction of which could not have been considered possible by Wykeham. They were taken down by Bishop Horne in the reign of Elizabeth. The short row of Norman arches seen from the Close belonged to the old Chapter House, which is said to have been pulled down for the sake of its lead. The Deanery was the ancient house of the Priors, of which it contains many interesting memorials. Here are the Great Hall, now subdivided, and the Hospitium, used as stables. The Deanery entrance has three pointed arches, beneath which, as we have stated, the poor pilgrims and other wayfarers received food and alms. On his numerous visits to Winchester, Charles II used to lodge at the Deanery, until Prebendary Ken (afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells) refused to allow Nell Gwynne to enter the house, with the result that she had to content herself with an inferior residence outside the precincts.

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Of Wykeham's "College of St. Marie", or New College, Oxford, this is not the place to speak, especially as it has already been dealt with in the "Oxford" volume of this "Beautiful England" series. His other "College of St. Mary", or, as it is commonly known, Winchester College, has a history extending far beyond that of most of our great public schools; and Winchester was celebrated for its educational institutions in Saxon days.

[Illustration: WINCHESTER COLLEGE: THE OUTER GATEWAY FROM "ARCADIA"]

Wykeham's idea in founding these two colleges was one for which he had no precedent before him, so that his design was to a large extent in the nature of an experiment. His idea, of course, was to enable those who proceeded from the Winchester to the Oxford College to receive a systematic and continuous education. Where Wykeham led, others were not long in following. Two of his successors in the see of Winchester, Waynflete and Fox, gave to Oxford the beautiful colleges of Magdalen and Corpus Christi respectively. Archbishop Chichele, one of Wykeham's first scholars, built St. Bernard's College, now St. John Baptist's, which he gave to the Cistercians before its completion; and later in life he founded the College of All Souls, while in his native village of Higham Ferrers, Northants, he built and endowed a school, bede-house, and church, which are among some of the loveliest pieces of building we possess. Henry VI made himself intimately acquainted with the works of Wykeham, and copied them for his two colleges of Eton, and King's College, Cambridge. Until Wykeham's time, schools had been under or connected with monastic houses; now they were distinct foundations, with priests still as masters, but priests secular and not religious. Wykeham was, indeed, the pioneer of the public-school system, of which, with all its shortcomings, England is so justly proud.

Each of the bishop's colleges took about six years in building, and that at Oxford was the first to be finished. It must have been a proud day for Winchester when, on March 28, 1393, the "seventy faithful boys", headed by their master, came in procession from St. Giles's Hill, where they had been temporarily housed, and, all chanting psalms, entered into possession of their fair college.

The buildings have been but little altered since their founder's day, and extend now, as then, on the south side of the Close, and along the bank of the Itchen. They consist mainly of two quadrangles, in the first of which, entered from College Street by a gateway, are the Warden's house and other offices. Here is the brewhouse, quite unaltered; but the Warden's house has absorbed the old bakehouse, slaughterhouse, and butcher's room. Over the second archway are figures of the Virgin, with Gabriel on her right, and Wykeham kneeling on her left. Here was a room for the Warden, from which he could see all who entered or left the college; and here also is the site of the old penthouse under

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which the scholars used to perform their ablutions, and which they called “Moab”. The old Society comprised the Warden, ten Fellows, three Chaplains, sixteen Queristers, and seventy scholars. The boys, the chaplains, and the choristers lived within the inner quadrangle, the northern side of which is formed by the chapel and the refectory. The original chapel, with the exception of the beautiful fan-groining of its roof, was much defaced in the seventeenth century, but was restored in the nineteenth, when a new reredos was added. The refectory remains practically untouched, and has a roof enriched with some beautiful carved woodwork, the painted heads of kings and bishops, and some great mullioned windows. Over the buttery is the audit-room, hung with ancient and rare tapestries, and containing a large chest known as Wykeham’s money box. The original schoolroom was in the basement, and has long been put to other uses. The chantry, the beautiful cloisters, and the chapel tower were all built after the founder’s death, but he provided a wooden bell tower, which stood away from the chapel, so that the main building should not be injured by the vibration of the bells. The remaining portions are mostly modern, and the foundation has naturally been much enlarged since Wykeham’s day, the last addition being the gateway in Kingsgate Street, erected as a memorial to the many Wykehamists who fell in the South African War.

On the wall of a passage adjoining the kitchen is a singular painting, supposed to be emblematical of a “trusty servant”, compounded of a man, a hog, a deer, and an ass. The explanatory words beneath it are attributed to Dr. Christopher Jonson, headmaster from 1560 to 1571.

With the completion of Winchester College, Wykeham turned his attention to the Cathedral, although he was then seventy years of age. He lived to see his munificence bearing good fruit, and his foundations flourishing in reputation and usefulness; so that when he lay down to die, on September 27, 1404, in his palace of Bishops’ Waltham, he could look back to a long life spent in the service of his Maker. The funeral procession moved slowly along the ten miles that separated palace from Cathedral through crowds of people mourning his loss. At the Cathedral door the prior met the procession, and the great bishop-builder was laid to rest in the beautiful chantry he had himself prepared. Four days before his death he made and signed his will, in which he bestowed gifts and legacies with the liberality that was so marked a characteristic of his life. That crowds of poor would attend his obsequies he was probably aware, for to each poor person seeking a bounty he bequeathed fourpence, “for the love of God and his soul’s health”. To the Cathedral, on which he had expended so much of his genius, he left money for its completion; and bequeathed to it many precious things, including a cross of gold in which was a piece of the “Tree of the Lord”. Henry IV was forgiven a debt

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of five hundred pounds, and was to have a pair of silver-gilt basins, ornamented with double roses, which were probably given to Wykeham by Edward III, as a special mark of his favour. So we take leave of this master builder and munificent bishop, whose motto "Manners makyth man" is known the world over. The inscription on his tomb tells us of his works, but Wykeham needs no inscription so long as the stones of the Cathedral hold together, and his two fair colleges raise their buttressed walls beside the waters of the Isis and the Itchen.

[Illustration: THE CLOISTERS, WINCHESTER COLLEGE]

Returning to the Butter Cross, the Piazza adjoining reminds one of the Butter Walk at Dartmouth, and the famous "Rows" of Chester. It was used for many years as a market where the country folk brought their produce, being then known as the "Penthouse". The mints established on the site by Athelstan were noted for the excellence of the coinage made there. In the Westgate Museum an old leaden box is shown which was discovered at Beauworth by a shepherd. It was found to contain some six thousand silver pennies of the coinage of William I and Rufus. In addition to its famous mints Winchester was the chief trading centre of this part of England during mediaeval days. A great woollen trade was carried on with Flanders when the city became one of the "staple" towns, still commemorated by "Staple Gardens", a narrow lane leading out of the north side of High Street, where the great warehouse for the storage of wool once stood. A little below the Queen Anne Guildhall, but on the opposite side of the street, is St. John's Hospital; while another old lane leading off from the main thoroughfare is Royal Oak Passage, at the junction of which with the street is the ancient house known as God-begot House, with some good timberwork and a fine gable. "Jewry" Street recalls to our memory the early settlement of the Jews in Winchester, for the citizens seem to have been more kindly disposed towards this persecuted race than those of the majority of English cities at an early period in their history. Richard of Devizes, in 1189, called Winchester the "Jerusalem of the Jews", and, writing of the massacre and plunder of the Jews in London and other cities, said: "Winchester alone, the people being prudent and circumspect and the city always acting mildly, spared its vermin". The Jews settled in Winchester between the years 1090 and 1290, landing at Southampton and making their way up the Itchen until they came in sight of the old capital of the kingdom. Crossing the river, they entered the city by the East Gate, and finally chose as their abiding-place a site near the north walls, in a thoroughfare then known as "Scowrttenstrete", Shoemakers' Row. The community soon could boast of a synagogue, and were the possessors of several schools. At the bottom of the High Street are the Abbey Gardens, so called from their being on the site of an abbey founded by Ealhswith, King Alfred's

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queen, in which to spend the years of her widowhood. The general plan of the gardens has probably been but little altered since the days when the nuns paced their shady paths in pious meditation. An ancient manuscript of prayers, used by the abbess in the ninth century, is preserved in the British Museum. Ealhswith's son, Edward the Elder, levied a toll from all merchandise passing under the City Bridge by water, and beneath the East Gate by land, for the better support of the abbey founded by his mother. Before the bridge stood the East Gate, and crossing we are in that part of the city known as the "Soke". In the "Liberty of the Soke" the bishop of the diocese had his court, presided over by the bailiff as his deputy. Thus the bishop's jurisdiction was entirely independent of that of the civic authorities. Wolvesey was his palace, and within its walls, now ivy-clad and crumbling to decay, he held his court, with three tithing men and a constable to assist him. Here also was his exchequer, and here he imprisoned those who offended against his laws. All that now remains of the once celebrated episcopal palace of Wolvesey—said, with no authority, to have been so named from the tribute of wolves' heads levied upon the Welsh by King Edgar—are a few ruined walls, of sufficient extent to give one an idea of the strength of the castle in its original state. At Wolvesey King Alfred brought together the scholars who were to aid him in writing the "Chronicles of the Time"; and on the outer walls he hung the bodies of Danish pirates as a warning to those who made periodical raids up the valley of the Itchen.

In the hands of Bishop de Blois the palace became of great importance, and withstood a siege by David, King of Scotland, and Robert, Earl of Gloucester. De Blois was one of those who assisted at the coronation of Henry II, and pulled down the tower when the bishop was absent from the diocese without the royal permission, on a visit to Clugny. Although shorn of much of its former strength, the palace remained a fortress until the fortifications of Winchester were reduced to a heap of ruins by Cromwell.

[Illustration: RUINS OF WOLVESEY CASTLE]

Beyond the City Bridge rises St. Giles's Hill, named after Giles, one of those numerous hermit saints who played so prominent a part in establishing the Christian faith in these islands. The hill is deeply grooved by a railway cutting; on it was held for many centuries a kind of open market or annual fair, which attracted the wealthy merchants of France, Flanders, and Italy. The fair generally lasted a fortnight, during which time all other local business was suspended, the shops closed, and the mayor handed over the keys of the city to the bishop, who claimed large fees from the stall holders. Thirty marks were paid for repairs needed at the Church of St. Swithun, and similar sums were demanded by the abbeys. Bishop Walkelin was granted the tolls of the fair for three days by William Rufus, his kinsman; but in

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the time of Henry III the privilege was extended to sixteen days. The stalls were arranged in long rows, and named according to the goods sold thereon, or after the nationality of the vendors. Thus one row would be named the Street of Caen, another that of Limoges, while the Drapery and Spicery stalls were held by the monks of St. Swithun, who proved themselves energetic traders at the great annual fair, which lasted until modern times, and was removed in due course from St. Giles's Hill into the city. Dean Kitchin writes: "As the city grew stronger and the fair weaker, it slid down St. Giles's Hill and entered the town, where its noisy ghost still holds revel once a year".

At the present day St. Giles's Hill is a pleasant spot from which to view the venerable city. Down the valley, by the Itchen, rises the Hospital and Church of St. Cross, a picturesque and peaceful group of buildings viewed from any position, but particularly so taken in conjunction with the ancient city and the fertile valley threaded by numberless small streams. On the left side of the valley is St. Catherine's Hill, a bold and outstanding spur crowned with a small belt of trees surrounded by a circular earthwork. At one time a chapel dedicated to St. Catherine capped the hill, and slight traces of the building may yet be seen. Here is the interesting maze, said to have been made by a Winchester College boy who was obliged to remain behind during the holidays, but probably of a different origin, some antiquaries holding the opinion that it is of great antiquity, and in some way connected with ecclesiastical penance.

Looking citywards, one can see the towers of many churches rising above the gables and chimneys of the houses. Near at hand are St. Peter's, Cheeshill, and St. John's, the former an interesting little building with a mixture of styles, among which the Norman and Early English predominate, the windows being of a later period. The bell turret is situated at the south-east corner of the building, which, as a whole, gives a singular impression, due to the fact that it is nearly as broad as it is long. St. John's Church is the most interesting in the city, containing as it does a fine rood screen, with the rood-loft stairs still existing in a turret of fifteenth-century date. Other features of interest are the fourteenth-century Decorated screens that enclose the chancel on each side, and an arched recess at the east end of the north wall, containing an altar-tomb with quatrefoil panels supporting shields on which are the symbols of the Passion. The tomb itself bears neither inscription nor date.

Here also are a set of carved bench ends, a Perpendicular pulpit, and an octagonal font.

Unfortunately, most of the other churches of Winchester have been either rebuilt or so altered as to retain very little of their original architecture. The Church of St. Maurice, rebuilt in 1841, has saved a Norman doorway, fragments of a fine Decorated screen which now serve for altar rails, and an ancient chest.

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Like most of our cathedral cities, Winchester is well supplied with charitable institutions, although the best known of them all, the famous Hospital of St. Cross, is situated a mile away from the city proper. The Hospital of St. John, within Winchester, is one of the oldest foundations of the kind in the country, and a portion of the vaulted kitchen remaining in the building may not unreasonably be supposed to have formed part of the almshouse thought to have been founded on the spot in A.D. 935 by St. Brinstan. The chapel connected with the charity dates from the time of the third Henry, and contains a piece of fourteenth-century carving depicting the nimbed head of the Saviour, which is now built into a wall. Considerable doubt exists as to the original founder and early re-founders of this hospital, and little is known concerning it until the time of Edward II, when John Devenish re-founded it. At that period it seems to have been for the "sole relief of sick and lame soldiers, poor pilgrims, and necessitated wayfaring men, to have their lodging and diet there for one night, or longer, as their inability to travel may require". Many influential citizens left money or property to this charity. In 1400 Mark le Faire, Mayor of Winchester, bequeathed to it several houses, including the "great inn called the George", and the "house under the penthouse where Mr. Hodgson died". Richard Devenish, in the time of Henry VI, left a sum of money to provide for a more frequent performance of divine service in the chapel; but in the reign of Henry VIII these and other funds were confiscated, although the building itself was subsequently restored to the Corporation.

[Illustration: BEAUFORT TOWER AND AMBULATORY, ST. CROSS]

After the Reformation, Ralph Lambe re-founded the charity for six poor and needy persons, who were to have six separate homes or chambers within the hospital, each furnished with locks and keys. Each person was to receive ten shillings quarterly, with a gown value ten shillings, and ten shillings' worth of coal yearly. On the election of a new mayor each was to receive two shillings, and any funds remaining were to be divided among the inmates at the discretion of the mayor and aldermen of the city. This institution is still a flourishing one, and the original hall, standing to the west of the chapel, is let as a public dining-hall.

Another old charity was that of St. Mary Magdalene, founded for lepers, in 1173-88, by Bishop Toclyve, the inmates being known locally as "the infirm people upon the hill", now Maun Hill. In early times lepers were required to give up the whole of their personal goods, and one of the questions asked by the official visitor to the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalene was whether the goods of the deceased inmates went to the works of the church after the settlement of debts. The funds of this foundation were much tampered with at various times, and it lost some of its property at the Reformation. One

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of its benefactors left to it four flitches of bacon yearly, this being an important article of diet. The original plan of the hospital was quadrangular: on two sides were the inmates' rooms and the chapel, the remaining sides being occupied by the Master's House and the common hall. The buildings were much damaged in the time of Charles I by the troops stationed there, and again in the reign of Charles II by the Dutch prisoners confined within the hospital. The chapel was pulled down in 1788, and the materials were used for building purposes, when the fine Early Norman doorway was used in the Roman Catholic Church in St. Peter Street, where it may still be seen. This was the west doorway of the ancient hospital chapel. The site is now occupied by a hospital of another character, the isolation hospital, but the old "lepers' well" can still be seen. The charity survives to some extent in six cottages in Water Lane, built in 1788, wherein are housed four men and four women.

In Symond's Street stands the picturesque "Christes Hospital", founded in 1586 by James Symonds. It is generally called the "Bluecoat" Hospital, from the distinctive dress worn by the inmates. A scholastic institution was attached to this charity for the education of four poor boys, chosen by the mayor and corporation, who also elected their teacher. The latter was not to be, in the terms of the founder, either a "Scotchman, an Irishman, a Welshman, a foreigner, or a North-countryman", lest their pronunciation of the English language should suffer.

From among the fertile meadows bordering the banks of the Itchen to the south of Winchester rises the stately grey pile of St. Cross, standing where it has stood for over seven and a half centuries, a witness alike to the munificence of its founders, de Blois and Beaufort, and to the skill of the mediaeval builders.

A good road leads from the city to the pleasing suburb in which the hospital is situated, though a far pleasanter way is by one of the field paths through the meadows.

Henry de Blois became bishop when only twenty-eight years old, and in 1136 he founded the hospital for the entire support of "thirteen poor men, feeble and so reduced in strength that they can hardly or with difficulty support themselves without another's aid"; and they were to be supplied with "garments and beds suitable to their infirmities, good wheate bread daily of the weight of 5 marks, and three dishes at dinner and one at supper, suitable to the day, and drink of good stuff".

Besides this, he provided for a hundred poor men to be supplied daily with dinner. Bishop Toclyve, de Blois's successor in the see, added to the charity the feeding of yet another hundred poor men daily; and it has been said, on somewhat slight evidence, that the poorer scholars of Winchester College dined without fee in the "Hundred Men's Hall".

In 1137 the management of the institution was given over to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem; the cross still worn as a badge by the Brethren is a link with the ancient Order, being the cross *potent*, or Jerusalem cross, which was an insignia of the Kingdom of Jerusalem established by the Crusaders.

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[Illustration: ST. CROSS FROM THE MEADOWS]

Shortly after the death of de Blois a dispute arose between the Hospitallers and the bishop, but after the lapse of many years the management was restored to the latter, then Peter de Rupibus, who appointed Alan de Soke as Master. In 1446, Cardinal Beaufort, Wykeham's successor in the see, added a new foundation to St. Cross, to be called "The Almshouse of Noble Poverty". De Blois's charity had been intended to benefit the very needy; this of Beaufort's was designed for those who had fallen upon evil days after a life of ease and comfort. There were to be two priests, thirty-five brethren, and three sisters. The brethren were to be of gentle birth, or old servants of the founder. The scheme, however, was never completed, owing to the Wars of the Roses intervening, with the result that the estates with which he had intended to endow his almshouse were claimed by the Crown on the accession of the House of York. So it came about that in 1486 Bishop Waynflete was compelled to reduce the recipients of Beaufort's charity to one priest and two brethren. Fortunately, St. Cross was spared at the Reformation, and its endowments were not confiscated. The Vicar-General reported that there were "certain things requiring reformation", and that sturdy beggars were to be "driven away with staves"; also that the Lord's Prayer and the Creed were to be taught in English, and that relics and images were not to be brought out for the devotion of pilgrims. In 1632 Archbishop Laud caused a strict enquiry to be made, with the result that the Master, Dr. Lewis, reported that the fabric was in a state of great dilapidation. This Master lost his post through his loyalty to Church and King, and John Lisle, the regicide, became Master of the Hospital until Cromwell made him a peer, when his place was filled by John Cooke, the Solicitor-General who drew up the indictment against Charles I. Both these regicides met with misfortune, for Cooke was executed and Lisle assassinated, so that at the Restoration Dr. Lewis was restored to the mastership. Between the years 1848 and 1853, chancery suits, costing a large sum of money, resulted in an entirely new scheme being drawn up, under which the two charities were treated as separate foundations under one head. The differences of qualification between the two sets of Brethren are carefully laid down, and a portion of the income is used for the maintenance of fifty out-pensioners, the modern equivalent for the "Hundred Poor Men" of mediaeval days. The distinctive dresses of the Brethren are the same with regard to colour and cut as those worn in the time of Henry VI, those worn by the recipients of Beaufort's charity being of red cloth, with the badge, a cardinal's hat and tassels on a silver plate, worn on the left breast. The Brethren of the older institution, founded by de Blois, wear black gowns, with the silver cross *potent* pinned on the left breast. On the death of a Brother the cross is placed on a red velvet cushion and laid on his breast in the coffin; but before burial the cross is removed and fastened by the Master on the breast of the Brother elected in place of the deceased.

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The Hospital buildings consist of an outer courtyard and gateway, to the right of which are the kitchens, and on the left the old brewhouse and remains of some of the earlier buildings. Immediately facing us is the tower gateway, thoroughly restored, if not built originally, by Cardinal Beaufort, under the groined archway of which is the porter's lodge, where the "Wayfarers' Dole" is still distributed to all who apply at the hatchway, an interesting and almost sole survival of the mediaeval custom by which food and drink were offered to passers-by. The daily dole at the present day consists of two gallons of ale and two loaves of bread, divided into thirty-two portions. The apartment over the archway is the Founder's room, wherein are stored all the ancient documents relating to the foundation. Beaufort's arms appear in one of the spandrels above the gateway arch, the corresponding spandrel exhibiting the ancient regal arms of England. On this side of the entrance are three niches, one of which contains a figure of the cardinal in a kneeling posture. The vacant niche in the south front once held a statue of the Virgin, which fell to the ground more than a century ago, and nearly killed one of the Brethren in its descent.

Passing through this noble gateway, which, somehow or other, does not look as old as we know it to be, we enter the great quadrangle, around which the various buildings are grouped. On the eastern side is the Infirmary, with the Ambulatory beneath it, a long, low cloister of sixteenth-century date, which extends along the whole side to the church. In one of the rooms above, a window opens into the church, where there may once have been a gallery to enable the infirm to hear the services. In 1763 Bishop Hoadley granted a license to the Master to pull down the cloister and use the materials for other purposes, but fortunately this was never done. On the opposite side of the quadrangle are the houses of the Brethren. Each dwelling consists of two rooms and a pantry, and has a garden attached.

The Brethren's Hall stands on the north side of the quadrangle, and is a portion only of the old "Hundred Mennes Hall"; but enough is left to enable one to form a good idea of the original apartment, which measured 36 feet by 24 feet, until a portion was cut off to provide rooms for the Master, who is now lodged in a modern dwelling outside the gates. At the east end of the hall is a table where the officials sat, those for the Brethren being ranged along the sides. Some black-leather jacks, candlesticks, salt-cellars, pewter dishes, and a dinner bell, all dating from Beaufort's time, are still carefully preserved. At the opposite end of the hall is a screen with the minstrels' gallery above, whence, on high days and holidays, the Brethren were enlivened with music during their feastings. The chief festivals of the year were All Saints' Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Twelfth Day, and Candlemas Day, on which occasions the Brethren

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had “extraordinary commons, and on the eve of which days they had a fire of charcoal in the Common Hall, and one jack of six quarts and one pint of beer extraordinary, to drink together by the fire. And on the said feast-day they had a fire at dinner, and another at supper in the said hall, and they had a sirloin of beef roasted, weighing forty-six pounds and a half, and three large mince-pies, and plum broth, and three joints of mutton for their supper, and six quarts and one pint of beer extraordinary at dinner, and six quarts and one pint of beer after dinner, by the fireside; six quarts and a pint at supper, and the like after supper.” During Lent, each brother had eight shillings paid to him instead of commons, and on Palm Sunday the Brethren had a “green fish, of the value of three shillings and fourpence, and their pot of milk pottage with three pounds of rice boiled in it, and three pies with twenty-four herrings baked in them, and six quarts and one pint of beer extraordinary”. On Good Fridays they had at dinner “in their pot of beer a cast of bread sliced, and three pounds of honey, boiled together, which they call honey sop”. Beneath the hall is a fine vaulted cellar, of ample proportions, a worthy resting-place for the stock of St. Cross ale.

[Illustration: THE BRETHREN'S HALL, ST. CROSS]

But, interesting as are all these portions of the Hospital of St. Cross, it is the church which has the greatest attraction for architect and antiquary alike, for it contains good examples of every style. From Romanesque, through Norman and Early English, to Later Decorated, and to Transition Norman, the church is considered to be the best example in existence. This building, unfinished after nearly two hundred years, was roofed with lead, in place of the thatch which originally covered it, by William of Edyndon, the famous Wiltshireman who became Master of St. Cross in the fourteenth century, and who restored the fabric from the ruinous state in which he found it to a condition of beauty and strength. The windows of the clerestory were erected by him; he re-roofed the “Hundred Menne’s Hall”, and built a new chamber for the Master.

On entering the church, through the north porch, one is struck by its loftiness and dignity, the vaulting throughout being of stone, while almost every ornamental feature of the Norman style can be seen. Proceeding to the western end of the church, and looking down the nave, the gradual development of its architecture can be well seen. The east end is Norman, the bay next the transepts Transition Norman, while the west end is Early English. The windows vary from Norman and Transition Norman to Early English, while those of the clerestory are Decorated. Mention must be made of the fine stone screens and tabernacle-work on either side of the altar, the altar slab of Purbeck marble, the triforium of intersecting arches in the choir, and the roof pendants. The western portion of the church was built during the mastership of Peter

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de Sancto Mario, and his fine canopied tomb is a striking object on the north side of the nave. Interesting, too, are the beautiful fourteenth-century tiles, some bearing the appropriate motto “Have Mynde”; and a very human note is struck in the mason’s marks, still to be seen in various parts of the building, especially around the staircase door in the south transept. What these signs actually mean is unknown, but some authorities, notably Leader Scott in her work on *Cathedral Builders*, trace them through the Comacine Guild to the Roman *Collegia*.

In the south-east corner of the south transept, on the exterior of the church, is a “triple-arch”, which is thought to have been a doorway, and may have led to the “clerken-house”, the original habitation of the seven choristers and their master, but which was pulled down by de Cloune, Master of St. Cross in the fourteenth century, who also allowed other parts of the fabric to fall into a state of great dilapidation. Here also, on the south side of the quadrangle, stood the original houses of Beaufort’s foundation, which were not pulled down until 1789.

No groups of buildings are in their way more charming or more impregnated with human associations than the famous episcopal foundation of St. Cross—an asylum of peace and rest, comfort and repose, to those who find shelter within its ancient walls, and a standing monument to the memory of the pious Henry de Blois and the princely churchman, Cardinal Beaufort. Winchester, like many an English city, would be shorn of much of its interest were this benevolent institution to be removed. The general air of peace and quietude, the grass-bordered walks, the stately church, all contribute to convey an appeal which is almost sacred in its simple eloquence. In the words of one who loved it well: “No one can pass its threshold without feeling himself landed, as it were, in another age. The ancient features of the building, the noble gateway, the quadrangle, the common refectory, the cloister, and, rising above all, the lofty and massive pile of the venerable church, the uniform garb and reverend mien of the aged brethren, the common provision for their declining years, the dole at the gatehouse, all lead back our thoughts to days when men gave their best to God’s honour, and looked on what was done to His poor as done to Himself, and were as lavish of architectural beauty on what modern habits might deem a receptacle for beggars, as on the noblest of royal palaces. It seems a place where no worldly thought, no pride, or passion, or irreverence could enter; a spot where, as a modern writer has beautifully expressed it, a good man, might he make his choice, would wish to die.”

The country around this beautiful city by the Itchen is full of quiet charm, for life’s ever-changing drama has but one and the same background. The actors come and go, but the stage remains much the same, and the devotions, the meditations, and the acts of men who lived centuries ago were set in the amphitheatre of the same green hills, and took place beside the same winding river as those we gaze upon to-day.

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[Illustration: PLAN OF WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL]

Literature, too, has worthy names here in Izaak Walton and Jane Austen, both of whom lie buried in the cathedral; while the house at Winchester in which the author of *Persuasion* lived, for a brief period before her death, stands beyond the college gate. Above the door is a wooden tablet recording that here Jane Austen spent her last days, dying July 18, 1817. She had previously resided at Chawton for some eight years, but her house in the village is now a Workmen's Club. At the same time, Chawton is a pretty little spot, watered by land springs, known locally as "lavants"; while some few miles away is Farrington, where Gilbert White, of "Selborne" fame, was curate.

Other literary associations of the Winchester country are those furnished by Hursley, where John Keble was vicar; by Otterbourne, the home for many years of Charlotte Yonge; and by Eversley, where Winchester's immortal son, Charles Kingsley, lies buried.

Each succeeding visit to Winchester can only strengthen one's love for the city, and one's reverence for the Cathedral in its midst. Our pilgrimage of Winchester the beautiful is over.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

At the Villafield Press, Glasgow, Scotland