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978-1-108-05191-0 - A History of the Gothic Revival: An Attempt to Show how the Taste for Medieval Architecture which Lingered in England During the Two Last Centuries has Since been Encouraged and Developed

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Frontmatter

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A History of the Gothic Revival

Charles Locke Eastlake (1833–1906), an interior, furniture and industrial designer, showed talent as an architect and was awarded a Silver Medal in 1854 by the Royal Academy. He is known for influencing the style of later nineteenth-century 'Modern' Gothic furniture with his *Hints on Household Taste* (1868), but his passion for medieval architecture developed much earlier while he was in Europe during the 1850s. In 1866 he became Secretary to the Royal Institute of British Architects, and it was in 1872 that this work was published. The book is notable for being released at the height of the Gothic Revival movement in the later nineteenth century. It includes detailed comments on the architects, societies, literature and buildings that formed the cornerstones of the Gothic Revival, primarily in Britain, from around 1650 to 1870. A valuable mine of information, it remains a key source on the topic.

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Frontmatter

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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Frontmatter

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Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE GOTHIC REVIVAL

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)



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Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

A HISTORY
OF
THE GOTHIC REVIVAL

AN ATTEMPT TO SHOW HOW
THE TASTE FOR MEDLÆVAL ARCHITECTURE
WHICH LINGERED IN ENGLAND DURING THE TWO LAST CENTURIES
HAS SINCE BEEN ENCOURAGED AND DEVELOPED

BY

CHARLES L. EASTLAKE

F.R.I.B.A., ARCHITECT

AUTHOR OF 'HINTS ON HOUSEHOLD TASTE'

*'Sic volvenda ætas commutat tempora rerum,
Quod fuit in pretio, fit nullo denique honore:
Porro aliud succedit, et e contemptibus exit,
Inque dies magis appetitur, floretque repertum
Laudibus, et miro est mortaleis inter honore'*

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Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

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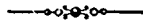
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Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

P R E F A C E.



IF ANY PREFACE to this book be needed, it should perhaps take the form of an ample apology for the time which has elapsed between its original announcement and its publication. During that interval, and in such leisure as more urgent duties left at my disposal, I gradually realised the difficulties of the task which I had undertaken.

It has been said of contemporary history that its events are less easy to ascertain with accuracy than those of past time. For my own part, and in reference to this work, I can testify to the fact that much information which I imagined might be obtained for the asking has cost me more trouble to procure than that which required literary research.

As it is, I fear that the following pages will be found deficient in many details, the omission of which I regret, not because it affects in any material degree the thread of my narrative, but because in describing works of equal merit or importance I had hoped to bestow an equal attention on each, and this, in the absence of necessary particulars respecting some of them, has not always been possible.

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Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi

Preface.

If I have not ventured to dwell at any length on the present prospects of the Revival, or attempted to enter into details respecting the application of Mediæval design to the specific requirements of domestic and ecclesiastical architecture, it is from a conviction that I could add little or nothing to what has been already said on these points. Mr. G. G. Scott's 'Remarks on Secular and Domestic Architecture,' and Mr. Beresford-Hope's 'English Cathedral of the Nineteenth Century,' are works so exhaustive in their nature, and so practical in their aim, that they leave scarcely a plea to urge or a suggestion to advance in the interest of modern Gothic.

My own object, as will be seen, is of a different kind.

For some years past it has seemed to me that the causes which brought about, and the events which attended, one of the most remarkable revolutions in national art that this country has seen were worthy of some record, if only to serve as a link between the past and future history of English Architecture. In attempting to supply this record, it was my intention from the first to chronicle facts rather than offer criticisms, and where I have departed from this rule it has been for the most part in the case of works which illustrate some marked change in the progress of the Revival.

I felt, as my book advanced, that technical descriptions

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Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface.

vii

of even noteworthy buildings would, if frequently repeated, become tedious to the unprofessional reader. For this reason I have in the majority of instances confined such descriptions to the Tabulated List appended to this volume, in which will be found a selection from the most remarkable structures of a Mediæval character erected by various architects during the last fifty years, chronologically arranged.

In the choice of these examples I have been guided by various considerations ; the date of a building, its local influence on public taste, or the novel character of its design frequently rendering it, in relation to my purpose, an object of greater interest than many others of more intrinsic importance. This explanation will, I trust, be sufficient to account for the absence of many works of acknowledged excellence from my List, which, as it is, has reached a length far beyond what I had anticipated when I began to compile it.

Little or no mention has been made of ' Restorations '—partly because it would have been difficult to draw a definite line between those which have been a simple repair of old buildings, and others which have required archæological skill in execution, but chiefly because in either case such works cannot be said to represent, except indirectly, the genuine progress of modern architecture.

The large proportion of engravings which illustrate build-

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Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii

Preface.

ings erected between 1860 and 1870 as compared with those of former years has prevented their even distribution over the volume. This is hardly satisfactory, but it will probably be considered a less evil than the only possible alternative, viz. their separation from the text to which they relate. I may here observe that the size of these woodcuts does not permit them, though very fairly executed, to convey more than a general idea of the designs represented, and that, like photographic portraits, they never flatter the original. If my readers will kindly remember this, I make no doubt that the architects concerned will be equally indulgent.

To the Editor of the 'Building News' I am indebted for permission to incorporate with this volume a small portion of its contents, which originally appeared in that journal. To many friends, who have kindly helped me with information and suggestions, my best acknowledgments are due for their assistance and advice.

CHARLES L. EASTLAKE.

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Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Ancient and Modern Art—Effect of Civilisation—Decline of Mediæval Art—Elizabethan Architecture—Dodsworth and Dugdale—The ‘*Monasticon Anglicanum*’—Hollar and King—Illustrations of the ‘*Monasticon*’—Inigo Jones—Archbishop Laud—Durham Churches—Sir Henry Wotton—Antiquaries of the Seventeenth Century—Dugdale’s ‘*History of St. Paul’s*’—Old St. Paul’s Italianised—Royal Commission on the Cathedral—The Fire of London PAGES 1–19

CHAPTER II.

Anthony à Wood—The ‘*Athenæ Oxonienses*’—Transition of Style—Sir Christopher Wren—His Report on Salisbury Cathedral—Seventeenth Century Gothic—Works at Oxford—Thomas Holt—Seventeenth Century Buildings at Oxford—University College—Tom Tower, Christchurch—Brasenose College—Charles Church, Plymouth—Old and New St. Paul’s—Wren’s Work at Westminster—St. Mary Aldermary—St. Dunstan’s-in-the-East—St. Michael’s, Cornhill—Death of Wren 20–41

CHAPTER III.

Horace Walpole—His Taste for Gothic—Strawberry Hill—Description of the Building—Character of Walpole’s Gothic—Pedantry of the Renaissance—Batty Langley—Gothic Architecture ‘improved’—The Five Orders Gothicised—Batty Langley’s Designs 42–54

CHAPTER IV.

The Georgian Era—Additions to Hampton Court—Eighteenth Century Gothic—Costessy Hall, Norfolk—The Revival in Scotland—William Beckford—Fonthill Abbey—Literature of the Revival—Grose’s ‘*Antiquities of England and Wales*’—Carter’s Works—Hearne’s ‘*Antiquities of Great Britain*’—Gough’s ‘*Sepulchral Monuments*’—Bentham and Willis—Their ‘*History of Gothic and Saxon Architecture*’ 55–71

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05191-0 - A History of the Gothic Revival: An Attempt to Show how the Taste for Medieval Architecture which Lingered in England During the Two Last Centuries has Since been Encouraged and Developed

Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x

Contents.

CHAPTER V.

Difficulties of Classification—The Works of Nash and James Wyatt—Country Mansions—Belvoir Castle—Elvaston Hall—Donnington Hall—Hawarden Castle—Ditton Park—Eaton Hall—Seldon House—Eastnor Castle—Sir Robert Smirke—John Britton—His early Life and Literary Career—The ‘Beauties of Wiltshire,’ ‘Antiquities of Great Britain,’ and ‘Cathedral Antiquities’—Britton’s ‘Autobiography’—Pugin and Willson—Their ‘Specimens of Gothic Architecture’—The Age of Plagiarism PAGES 72–90

CHAPTER VI.

A Retrospect—James Essex—Wyatt’s Professional Practice—His ‘Improvements’ and Restorations—Old and Modern Sculpture—Restoration of Henry VII.’s Chapel—Public Confidence in Wyatt—New College Chapel, Oxford—John Carter—His Antiquarian Tastes—His Letters in the ‘Gentleman’s Magazine’—Effect of Carter’s Remonstrance—William Atkinson—Cottingham’s Works—J. C. Buckler—His Additions to Costessy Hall—His Description of Magdalen College 91–111

CHAPTER VII.

Sir Walter Scott—The Waverley Novels—Their Effect on the Revival—Progress of Mediæval Sentiment—Domestic Architecture—The Church of ‘the Period’—Dr. Milner—The ‘Antiquities of Winchester’—Milner’s Literary Works—His Attack on Wyatt—Thomas Rickman—St. George’s Church, Birmingham—Rickman’s Literary Works—John Shaw—Christ’s Hospital—A. Poynter—St. Katherine’s Hospital—Salvin’s Works—Scotney Castle—Dr. Whewell—Foreign Gothic 112–131

CHAPTER VIII.

The Pointed Arch Question—Theories as to the Origin of Gothic—Modern Gothic Sculpture—Classification of Styles—Ecclesiological Studies—Proprieties of Design—Edward Blore—His Early Life and Studies—His ‘Monumental Remains’—His Professional Works—James Savage—St. Luke’s Church, Chelsea—Characteristics of the Building 132–144

CHAPTER IX.

A. N. Welby Pugin—His early Life—His Theatrical Tastes—St. Marie’s Grange—Scarbrick Hall—Pugin’s Literary Works—His Tour in Italy—Character of Pugin’s Designs—His Facility of Invention—St. Giles’s Church, Cheadle—St. George’s Cathedral, Westminster—St. Chad’s Church, Birmingham—Stained Glass in St. Chad’s—Character of Ancient Glass—Church of St. Wilfrid, Manchester—St. Marie’s Church, Liverpool—Pugin’s House at Ramsgate—St. Augustine’s Church 145–165

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05191-0 - A History of the Gothic Revival: An Attempt to Show how the Taste for Medieval Architecture which Lingered in England During the Two Last Centuries has Since been Encouraged and Developed

Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents.

xi

CHAPTER X.

Sir Charles Barry—His Early Works—His Views on Church Architecture—The Houses of Parliament Competition—Barry's Design selected—The unsuccessful Designs—St. Stephen's Chapel—Westminster Hall—Ingenuity of Barry's Plan—Opposition to Barry's Scheme—Mr. Hamilton's Protest and Arguments—Anti-Mediæval Prejudices—Pseudo-moral Objections—Colonel Jackson's Reply—Commencement of the Work—Character of Barry's Design—Its Effects on the Revival, and Influence on Art-Manufacture PAGES 166–186

CHAPTER XI.

Revival of Ecclesiastical Architecture—The 'Incorporated Society for Promoting the Building of Churches'—'Commissioners' Churches'—Evangelical Scruples—Utilitarian Objections—Ecclesiastical Economy—Secular Apathy—Condition of Church Service—The Cambridge Camden Society—Publication of the 'Ecclesiologist'—Neale's 'Hints to Churchwardens'—Opposition to the Cambridge Camden Society—Its Change of Name—Restoration of the Temple Church—Dr. Chandler—The Oxford Society—Their Effect on the Revival—Mr. Beresford-Hope—Kilndown Church 187–208

CHAPTER XII.

A.D. 1840–1850—Architects of the Revival—Lincoln's Inn Hall—Character of the Design—Mr. Drake's Lectures—Bartholomew's Essay on the Decline of Excellence in the Structure of English Buildings—Exhibition of Mediæval Art—Wilton Church and Cheltenham College—Publication of 'The Builder'—The Works of Scott and Ferrey—Church of St. Giles's, Camberwell—R. C. Carpenter—His Churches at Birmingham and elsewhere—Mr. Butterfield—St. Augustine's College, Canterbury 209–228

CHAPTER XIII.

The Rev. J. L. Petit—Mr. E. A. Freeman—Ecclesiological Symbolism—Translation of Durandus published—Nomenclature of Styles—Mr. E. Sharpe—His 'Architectural Parallels'—His Professional Works—Paley's 'Gothic Mouldings'—Bowman and Crowther—Nash's 'Mansions of England'—Mr. R. W. Billings—His 'Baronial Antiquities of Scotland'—Brandon's 'Analysis of Gothic Architecture'—Messrs. Hadfield and Weightman—Their Works at Manchester, Sheffield, &c.—Mr. J. J. Scoles—Church of St. Francis Xavier at Liverpool—A new Reformation 229–245

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05191-0 - A History of the Gothic Revival: An Attempt to Show how the Taste for Medieval Architecture which Lingered in England During the Two Last Centuries has Since been Encouraged and Developed

Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

Contents.

CHAPTER XIV.

New Churches in London—St. Andrew's, Wells Street—St. Stephen's, Westminster—St. Barnabas', Pimlico—St. Mary Magdalene, Munster Square—Proposed Erection of a Model Church—All Saints' Church, Margaret Street—Its Internal Decoration—Criticism of the work—Yealmpton Church—Abbey Mere, Plymouth—St. Alban's Church, Holborn—Description of its Details—Decorative Sculpture and Painting—Chapel of Balliol College, Oxford—Keble College—Characteristics of Mr. Butterfield's Work PAGES 246–263

CHAPTER XV.

'Ruskinism'—Condition of Modern Architecture—'The Seven Lamps'—Claims of Italian Gothic—Mr. Ruskin as an Art Reformer—Use of Iron in visible Construction—Development of Window Tracery—'The Lamp of Beauty'—Mr. Ruskin's Critics—The Morality of Art—Proposed Limits of National Style—Character of Mr. Ruskin's Views—'The Stones of Venice'—Divisions and Subdivisions—Mr. Ruskin as a Critic—Early Converts to Ruskinism—Introduction of Venetian Gothic 264–280

CHAPTER XVI.

The Great Exhibition of 1851—Its Effect on the Revival—Messrs. Deane and Woodward—The Oxford Museum—Decorative Treatment of the Building—Christ Church and Merton Colleges—Domestic and Ecclesiastical Gothic—Church Architects A.D. 1850–60—St. Peter's Church, Bournemouth—All Saints' Church, Notting Hill—Character of Mr. White's Designs—Lyndhurst Church, Hampshire—Exeter College Chapel and Library—Progress of the Revival—The Battle of the Styles . 281–297

CHAPTER XVII.

Deficiency of Public Interest—The Architectural Exhibition—The Architectural Museum—Mr. F. Wyatt's Works—Orchardleigh Park and Capel Manor—Mr. J. L. Pearson's Works—Treberfydd House and Quar Wood—Mr. J. Prichard—Eatington Park—Adaptability of Italian Gothic—New Houses at Westminster—Mr. Scott on the Revival—The New Foreign Office Competition—Lord Palmerston's Dislike to Gothic—The Manchester Assize Courts Competition—Mr. Waterhouse's Design—The Building as executed—Ancient Art and Modern Requirements 298–315

CHAPTER XVIII.

Influence of Individual Taste—The Study of French Gothic—The Lille Cathedral Competition—M. Viollet-le-Duc—The 'Dictionnaire de l'Architecture Française'—Sketches published by Shaw and Nesfield—Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Notting Hill—Church of St. James the Less, Westminster—Character of Mr. Street's designs—

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978-1-108-05191-0 - A History of the Gothic Revival: An Attempt to Show how the Taste for Medieval Architecture which Lingered in England During the Two Last Centuries has Since been Encouraged and Developed

Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Contents.*

xiii

Church of SS. Philip and James, Oxford—St. Peter's Church, Vauxhall—Internal Decoration of St. Peter's—Mr. H. Woodyer—St. Raphael's College, Bristol—Church of the Holy Innocents at Highnam—St. Paul's Church, Wokingham—Surrey County Schools—Eastbourne Convalescent Hospital—The House of Mercy at Bovey Tracey PAGES 316–332

CHAPTER XIX.

A Truce to the Battle of the Styles—The Mediævalists divided—The Eclectic and the Parish Schools—Mr. T. Hudson Turner—Parker's 'Domestic Architecture of the Middle Ages'—Unpopularity of Early Art—A Reaction in favour of Late Pointed Work—Mr. R. Norman Shaw—Leyes Wood and Glen Andred—Mr. W. E. Nesfield—Cloverley Hall—House at Farnham Royal—The Church of Rome and the Revival—Obstacles to Roman Catholic Encouragement of Gothic—Mr. G. Goldie—Abbey of St. Scholastica, Teignmouth—Roman Catholic Church of St. Mary, Kensington—Mr. Hadfield's Works—The Revival independent of Religious Creed 333–351

CHAPTER XX.

A.D. 1860–1870—The Works of Mr. W. Burges—Cathedral Church of St. Finbar, Cork—New Tower at Cardiff Castle—'Knightshayes,' Devon—The Dangers of Liberty in Design—Mr. E. W. Godwin's Works—Town Halls at Northampton and Congleton—Three Schools of Modern Gothic—The University College of Wales—Balliol College, Oxford—'Humewood,' Wicklow—Mr. James Brooks—St. Chad's Church, Haggerston—St. Columba, Kingsland Road—Church of the Annunciation, Christchurch—French and English types—St. Stephen's Church, Hampstead—Mr. G. F. Bodley—Church of St. John the Baptist, Liverpool—Its Internal Decoration—Future Prospects of the Revival—Conclusion 352–372

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05191-0 - A History of the Gothic Revival: An Attempt to Show how the Taste for Medieval Architecture which Lingered in England During the Two Last Centuries has Since been Encouraged and Developed

Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Errata.

Page 102, line 22, *for* mezzo-relievo *read* mezzo-rilievo.

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„ 243, „ 4, *for* latter *read* former.

„ 270, „ 7, *for* has *read* have.

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Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
The Annunciation: part of a mural painting in the chancel of All Saints' Church, Notting Hill	<i>frontispiece</i>
Church of St. Andrew, Plaistow, Essex	<i>to face</i> 1
Old House on Pride Hill, Shrewsbury	" 5
The Tom Tower, Christ Church, Oxford	" 30
Eaton Hall, Cheshire. The seat of the Marquis of Westminster	" 77
Scotney Castle, Sussex. The residence of Edward Hussey, Esq.	" 130
Church of St. Augustine, Ramsgate	" 163
Church of S. Mary, Chetwynde, Shropshire	" 220
College at Lancing, Sussex	" 224
St. John's (R. C.) Cathedral, Salford, Manchester	" 243
Church of S. Stephen, Westminster	" 247
Belfry of S. Alban's Church, London	" 257
Balliol College Chapel, Oxford	" 261
The University Museum, Oxford	" 283
Lyndhurst Parish Church	" 292
South Porch of Exeter College Chapel, Oxford	" 295
Orchardleigh Park, Somersetshire. The seat of W. Duckworth, Esq. :	" 301
Quar Wood, Gloucestershire. The residence of the Rev. R. W. Hippisley .	" 304
Eatington Park, Warwickshire. The seat of E. P. Shirley, Esq.	" 307
Entrance to the Assize Courts, Manchester	" 312
Entrance to the Digby Mortuary Chapel, Sherborne	" 319
Baptistery of St. Francis' Church, Notting Hill	" 321
Church of S. Philip and S. James, Oxford	" 323

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05191-0 - A History of the Gothic Revival: An Attempt to Show how the Taste for Medieval Architecture which Lingered in England During the Two Last Centuries has Since been Encouraged and Developed

Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xvi

Illustrations.

	PAGE
Chancel of St. John's Church, Torquay	<i>to face</i> 325
Chancel of S. Peter's Church, Vauxhall	,, 327
All Saints' Hospital, Eastbourne	,, 331
Cloverley Hall, Whitchurch, Shropshire. The seat of J. P. Heywood, Esq. .	,, 340
Leyes Wood, Sussex. The seat of James W. Temple, Esq.	,, 343
Abbey of St. Scholastica, Teignmouth	,, 348
Western Doorway of St. Mary's (R. C. pro-Cathedral) Church	,, 350
Knightshayes, near Tiverton, Devon. The seat of J. H. Amory, Esq., M.P.	,, 356
Part of New Buildings at Balliol College, Oxford	,, 360
Humewood, Wicklow. The seat of W. W. Fitzwilliam Dick, Esq., M.P. .	,, 362
Church of St. Chad, Haggerston	,, 364
Church of St. Columba, Haggerston	,, 366
Church of St. Stephen, Hampstead	,, 368
—————	
Portion of Nave Arcade, All Saints' Church	254
Capital of Nave Pier, St. Alban's Church	258
Ironwork of Chancel Railing, St. Alban's Church	259
Spandrils and Arch-mouldings of Windows, Oxford Museum	284
Ironwork Capital, Oxford Museum	285
Carved Capital, Oxford Museum	286
Decorative Sculpture of Reredos, St. Peter's Church, Bournemouth	290
Carved Capitals, Lyndhurst Church	294
Corbel, Exeter College Chapel, Oxford	295
Dormer Window, Eatington Park, Warwickshire	305
Chimneys, Eatington Park	306
Fireplace in House at Farnham Royal, Windsor	342

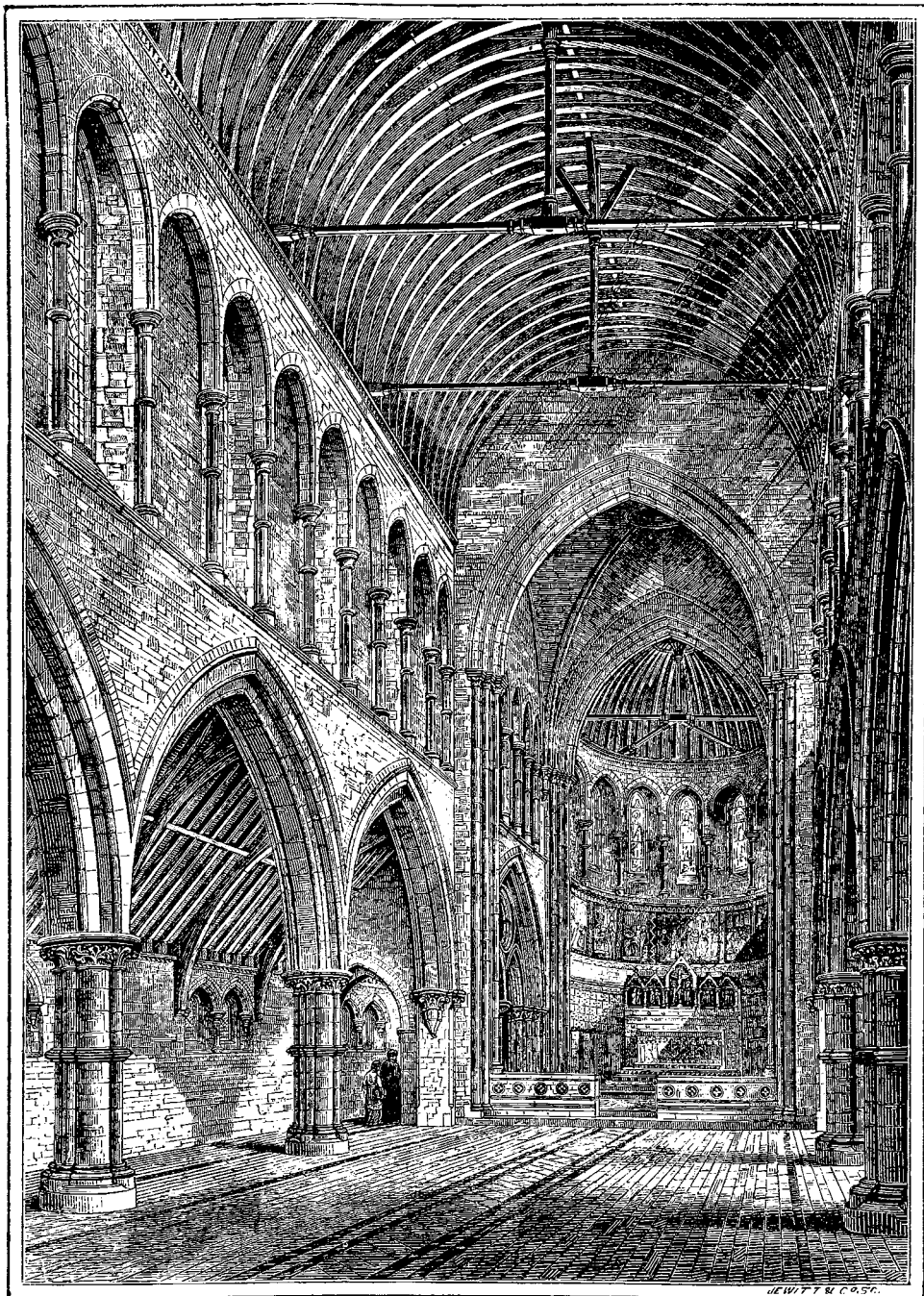
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Charles Lock Eastlake

Frontmatter

[More information](#)



Church of St. Andrew, Plaistow, Essex.

James Brooks, Architect, 1867.