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978-1-108-06134-6 - Contrasts: Or, a Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages and Corresponding
Buildings of the Present Day
A.W. Pugin
Frontmatter
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Contrasts

Among the most influential figures of the Gothic Revival in nineteenth-century Britain, Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812–52) distinguished himself as an architect, author and interior designer. He had crafted furniture for George IV at Windsor, but his greatest triumph was the design and fitting out of the new Palace of Westminster with Charles Barry (1795–1860) following the fire of 1834. First published in 1836, *Contrasts* is Pugin’s most famous work, championing the medieval over the modern through satirical comparison of divergent styles. Reissued here in its substantially revised second edition of 1841, the book reflects its author’s Catholicism and a developing interpretation of Gothic architecture. Along with *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (1841), this work remains essential reading for those seeking to understand the growth of the Gothic Revival, illuminating with many illustrations the theories guiding one of Britain’s most important architects.

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C O N T R A S T S :

OR,

A Parallel

BETWEEN THE

NOBLE EDIFICES OF THE MIDDLE AGES,

AND

CORRESPONDING BUILDINGS OF THE PRESENT DAY ;

SHEWING

THE PRESENT DECAY OF TASTE.

Accompanied by appropriate Text.

By A. WELBY PUGIN, ARCHITECT.

LONDON :
CHARLES DOLMAN, 61, NEW BOND STREET.

M.DCCC.XLI.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE author gladly avails himself of the opportunity afforded him by the publication of this edition, to enlarge the text, and correct some important errors which appeared in the original publication. When this work was first brought out, the very name of Christian art was almost unknown, nor had the admirable works of Montalembert and Rio appeared on the subject. It is not by any means surprising that the author, standing almost alone in the principles he was advocating, should have adopted some incorrect views, in the investigation of a subject involved in so many perplexing difficulties: the theory he adopted was right in the main point, but indistinctly developed. He was perfectly correct in the abstract facts, that *pointed architecture was produced by the Catholic faith*, and that it was destroyed in England by the ascendancy of Protestantism; but he was wrong in treating Protestantism as a *primary cause*, instead of being the *effect* of some other more powerful agency, and in ascribing the highest state of architectural excellence to the ecclesiastical buildings erected immediately previous to the change of religion; as, although immeasurably excelling the debased productions of the Elizabethan period, they still exhibited various symptoms of the decay of the true Christian principle.

The real origin of both the revived Pagan and Protestant principles is to be traced to the decayed state of faith throughout Europe in the fifteenth century, which led men to dislike, and ultimately forsake, the principles and architecture which originated in the *self-denying Catholic principle, and admire and adopt the luxurious styles of ancient Paganism*. Religion must have been in a most diseased state, for those two monsters, revived Paganism and Protestantism, ever

to have *obtained a footing*, much less to have overrun the Christian world. We cannot imagine a St. Ambrose or St. Chrysostom setting up Bacchanalian groups and illustrations of Ovid’s fables as decorations to their episcopal residences, nor a St. Bede or St. Cuthbert becoming Calvinists. If Henry VIII exceeded Nero himself in tyranny and cruelty, had not the Catholic spirit been at an exceedingly low ebb, the Church of England, instead of succumbing, would have risen in glory and purity, for such has ever been the effect of persecution in the days of lively faith. But when the will of a schismatical king could so prevail with the whole clergy of this country, that they actually erased from their missal and breviaries the most glorious champion and martyr of the Church, St. Thomas of Canterbury, and even put out the commemoration of the holy father himself (only one bishop and a few abbots and priests being found true witnesses of the faith), it is evident that England’s Church had miserably degenerated.

The so-called Reformation is now regarded by many men of learning and of unprejudiced minds as a dreadful scourge, permitted by divine Providence in punishment for its decayed faith; and those by whom it was carried on are now considered in the true light of Church plunderers and crafty political intriguers, instead of holy martyrs and modern apostles. It is, indeed, almost impossible for any sincere person to see all episcopal and ecclesiastical power completely controlled at the pleasure of a lay tribunal, without condemning the men who originally betrayed the Church, and feeling that in our present divided and distracted state, consequent on the *Reformation*, we are suffering severely for the sins of our fathers. This is the only really consistent view which can be taken of the subject. England’s Church was not *attacked by a strange enemy and overthrown*, she was consumed *by internal decay*; her privileges and abbeys were surrendered by dissembling and compromising nominally Catholic ecclesiastics, and her revenues and her glorious ornaments were despoiled and appropriated by so-called Catholic nobles. Both Protestantism and revived Paganism were generated by unworthy men who bore the name of Catholic; the former is, indeed, a consequence of the latter, as will be shown hereafter; and, strange as it may appear, there is a great deal of connexion between the gardens of the Medici, filled with Pagan luxury,

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

v

and the Independent preaching-houses that now deface the land ; for *both are utterly opposed to true Catholic principles, and neither could have existed had not those principles decayed*. When that great champion and martyr for the truth, Savonarola, the Dominican monk, preached his first sermon at Florence, he predicted the desolation about to fall on the Church ; and after pourtraying, in the most powerful language, the terrible danger in the then new rage for classic and Pagan styles, that were beginning to usurp the place of Christian art and feeling, he exclaimed, “ By your continued study of these things, and your neglect of the sublime truths of the Catholic faith, you will become ashamed of the cross of Christ, and imbibe the proud luxurious spirit and feelings of Paganism ; till, weak both in faith and good works, you will fall into heresies, or infidelity itself.”

Who cannot see this terrible prediction fulfilled in the desolating religious revolution of the sixteenth century, to which we owe the present divided state of religious parties in this country ?

Having explained and rectified the errors into which he had fallen, the author is quite ready to maintain the principle of contrasting Catholic excellence with modern degeneracy ; and wherever that degeneracy is observable, be it in Protestant or Catholic countries, it will be found to proceed from the decay of true Catholic principles and practice.

It may be proper to observe, that most of the reviewers of this work have fallen into a great error, by reproaching the author for selecting buildings of the modern style to contrast with the ancient edifices, when so many better buildings had been erected during the last few years in imitation of the pointed style. This objection may be answered in a few words : *revivals of ancient architecture*, although erected *in*, are not buildings *of*, the nineteenth century,—their merit must be referred back to the period from whence they were copied ; the architecture of the nineteenth century is that extraordinary conglomeration of classic and modern styles peculiar to the day, and of which we can find no example in any antecedent period.

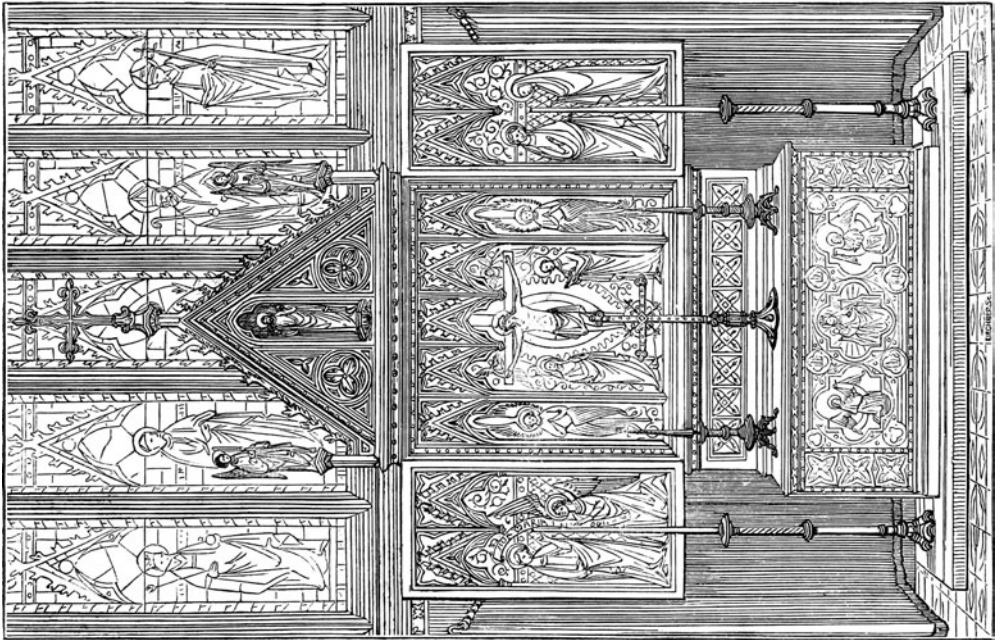
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No. II.

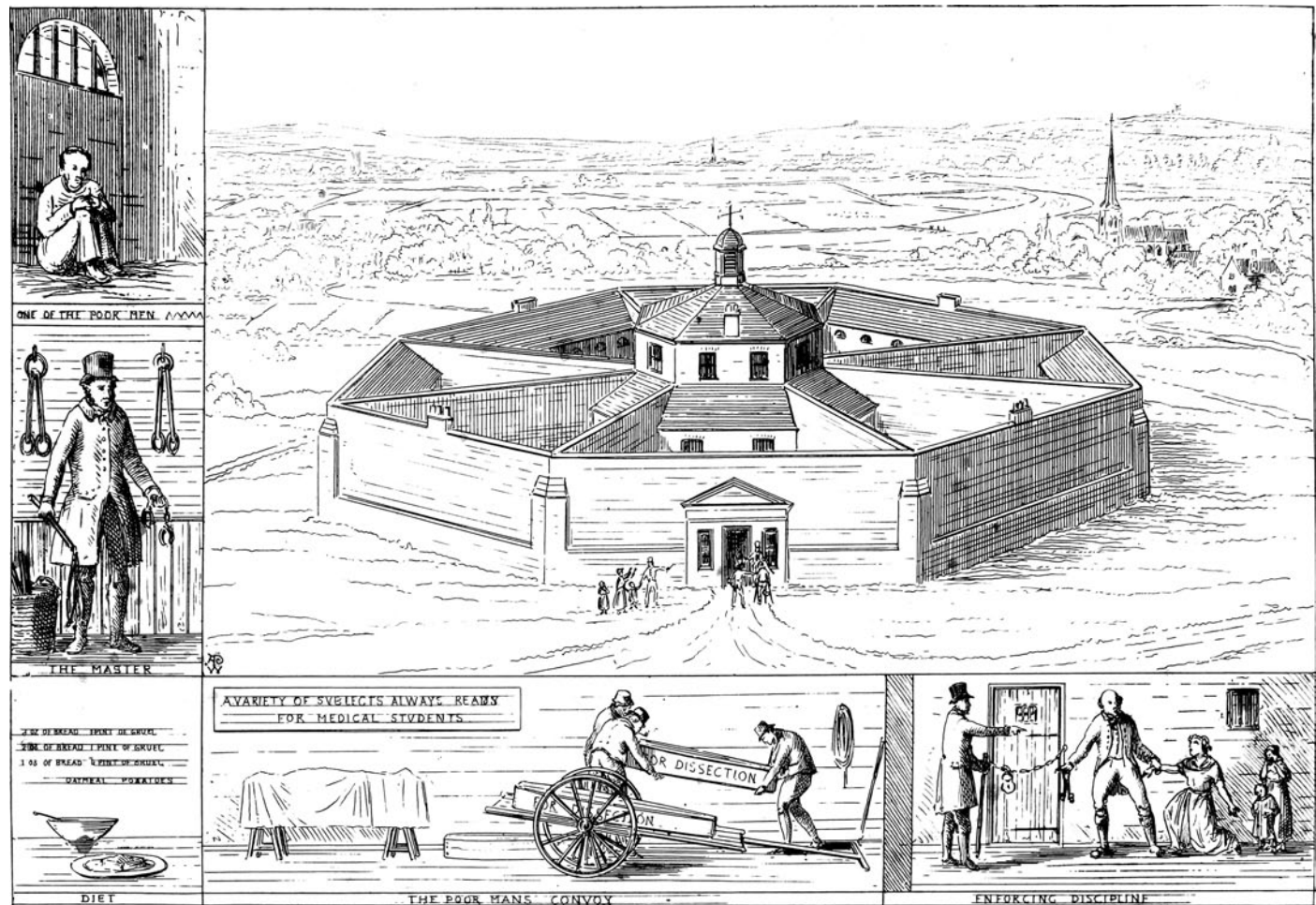


Contrasted Altars.

No. I.

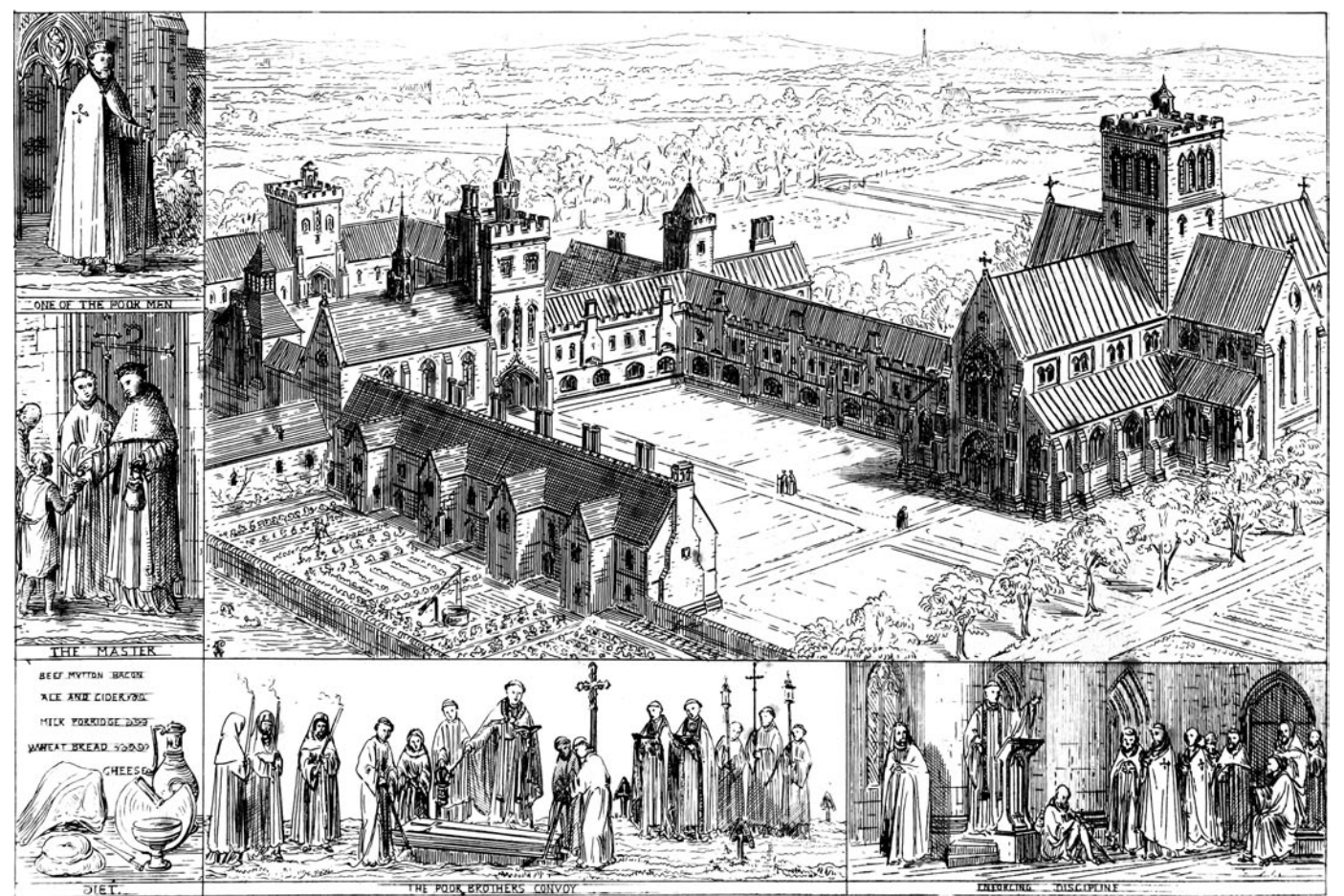


MODERN POOR HOUSE

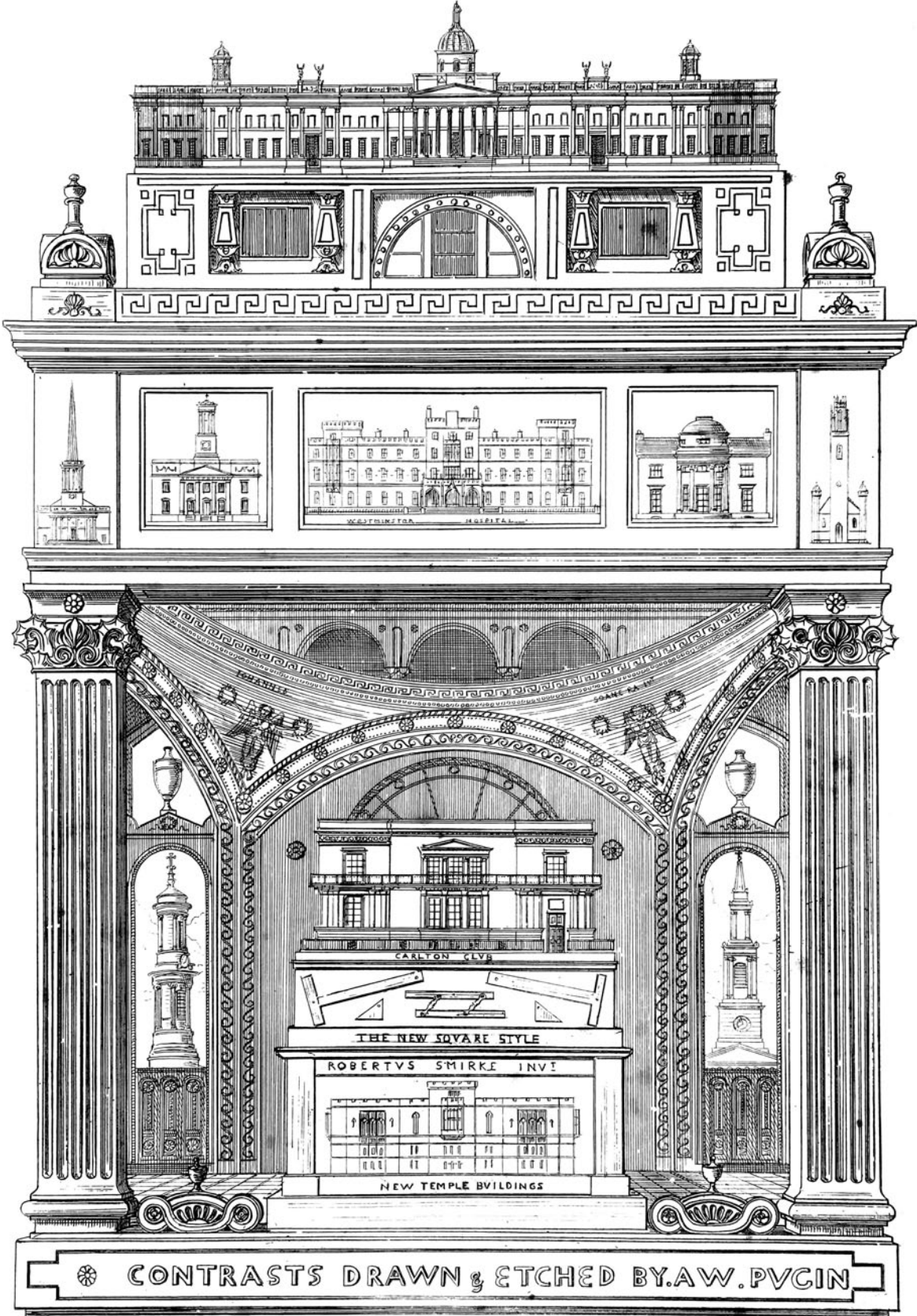


CONTRASTED RESIDENCES FOR THE POOR

ANTIENT POOR HOYSE.

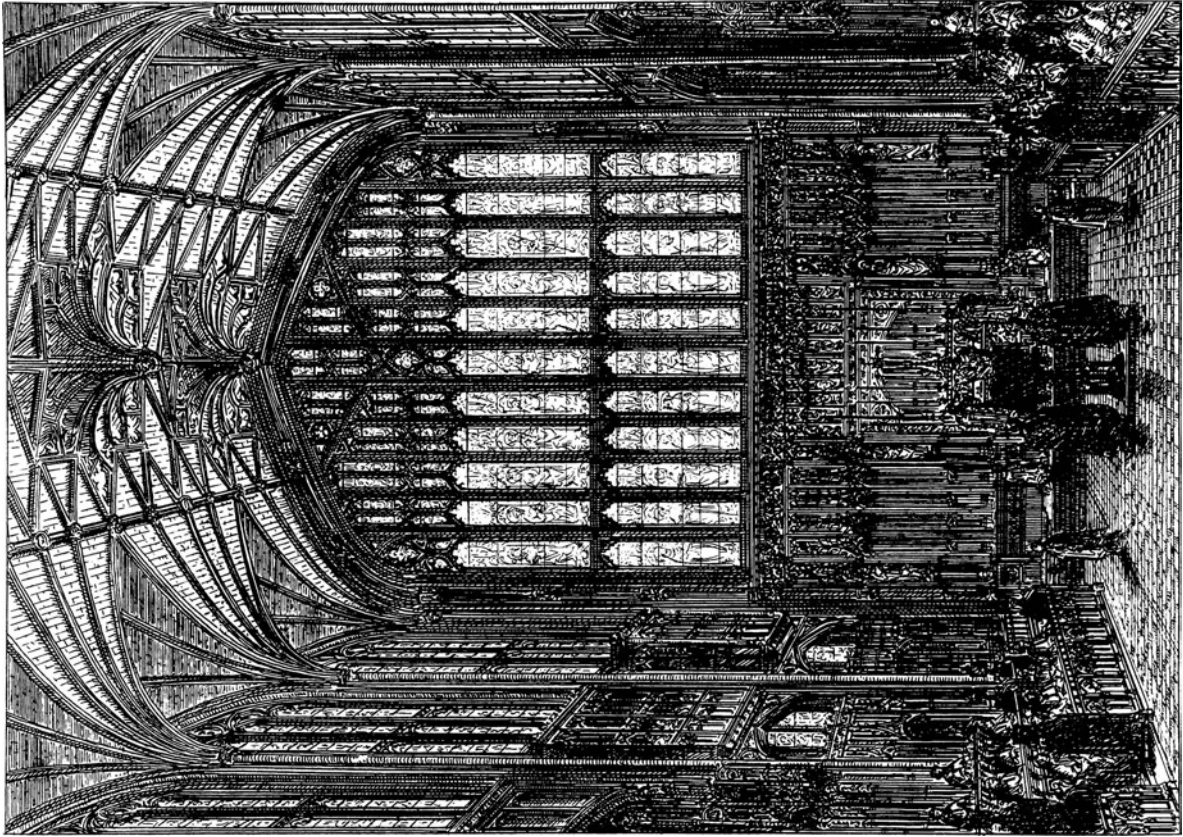


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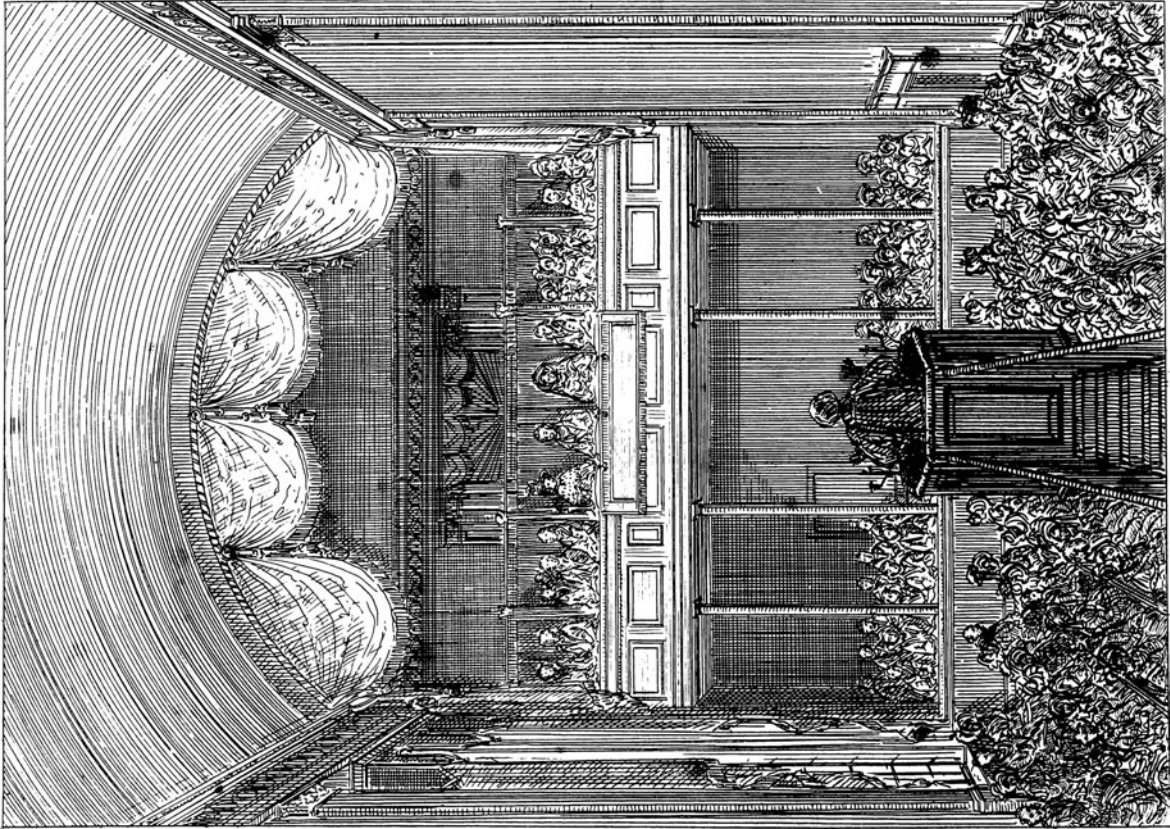


SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF VARIOUS CELEBRATED BRITISH ARCHITECTS

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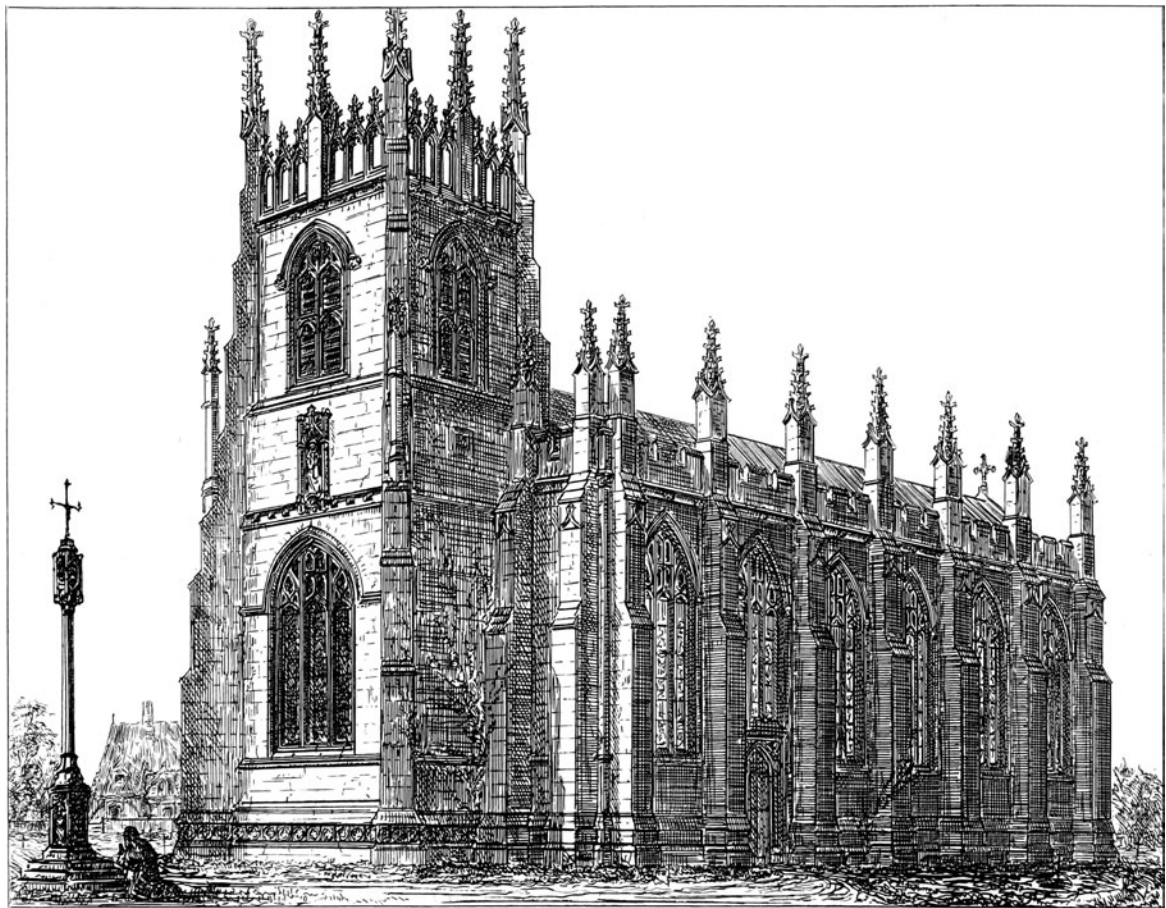
ST GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR
CONTRASTED ROYAL CHAPELS



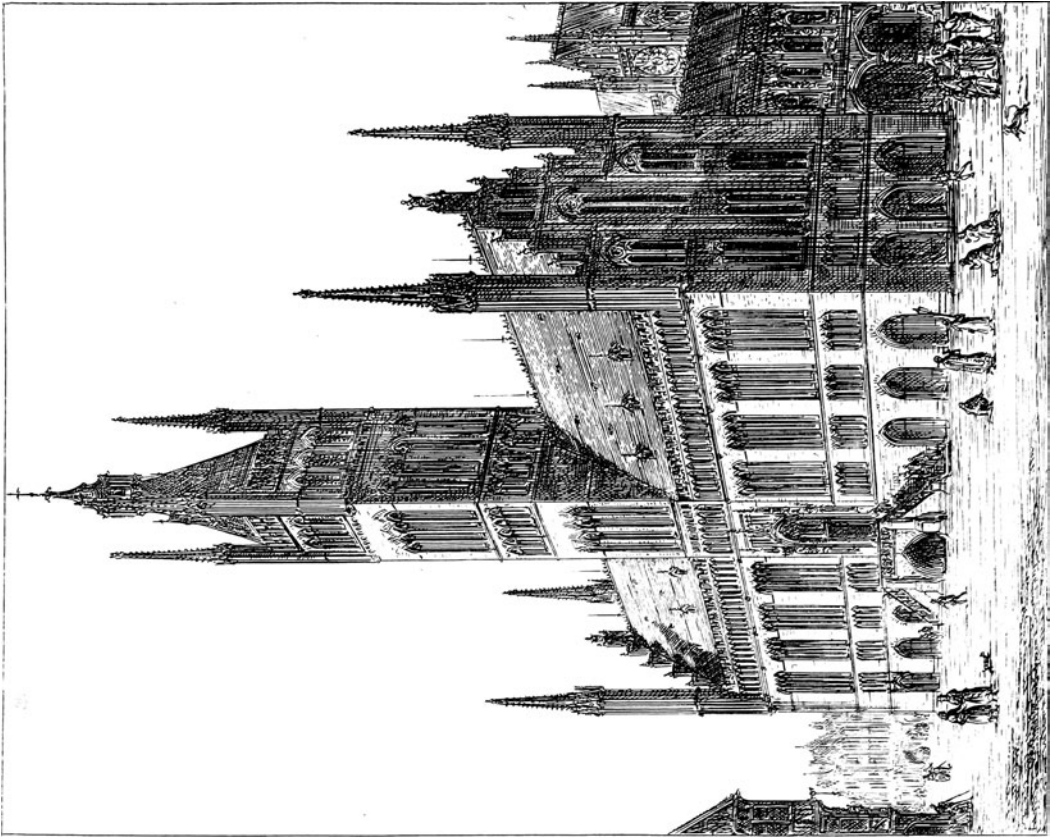
CHAPEL ROYAL, BRIGHTON
CONTRASTED ROYAL CHAPELS



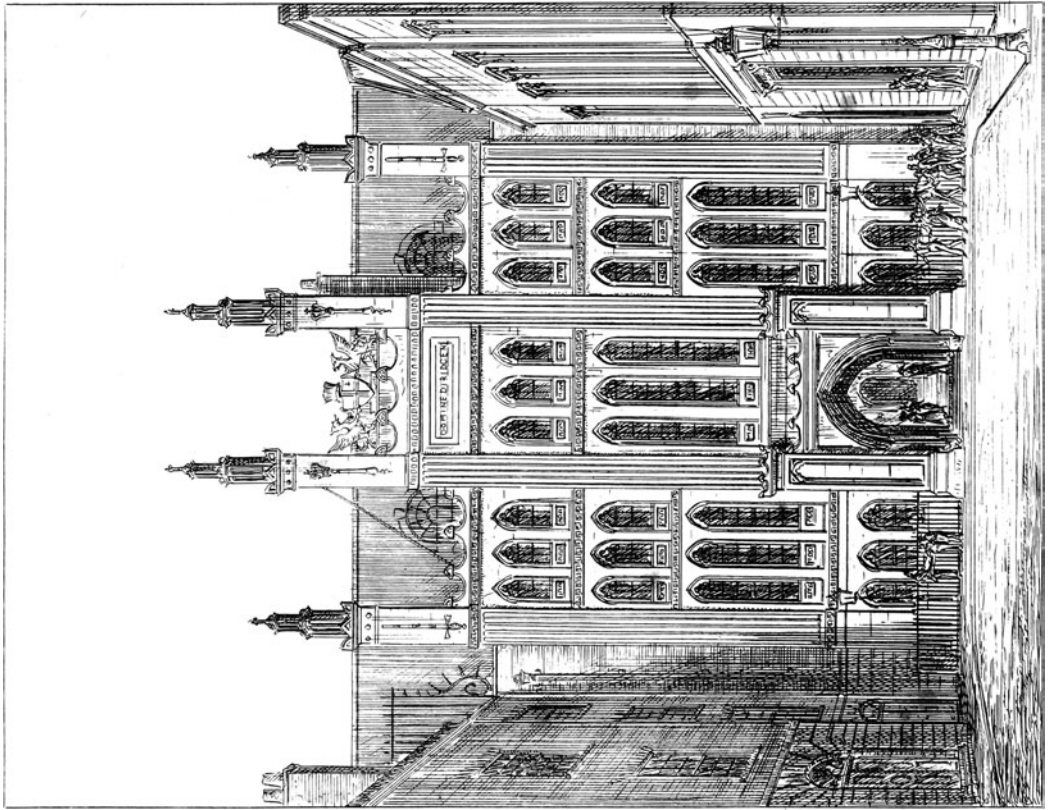
CONTRASTED CHAPELS



BISHOP SKIRLAWS CHAPEL YORKSHIRE



HOTEL DE VILLE

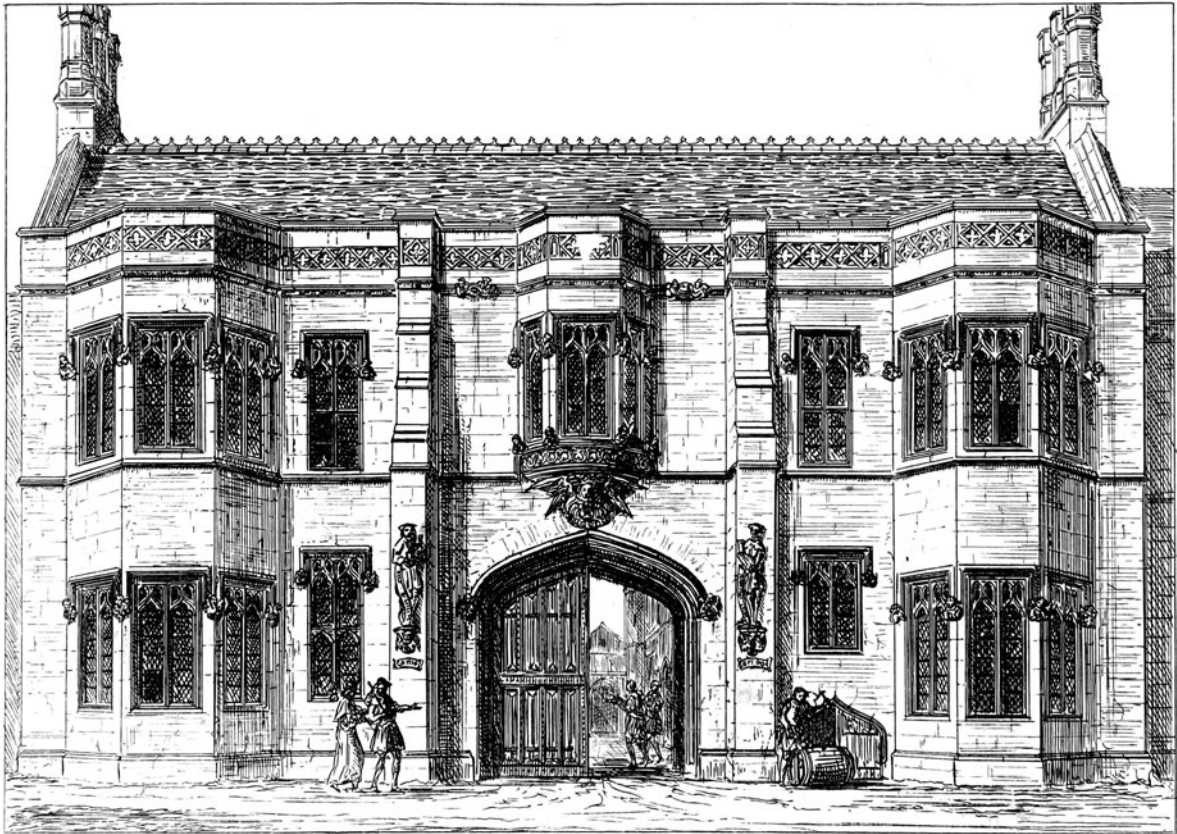


GUILDHALL LONDON
George Dance Esq. archit.

CONTRASTED
TOWN HALLS



ANGEL INN OXFORD



ANGEL INN GRANTHAM
CONTRASTED PUBLIC INNS

REFERENCES TO THE
NEW HOUSE.



- AAA. THE NURSERY WINDOWS.....
- B. AN ILL SHAPED MITER.....
- CCC. THE DRAWING ROOM.....
- D. THE STREET DOOR.....
- EE THE PARLOVR.....
- F THE WAY DOWN THE AREA.....

THIS HOUSE HAS BEEN BUILT WITH DVE
REGARD TO THE MODERN STYLE OF EPISCI
PAL ESTABLISHMENTS. ALL VSELESS BVILD
INGS SVCH AS CHAPEL HALL OR LIBRARY
HAVE BEEN OMITTED, AND THE WHOLE
IS ON A SCALE TO COMBINE ECONOMY
WITH ELEGANCE !!!



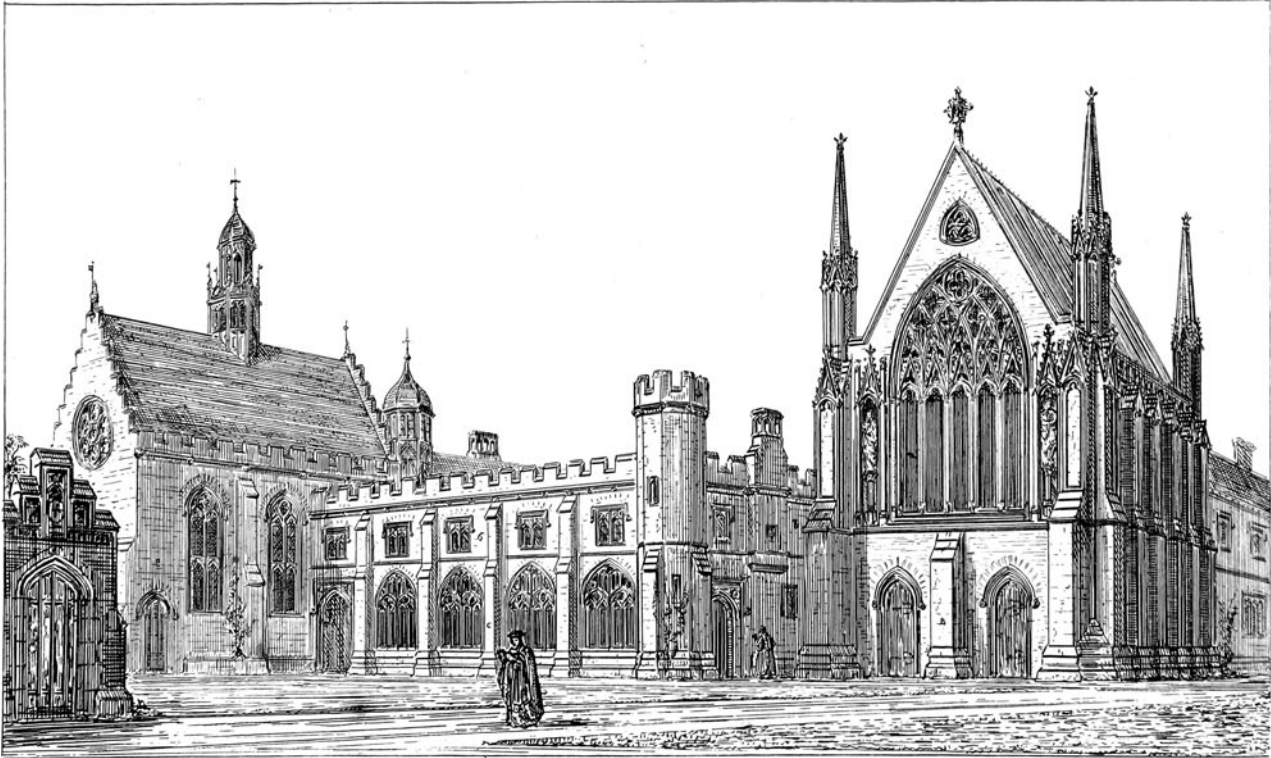
ELY HOVSE DOVER STREET
1836

CONTRASTED EPISCOPAL RESIDENCES

References to the
Old Palace +

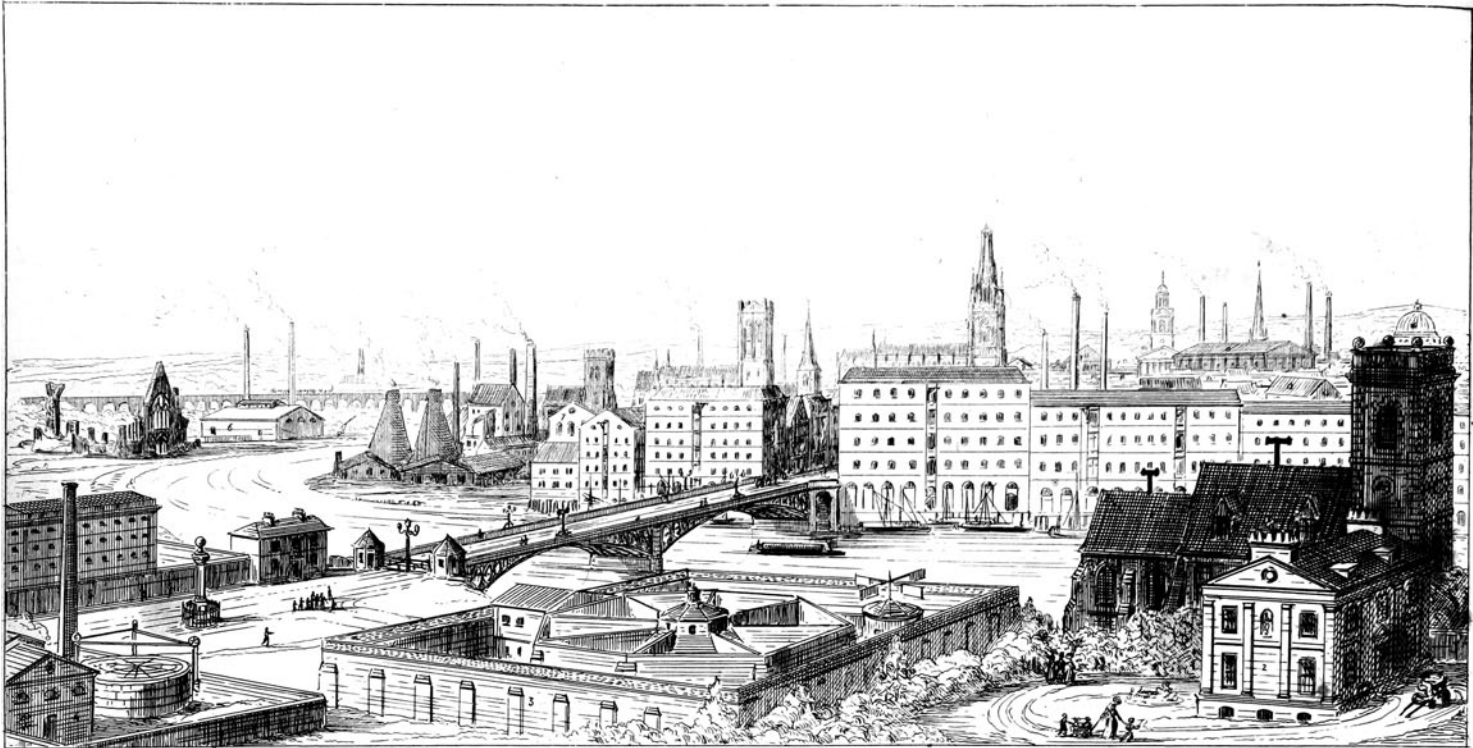


- a S'Etheldredas chapel.....+
 - b Part of the library.....+
 - c The east cloister.....+
 - d Lodgings for guests.....+
 - e The great hall.....+
- THIS VENERABLE PALACE WAS SOLD
TO THAT EMINENT SVRVEYOR C.COLE
WHO VTERLY DESTROYED IT AND ON
ITS SCITE ERRECTED THE PRESENT
HANDSOME AND VNIFORM[†] STREET WITH
ITS NEAT AND APPROPRIATE
IRON GATES IN 1776.
[†] bragleys londiniana



ELY PALACE HOLBORN 1536

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THE SAME TOWN IN 1840

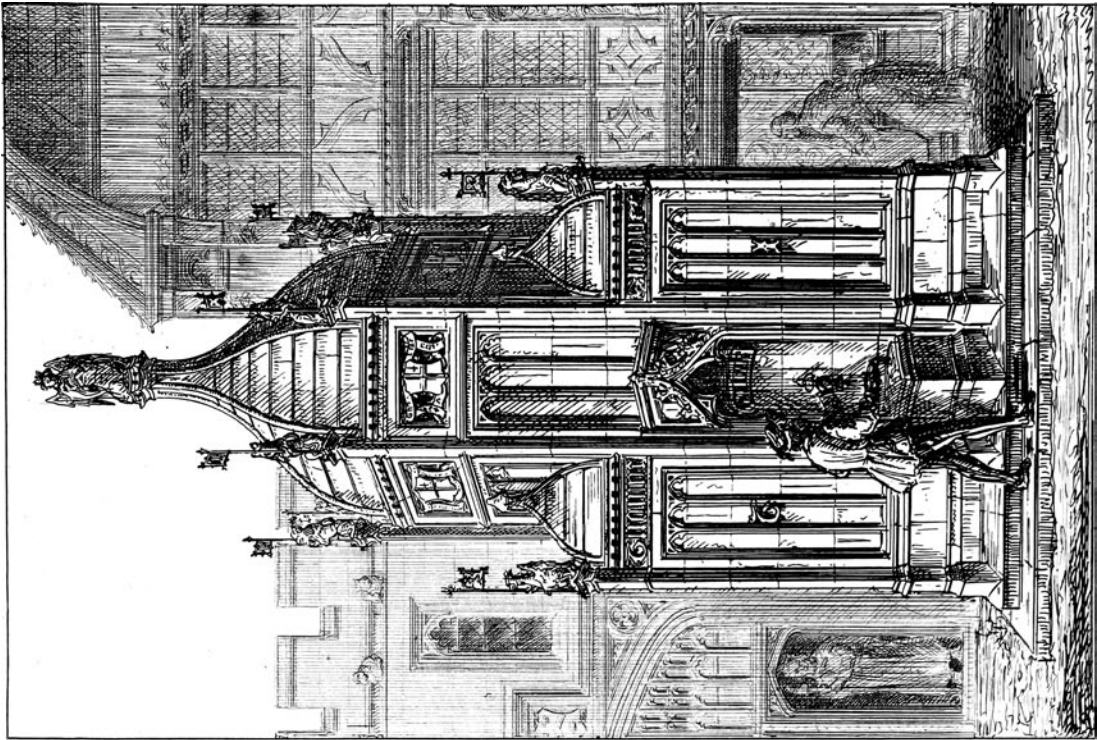
1, St. Michael's Tower, rebuilt in 1750. 2, New Parsonage House & Pleasure Grounds, 3, The New Jail, 4, Gas Works, 5, Lunatic Asylum, 6, Iron Works & Ruins of St. Mary's Abbey, 7, Mr. Evans' Chapel, 8, Baptist Chapel, 9, Unitarian Chapel, 10, New Church, 11, New Town Hall & Concert Room, 12, Wesleyan Centenary Chapel, 13, New Christian Society, 14, Quakers Meeting, 15, Socialist Hall of Science.



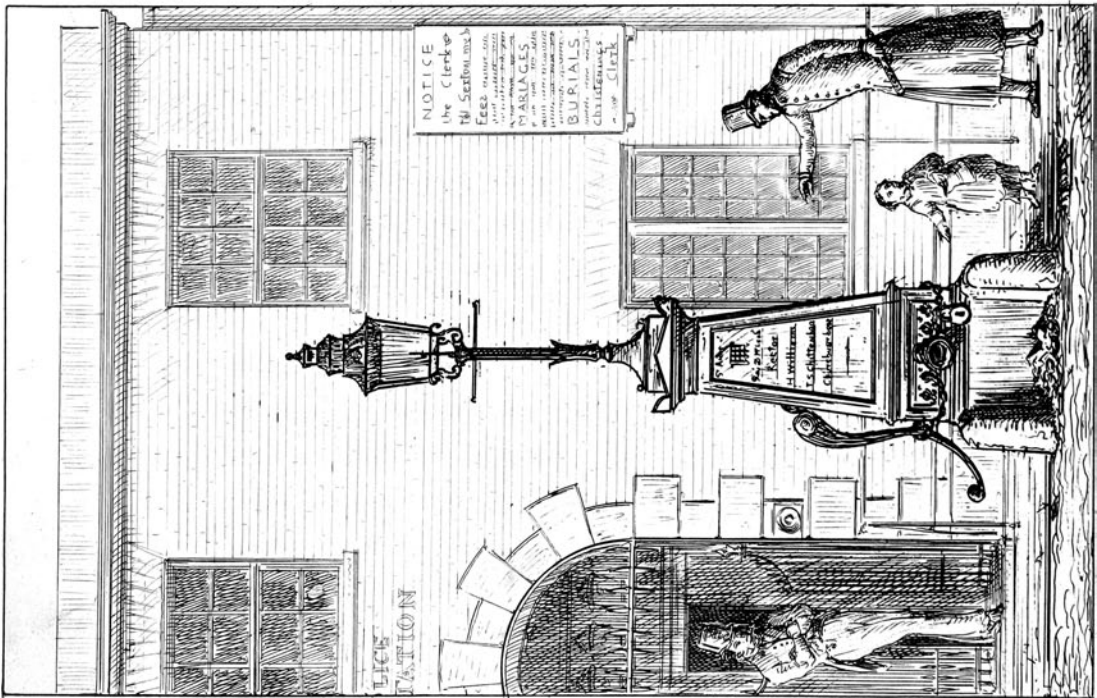
Catholic town in 1440.

1, St. Michael's on the Hill, 2, Queens Croft, 3, St. Thomas's Chapel, 4, St. Mary's Abbey, 5, All Saints, 6, St. Johns, 7, St. Peters, 8, St. Alkmunds, 9, St. Maries, 10, St. Edmunds, 11, Grey Friars, 12, St. Cuthberts, 13, Guild hall, 14, Trinity, 15, St. Olaves, 16, St. Botolphs.

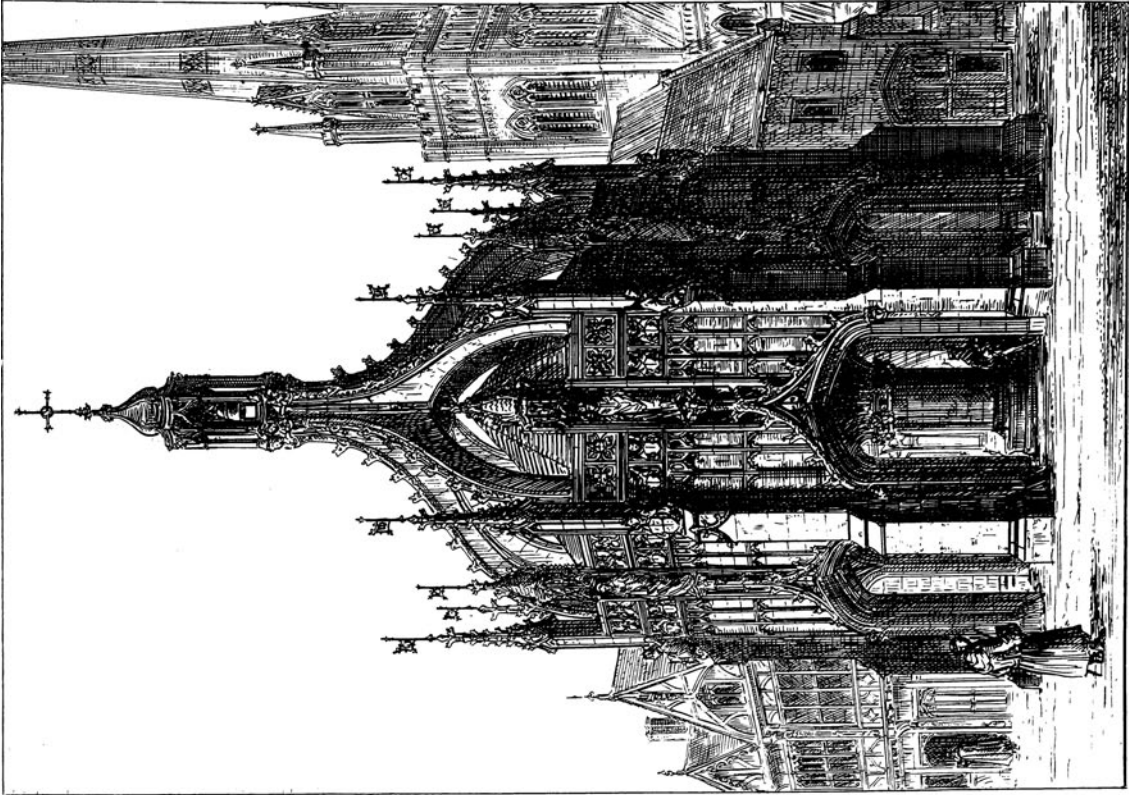
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WEST CHEAP CONVENT
THOMAS WILKINSON 1479

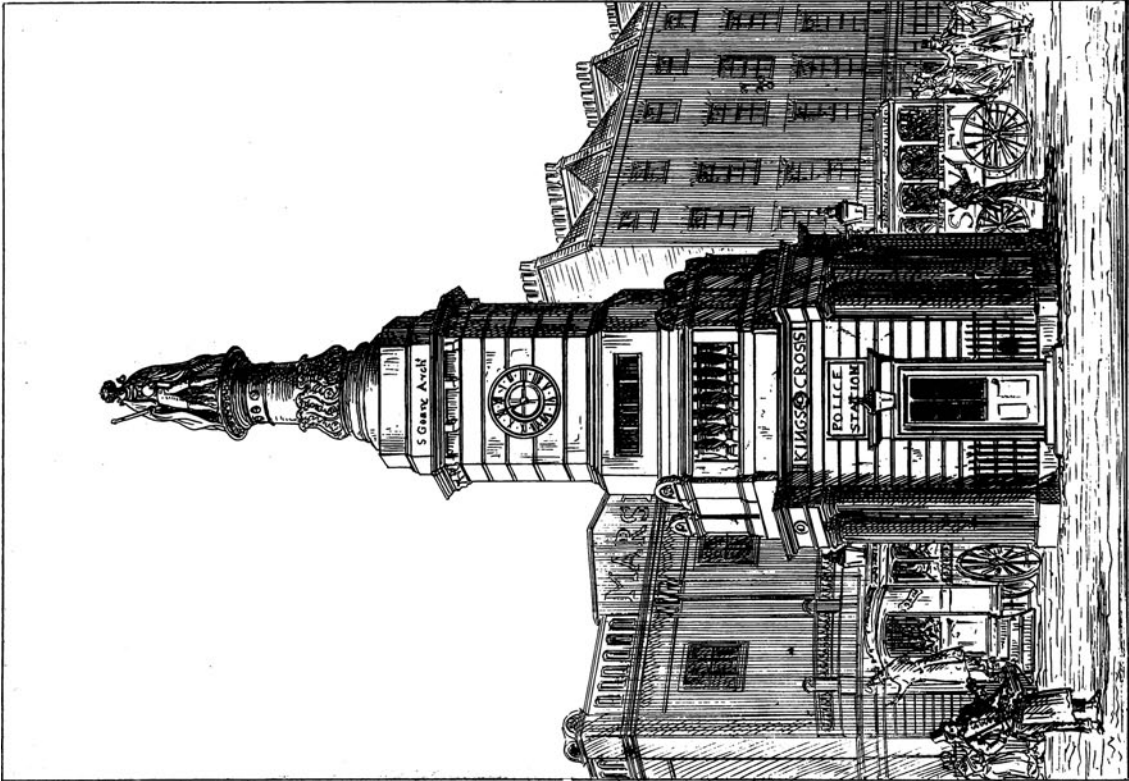


ST ANNE'S CHURCH
CONTRASTED
PUBLIC CONVENTS



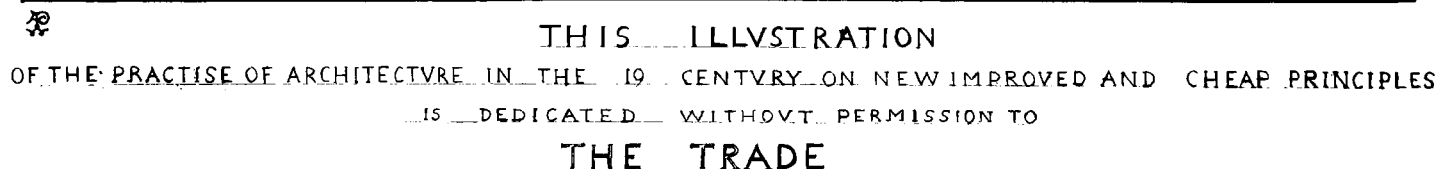
CHICHESTER CROSS

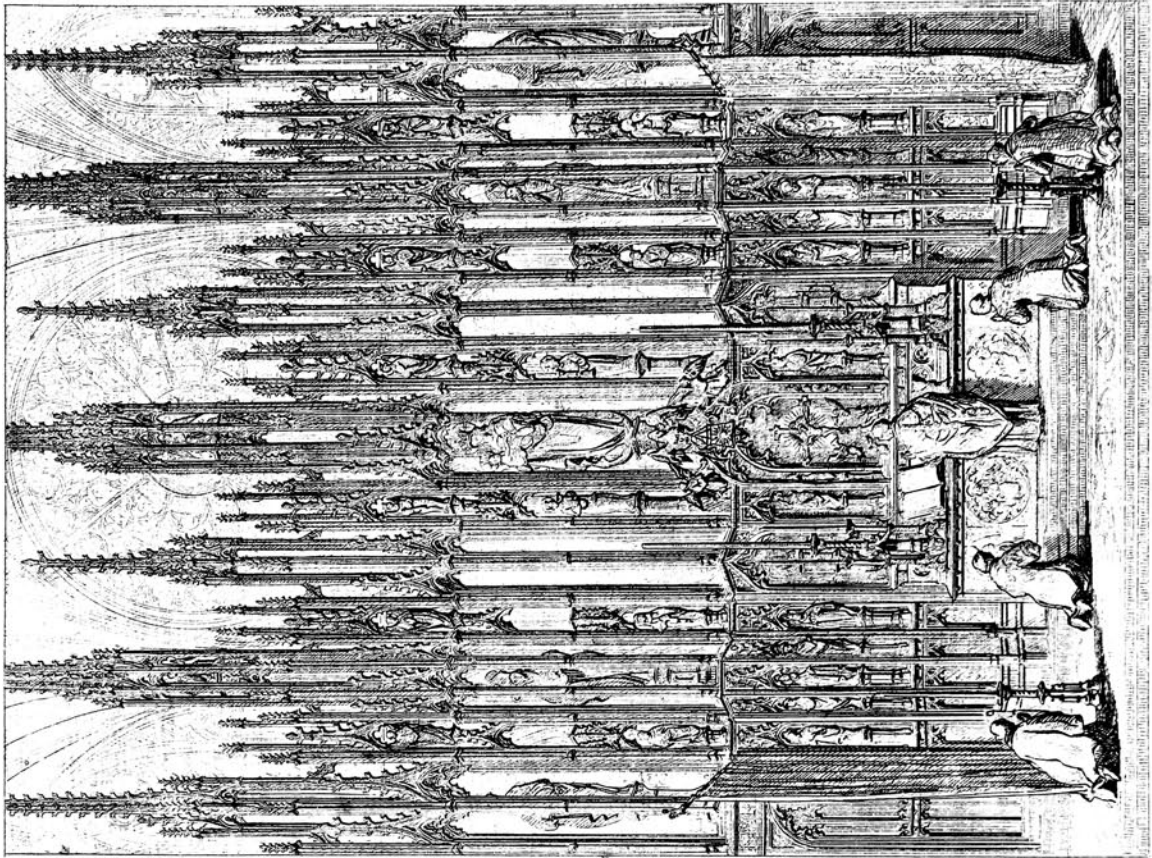
CONTRASTED CROSSES



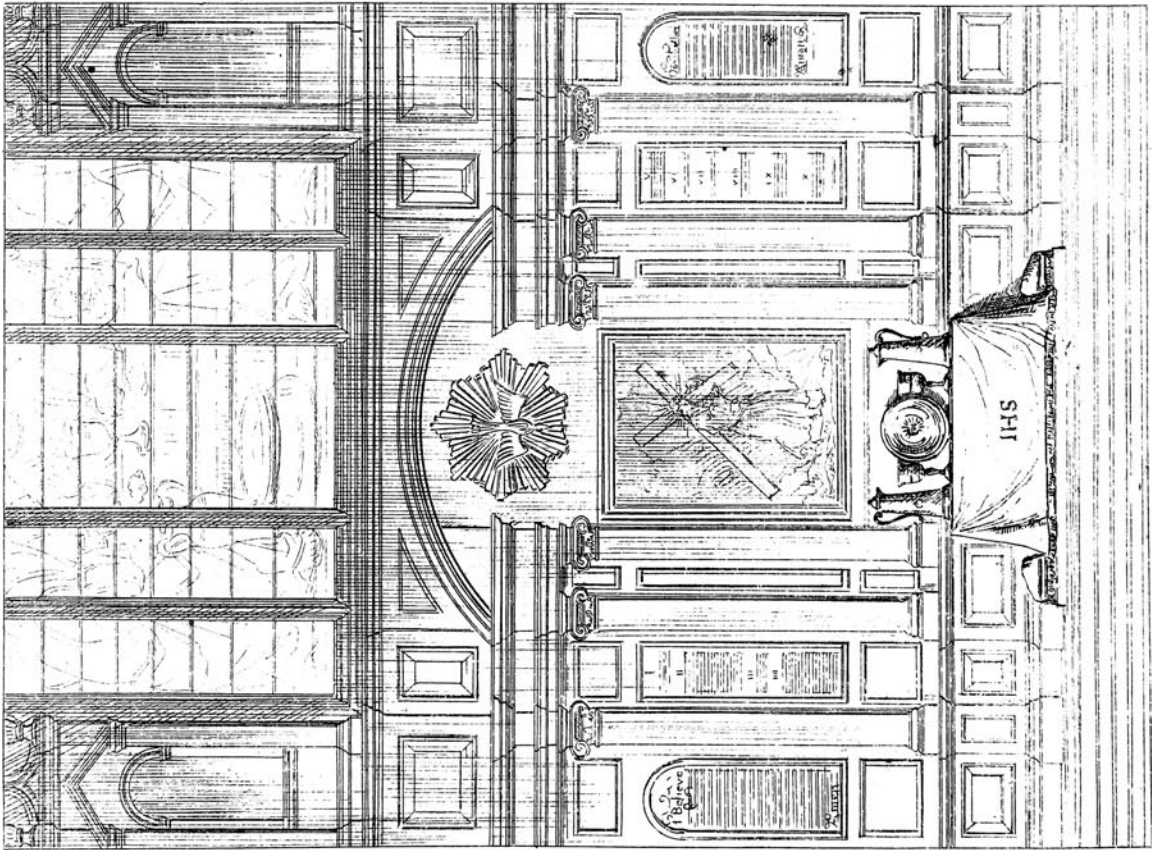
KINGS CROSS BATTLE BRIDGE

S. Gerry Arch





DURHAM ABBEY IN 1430

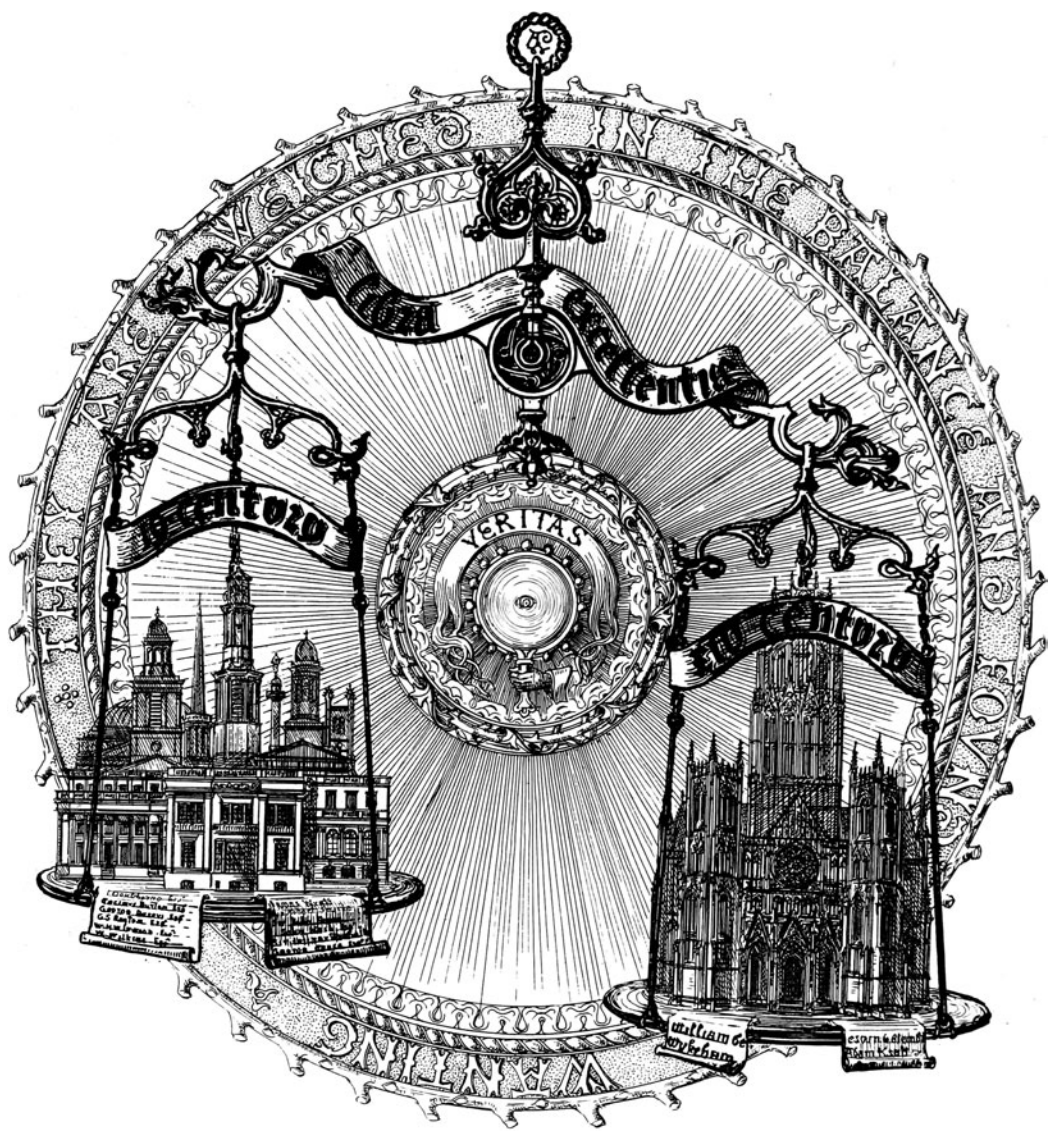


HEREFORD CATHEDRAL 1830

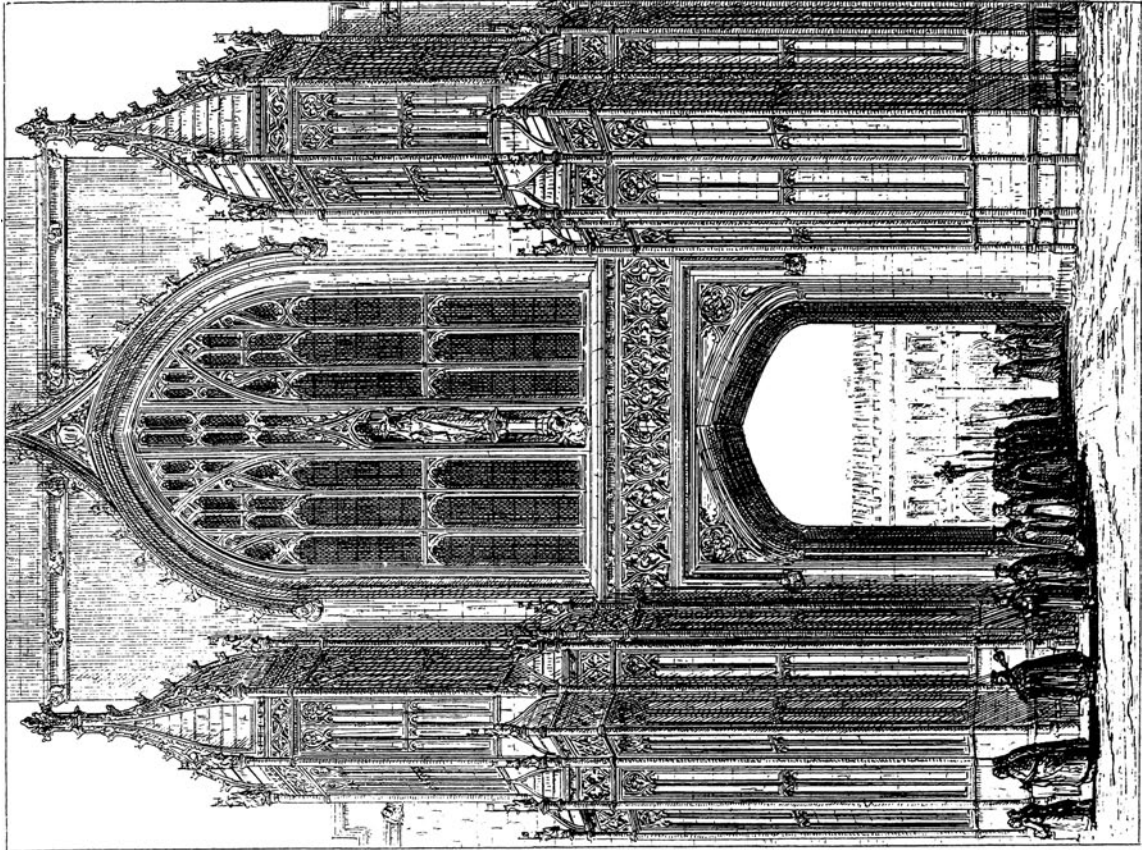
CONTRASTED
ALTAR SCREENS



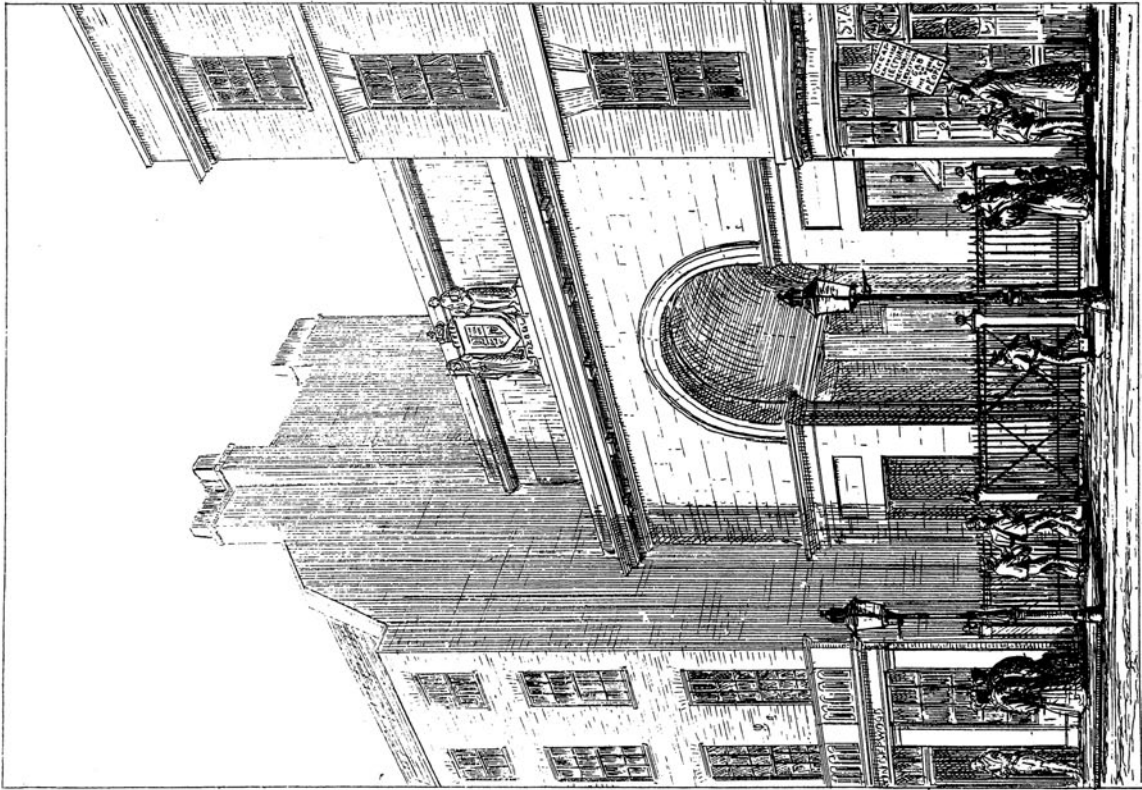
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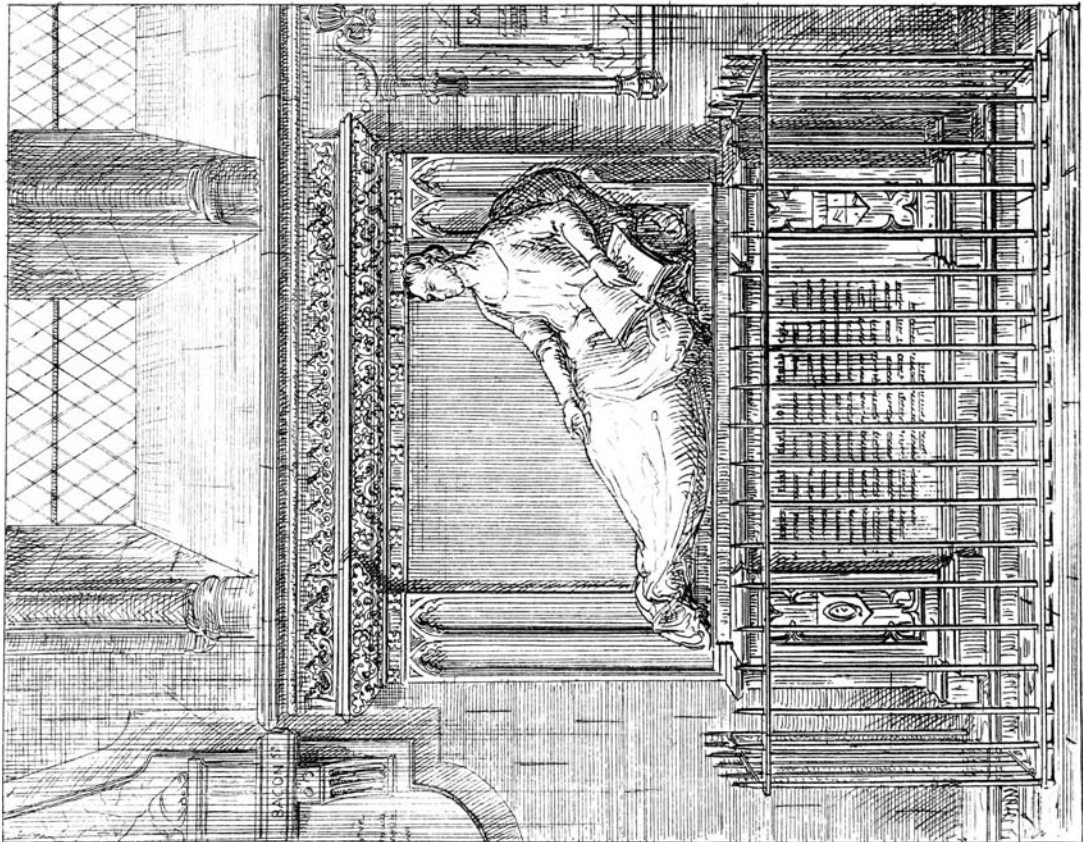
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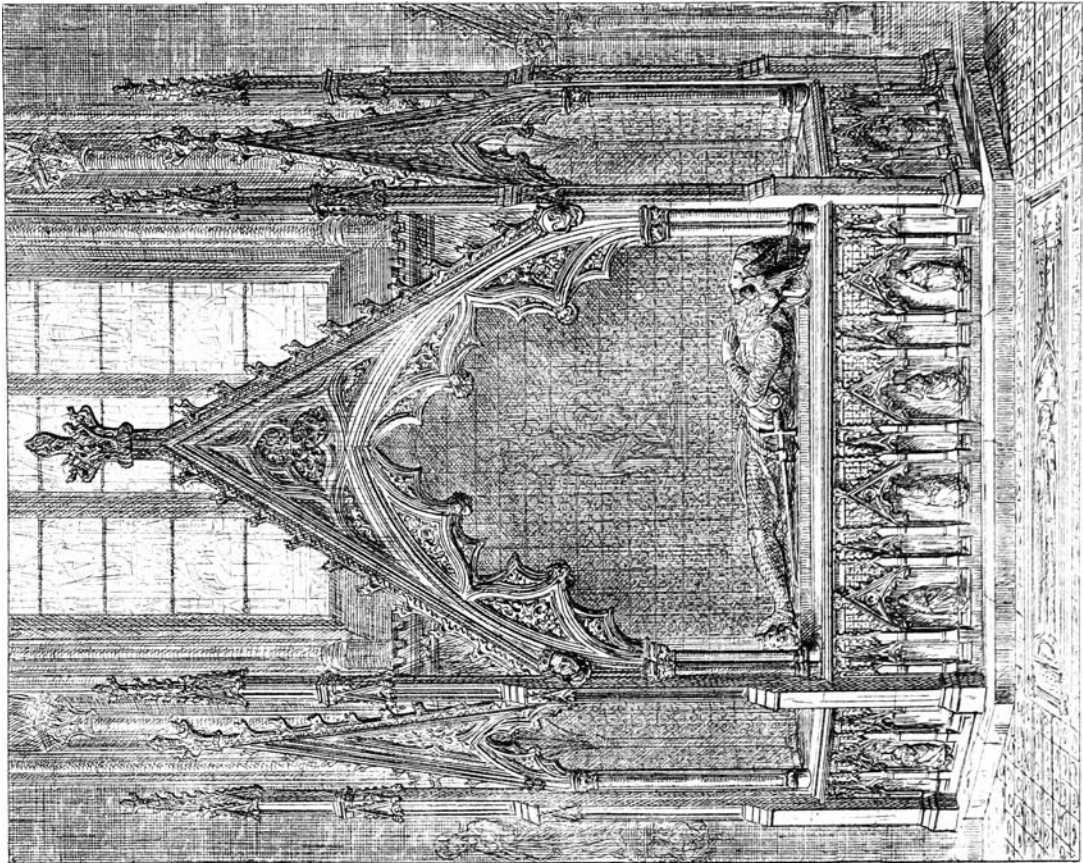
CHRIST'S COLLEGE OXFORD
GATEWAYS



Sir R. Smirke, Bart.
KINGS COLLEGE STRAND
CONTRASTED COLLEGE



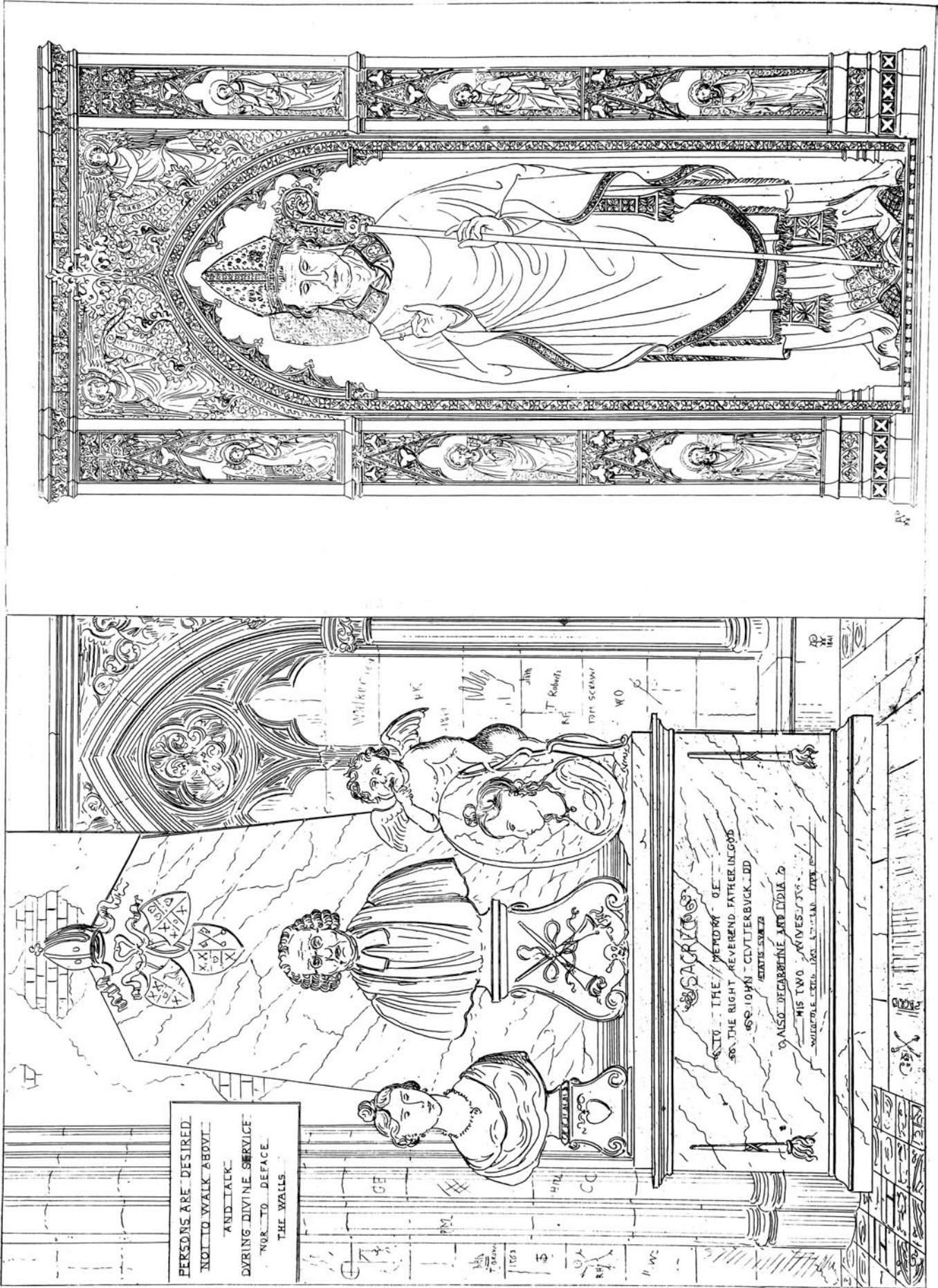
EARL OF MALMSBURY
SALISBURY CATH.
Chantry 1823



ADMIRAL GERVAASE ALCOCK
WINCHESTER CATH.
SEPULCHRAL MONUMENTS



CONTRASTED EPISCOPAL MONUMENTS.



ST MARY OVERIES SOUTHWARK.

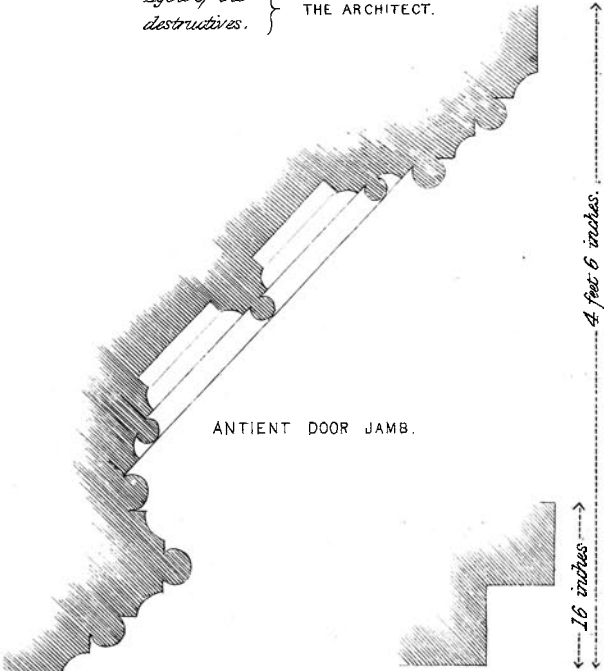


OLD WESTERN DOORWAY.

NEW WESTERN DOORWAY.

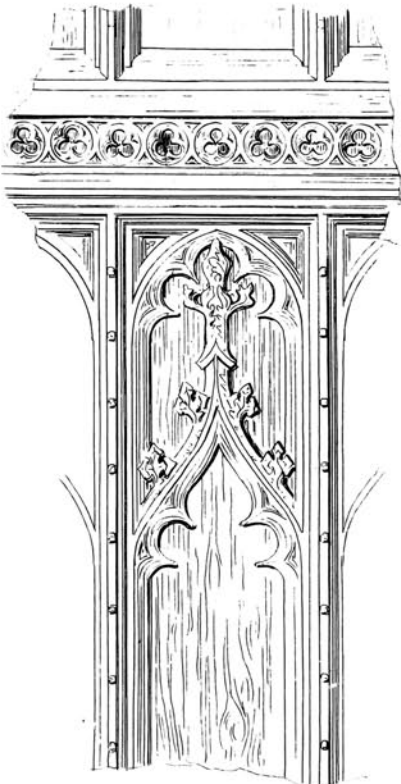
*destroyed in 1838,
the destructives, the Vestry.*

*Agent of the
destructives.* } THE ARCHITECT.



ANTIENNT DOOR JAMB.

NEW DOOR JAMB.



*Compartment of
the old door
Carved in oak.*



*Compartment of
the new door
Painted deal.*