

# On the Lady Chapel by the Cloister of Wells Cathedral and the adjacent buildings.

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IN a paper preceding this, Canon Church has quoted the principal passages in the cathedral documents, in which reference is made to the ancient Lady chapel by the cloister; and has given the reasons that induced him to start the excavations which have led to such unexpected discoveries. It is now my turn to trace, to the best of my ability, the history of the various buildings which have successively occupied the site under consideration, and to attempt an explanation of the many puzzling features connected with them.

No vestige whatever has been found of Giso's conventual buildings, though (if the Saxon church stood on the site of the present cathedral) they may be presumed to have crossed the area which has now been excavated. But a single stone of Saxon date, ornamented with an interlaced pattern, is evidence that there was at that early period some building in the immediate neighbourhood.

The oldest building, of which any remains have been found, appears to have consisted of a simple rectangle fifteen feet wide and about forty feet long, with walls three feet two inches

thick. The church of Wells and all the existing buildings in immediate connection with it are set out perfectly square with an orientation of  $5^{\circ}$  to the north of east ; but this early chapel, whose foundations have just been discovered, points in a much more northerly direction, namely,  $18^{\circ}$  to the north of east ; its lines take a decidedly oblique direction, as compared with those of the other buildings, and it is to this fact that the preservation of the foundations is largely due.

This building is certainly as old as the east wall of the cloister garth ; for at the junction of this wall with the south wall of the chapel there still remains a solid stop to the plinth of the cloister wall, with the beginning of the chapel wall worked upon the same stone. And there is a strong presumption that the chapel and the cloister wall were not built at the same time, for—

1st. The cloister plinth<sup>1</sup> was not carried round the chapel, which, if it had a plinth at all, can only have had a plain chamfer at a lower level.

2nd. The floor of the chapel<sup>2</sup> was about eighteen inches below the original floor level in the cloister.

3rd. It is improbable that the chapel was originally built with its west wall conspicuously out of the square with its other three walls.

It may then be fairly assumed that the chapel is older than the east cloister wall ; and it thus becomes important to determine the date of that wall. The south and west walls of the cloister are homogeneous and the west wall is bonded into the west front of the cathedral, which is probably the work of Bishop Jocelin ; these two walls have buttress slopes with a very delicate moulded nosing identical with that found in

(1). This plinth is at different levels on the north and south sides of the chapel.

(2). The original floor level is determined by the stone foundation for the floor which is bonded into the walls, and agrees with the level of Bitton's tile floor to be subsequently mentioned.

Jocelin's work at the palace, so that they may be assigned to his period, 1206-1242. But the buttresses to the east wall were originally lower than the others and had plain chamfered slopes which they still retain in their lower part; they were subsequently heightened to correspond with the other buttresses and the upper slopes have the delicate moulding characteristic of Jocelin's work. The same double-chamfered plinth is carried round the entire wall; but there can be no doubt that the lower part of the east cloister wall is earlier than Jocelin's time.

Two doorways in this east wall appear to be original. The large doorway in the most southerly bay, through which the procession entered the cloister after passing round the outside of the church, has a simple moulding to the jambs consisting merely of a filleted roll and hollow, with a hollow-moulded label over. The other, a small doorway, the purpose of which is obscure, has a plain chamfer only. Taking into account the slight indications to be gathered from the masonry, it seems likely that this wall is about contemporary with the north porch of the cathedral, which, from its resemblance to the work at Glastonbury, may certainly be dated about 1185. And the chapel, whose history we are investigating, must be attributed to some date prior to this.

It appears, however, that there was a chapel of the Blessed Mary at Wells, in the time of Bishop Giso,<sup>3</sup> 1061-1088, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that that chapel occupied the site under consideration, even if the foundations now disclosed may be of somewhat later date. If this is so the difficulty caused by the oblique position of the chapel vanishes at once; for in that case the chapel is of higher antiquity than the present cathedral, and nothing is known of the direction or even of the exact site of the earlier Saxon church.

The importance which clearly attached to the Lady chapel

(3). For the documentary evidence for this and other following statements see the preceding paper by Canon Church.

by the cloister throughout the medieval period, may be taken to be some corroboration of the theory that it stood upon a very ancient site. The rivalry between Wells and Glastonbury was keen, and the history of each set of buildings was certainly affected by what was done to the other. Thus, the nave of Wells was planned to contain seven or at most eight bays; but the Glastonbury nave had ten bays, and Jocelin extended the nave at Wells to a corresponding length. In both cases the body of the church was built in the local style, but the west front was early English. Again, in the fourteenth century the Wells choir was lengthened from three to six bays, and shortly afterwards the Glastonbury choir was similarly lengthened from four to six bays. A fan vault was inserted over the crossing at Wells at the end of the fifteenth century, and the crossing at Glastonbury was also vaulted by Abbot Beere at about the same date; and the same abbot put in S. Andrew's arches to support the great tower, as had been done at Wells more than a century before. Now, at Glastonbury the ancient Lady chapel at the west end of the great church, the *vetusta ecclesia*, was regarded as a building of especial sanctity; and it seems probable that if there was at Wells also an ancient Lady chapel in an unusual situation, the canons of Wells would have similarly regarded it as an important feature in their buildings, and made it take the place to them of the *vetusta ecclesia* at Glastonbury. But there is no reference in their records to any such claim of antiquity.

There is, however, a simple way of accounting for the obliquity of the chapel if it is really ancient. At the east end of the cathedral are the two wells which give their name to the town, and which provide a supply of water which has never been known to fail. The overflow from the smaller well passes through a stone conduit which has been from time to time altered in form and direction, but the oldest part of which lies almost exactly parallel to the chapel and within a few feet of it on the south side. Here it is two feet six inches

wide, and covered with a pointed barrel vault, apparently coeval with a dipping place contrived underground in the cloister garth and also covered with a pointed barrel vault, and ornamented with a simple early English moulding round the arch of entry. This dipping place was approached by a flight of steps and was in actual use within living memory, though now disused and covered with earth. Like the conduit it is set out on lines parallel to the old chapel. The natural overflow from the well was presumably an open stream taking a line in general agreement with this conduit, and it is quite intelligible that an isolated chapel should have been built upon the bank of the stream following the direction indicated by the stream.

The length of this original chapel is unknown, for no vestige remains of the west wall; but it is probable that it was lengthened somewhat when the cloister wall was substituted for the old west wall,<sup>4</sup> for the foundation under the south-west corner is of a different character from that under the north wall. The old foundation, as seen under the north wall, consisted of a bottom built in mortar, about one foot eight inches high, then a portion about one foot six inches high, built dry, reaching up to the floor line, and intended to serve the purpose of the modern damp-course; over this came the true wall, built in mortar and probably faced externally with ashlar. No fragment of this facing now remains, and it is supposed that the freestone was all carefully taken out for subsequent re-use.

The west doorway of the chapel, which still stands though now blocked, is apparently of Jocelin's date, and contemporary with the alteration to the cloister wall already noticed. The doorway from the east cloister walk into the cathedral is also

(4). Excavations were made under the paving in the cloister walk to discover whether the side walls were carried further westward, but the positions where they would have been were found to be entirely occupied by comparatively modern graves.

of this date.<sup>5</sup> In both cases there must have been an earlier doorway, and it is suggested that the object of the change was in each case to obtain greater height for the more convenient passage of the procession, which on most Sundays came out of the cathedral by this door and made a station in the Lady chapel.

The height of the chapel was apparently slight, the roof-plate not more than thirteen or fourteen feet from the floor. At the south-west corner a scar is visible in the cloister wall where the chapel wall joined it, and appears to indicate a thick wall of about this height with a thinner wall over, the meaning of which will be considered later on.

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ABOUT the year 1276, an altar of S. Nicolas was constructed in this Lady chapel and a chantry endowed for the souls of the Bitton family. At a later period we find also an altar of S. Katherine here, and it is not improbable that this was erected at about the same time; for Thomas de Bitton, dean 1284—1292, and previously a canon of Wells, was the founder of S. Katherine's chapel in Bitton church. At any rate the foundations appear to indicate the addition of a chapel (or aisle) symmetrically on either side of the old Lady chapel.

On the south side the base of one respond remains, and its mouldings are absolutely identical with those found on the detached columns in the undercroft, which support the chapter house floor over; columns which were almost certainly erected about 1286, when Thomas de Bitton was dean. Part of the south aisle wall also exists with a buttress attached.

The evidence for the north aisle is less direct but not less clear. It consists of a stone coffin and a piece of tile paving

(5). The doorway leading from the cloister into the Bishop's park is another insertion of Jocelin's date.

found in the direct line of the old north wall, and of another stone coffin and preparation for paving found outside the north wall, that is to say, in the position occupied by the aisle.

The western part only of the old walls was taken down and replaced by arches; in the eastern bay the solid walls were allowed to remain, for on the north side the wall is now standing above the floor level. The eastern respond on the north side must have stood exactly opposite the buttress now remaining on the south side; so the presumption is that the respond on the south side was also opposite to this respond and to the buttress. If the space between the respond thus fixed and the existing western respond is divided into two equal parts, it will be found that the intermediate pier comes opposite the spot where on the north side the tile pavement fails, and where consequently it is reasonable to expect to find a pier. If this restoration be correct, it follows that the two aisles were as nearly symmetrical as the oblique direction of the west wall would permit. The length of the north aisle is determined by a small fragment of its east wall, which lines with the east wall of the Lady chapel. It is assumed that the south aisle likewise extended as far as the east end of the Lady chapel.

Both the arcade and aisle wall are two feet six inches thick. The aisle wall is faced with rubble and without a plinth, but the buttress has a freestone plinth with a plain chamfer. The south aisle is ten feet six inches wide. This aisle wall seems to have been butted against the old cloister wall, with perhaps an occasional bonder. This outer wall was very low, only about nine feet high up to the eaves; the roof sloped upwards at an angle of  $45^{\circ}$ , and the arcade wall was apparently raised some ten feet to take the upper plate of the aisle roof; at least this is my interpretation of the marks upon the east face of the cloister wall. Whether or not the old Lady chapel was now lighted by clerestory windows there is nothing to shew, but in any case this building must have been considerably raised.

The whole building was at this time paved with tiles, of which at least half were encaustic. Great numbers of broken tiles have been found ; four border tiles remain *in situ* in the south aisle ; and on the north side there is still a piece of paving four feet six inches long. The border consists of tiles five inches by two-and-a-half inches, alternately plain and encaustic, the latter having a pattern of small rings between two straight lines. The larger piece of paving is partly under an arch of the arcade, where the five-inch tiles are set diagonally and separated by one-and-a-half-inch strips and dots ; and partly in the body of the Lady chapel, where the tiles are set square and in alternate rows five inches and two-and-a-half-inches square. Of the diagonal tiles only three remain, a fleur-de-lys, and two half-tiles shewing an animal within a circle, in one case a griffin, in the other probably a bird. Of the square tiles the five-inch rows are all encaustic and of the same ornamental pattern ; the rows of smaller tiles are mostly plain, but every third or fourth bears a rose, of which there are two distinct patterns used. These tiles are laid on mortar at the same level as the floor of the older Lady chapel, but under the south-west respond there is a small piece of stone paving at a level a few inches above that of the tile floor. Though fragments of a large number of tiles have been found, few of them have any special interest. One or two have unusually good designs and some have an excellent green glaze, but five may be considered heraldic. One of these bears the three lions of England, another the three lilies of France, a third the three chevrons of Clare ; the other two are without the shield, but one shews the double-headed eagle of the King of the Romans, the other the triple tower of Castile. The triple tower is interesting, because out of the very few ancient tiles still preserved in the cathedral, two bear this tower in connection with a checky coat, presumably intended for Warren.

The stone coffins previously mentioned are about a foot below the floor, and many bones were met with in other parts.



In the north aisle against its south wall is what appears to be part of the base of a monument.

When the chapel was taken down some of the *débris* was re-used to make good the cloister wall. This walling has not been interfered with, but it is apparent that it contains several fragments of lias shafts and various pieces of Purbeck marble, evidence that the chapel contained some elaborate work.

Probably it was at the time that the side chapels were added that the overflow from the well was enclosed in the vaulted conduit already mentioned. This conduit appears to have passed under the entire length of the south aisle. And the dipping place, which has an early English moulding on its arch of entrance, seems to be coeval with the vaulted conduit.

Some building occupied the space to the east of the Lady chapel, for foundations remain both towards the north and towards the south. The foundation on the south side apparently had its floor about two feet below that of the Lady chapel. The preparation for the floor is of stone—an indication of twelfth century work—and the foundation for some distance below the floor is built dry as in the case of the Lady chapel.

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DURING the fourteenth century the building of the chapter house, the eastern extension of the cathedral, the strengthening of the central tower, and the erection of the south-west tower, are a sufficient explanation of the fact that so far as we know no alteration was made to the buildings which we are at present considering. But with the fifteenth century came very radical changes.

Bishop Bubwith died in 1424, and left money to build a library over the whole length of the east cloister, from the Eschaetor's office (which was probably in the western turret of the south transept) to the doorway leading into the Bishop's

park. But the legacy seems to have been insufficient, for the library erected at this time was hardly more than half the length intended by the bishop.

Up to this time the cloister had been merely a wooden penthouse leaning against the massive outer wall of the garth ; and the architect employed by Bubwith's executors had to determine the width of bay to be used in vaulting the undercroft of the library along the eastern range. This he did, looking wisely to the future, by dividing up the *south* walk into equal bays of a convenient length, and then he set out the eastern range from the *southern* end, leaving the northern end against the cathedral transept to take care of itself. This is really a remarkable fact ; for all that the original architect was able to carry out was the northern part of the east walk, including the irregular bay next the church, though he may perhaps have put in the foundations for the rest of the eastern and one bay of the southern walk ; and though the southern walk is clearly the one that ruled the design, and the only one which is regularly divided into a series of equal bays, it was, as a matter of fact, the last to be completed.

The original architect probably raised the gable wall at the south end of the east cloister, for Bubwith's arms may here be seen ; but he cannot even have completed that part of the library which was first built, for there is a distinct change of detail in the windows on the east side. The object of this change was probably to save money, but the saving must have been so slight that it can only be accounted for by a change in the architect. On the west side, towards the palm churchyard, no change was made but the original design literally followed.

This library building presents some features of considerable difficulty.

One of the vaulting shafts happens to come right against the small doorway into the cloister on the south side of the Lady chapel ; so that this doorway must now have been

closed. Another shaft encroaches upon the Lady chapel doorway, standing just in front of one jamb ; but there seems to be no reason to suppose that this doorway was disused, for the end shaft is very similarly placed, so as almost completely to hide one jamb of the handsome doorway into the cathedral.

The upper part of the early wall was taken down and rebuilt much thinner, so as to give greater width to the library : underneath the windows a continuous weathercourse was built in to cover the top of a penthouse roof ; and at a lower level large corbel stones were inserted to support this roof. These stones have since been hacked back flush with the wall-face ; but that they belong to this date is clear from the fact that they are in every case opposite the piers of the library building, so that to every bay of the cloister vault there would correspond a bay of the penthouse roof. It is curious that though the window sills are all at the same level, the weathercourse below them is at different levels on the two sides of the Lady chapel. The difference is seven inches, just enough to make the junction of the two roofs exceedingly awkward. Perhaps the Lady chapel roof was intended to cut through the penthouse ; but there are difficulties about accepting this explanation, for the library windows originally formed an unbroken series, and it will be noticed that one of the corbels came partly over the chapel doorway.<sup>6</sup> It is also curious that the weathercourse should not be returned against the wall of the library staircase, and that the windows in the turret should not have been made to look east and so avoid this lean-to building. But the upper part of this turret is certainly not original, and perhaps the greater part of the turret has been taken down and rebuilt. The windows may then have been

(6). One bay of the library was entirely rebuilt by Stillington, so that it is not quite certain that there were originally windows in that bay ; but in the adjoining bays he blocked three windows, two of which were over the doorway into the old chapel. The only place where a roof could have been intended to rise above the sills of the windows is just where Stillington's chapel afterwards stood.

shifted, in order to avoid a timber structure built against the transept of the cathedral, of which nothing remains now but the mortice holes. The roof mark on the south side of the turret is due to a modern building, shewn on Carter's plan.

It is difficult to understand what can have been the purpose of the penthouse roof, but it is at least clear that Bubwith's executors contemplated a great change, which could hardly have involved less than a complete rebuilding of the Lady chapel in a position rather further to the east than that occupied by the old building. But there is no reason to suppose that any part of this scheme was ever carried out. Except one small fragment near the turret, no sign has been discovered of a wall parallel to the cloister wall. And it seems certain that after the building of the library the high-pitched roof of the old chapel remained as before, blocking the light from at least three of the new library windows. When Bitton's aisle was built a groove was cut for the tiles in the old cloister wall; but when the library was added no provision was made for this roof either by groove or weathercourse, for the reason that the roof was not intended to remain. Remain, however, it did, for the weathercourse under the window sills has been cut through in exactly the same line as the groove below. It seems impossible to account in any other way for the groove stopping just where Bubwith's work begins, and for the corresponding cut through the weathercourse above, except upon the supposition that the roof was intended to be taken down, but was after all allowed to remain.

Soon after the first half of the library had been finished the east walk of the cloister was completed, together with the first bay of the adjoining alley, and the whole of the east walk was paved in 1457; but the completion of the library over was deferred until the succeeding century.

Leland states that Bubwith made the east part of the cloister with the little chapel beneath and the great library over it, but what he means by the little chapel I do not know.

The early vestry against the aisle of the cathedral transept must have been taken down before 1448, for at that date the doorway was walled up and Bicknell's monument placed across it, in accordance with the directions contained in his will.

The perpendicular tracery was inserted in the transept windows some time before 1424, for one of these windows with the tracery already inserted was then blocked by the end of the library building.

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WE have seen that after Bubwith's death a scheme for rebuilding the Lady chapel was adopted, but for forty years no steps were apparently taken to carry the work into execution; or, if a beginning was made, what was done then was entirely swept away to make room for Stillington's magnificent building. This was not a continuation of the works begun long before, but an entirely new design of a chapel in a position and probably on a scale not previously contemplated. No space was left, as before intended, between the cloister and the chapel, to light the library windows, but five of these windows were now permanently closed by the west end of the chapel, and the weathercourse built in under the window sills became of no use.

This chapel is cruciform on plan without aisles; the western limb is three bays in length, the eastern two bays, and each transept contains one wide bay. The dimensions are nearly as below:—

	<i>Ft.</i>	<i>In.</i>
Internal length—Nave . . . . .	50	6
Crossing . . . . .	22	2
Choir . . . . .	34	3
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Total—say . . . . .	107	0
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	Ft.	In.
Internal width—Transept . . . .	20	0
Crossing . . . .	22	2
Transept . . . .	20	0
Total . . . .	62	2

Walls 3ft. 5in. thick.

	Ft.	In.	x	Ft.	In.
Size of Bays—Nave and Choir . . . .	22	0	x	16	3
Crossing . . . .	22	0	x	22	0
Transepts . . . .	22	0	x	18	3

Internal height, about 40ft.

There is also a vestry on the north side, about fifteen feet by twelve feet, which appears from the indications of a stair in one corner to have had another room over.

The stairs to the roof were contained in two octagonal turrets attached to the western sides of the two transept gables.

The chapel was probably almost completed during Stillington's time, 1466-91 ; but Leland's phrase "of Stillington and King," suggests that the finishing strokes were given to it by the latter, who sat from 1495 to 1503. This chapel was set out parallel to the cathedral, without regard to the obliquity which distinguished the older building.

At this period the conduit already mentioned must have been diverted so as to pass round the southern side of the chapel. But the direction of this conduit appears to have been changed more than once. On leaving the well the water passes at once into the *camera*,<sup>7</sup> and the spot where it pierces the wall is marked by a small niche on the east side of the wall. Ten feet beyond the wall there is a stone sluice box, and a branch channel, nine by fifteen inches, leading to the left ; the water in this channel now forces its way through the boundary wall and may be seen running over the stones into

(7). This is the name of the enclosure within which the chapel stood. The cloister garth is commonly called the *palm churchyard*.

the Bishop's stew. The main conduit up to this point has rubble walls, with flat floor and cover-stones, and measures one foot nine inches by three feet two inches. Twelve feet further on it begins to sweep round to the left, but immediately afterwards there comes a total change in the character of the work. This upper part of the conduit is of uncertain date: the piece that follows is clearly more modern. It has a smaller section, only one foot ten inches by one foot five inches, and is of lighter construction, and built of squared stones; and it takes a new direction, the effect of which is that the conduit is not now deflected so much to the left as was the case previously. The conduit has not been opened at any point between this bend and the spot where it rejoins the early vaulted conduit already described. The junction occurs close to the cloister wall, and here the newer portion, which must almost certainly be of Stillington's date, measures two feet by two feet six inches, and is constructed wholly of squared stones. The quantity of water here is much greater than in the upper part of the conduit: another stream must have been picked up on the way, for the increase is independent of rainfall. At the point of junction there is over the six inch cover-stone a huge piece of squared Chilcote stone, whose extreme dimensions are four feet four inches by one foot ten inches by one foot six inches. This must apparently have come from Stillington's chapel, for it is not now *in situ*, but merely forms part of a rain-water drain. From this point the old vaulted conduit continues in a perfectly straight line to and beyond the old dipping place. This must always have been approached by steps, but the actual retaining wall, existing on one side of the flight, is of later date, and hides the early English moulding on the jamb. The enclosing wall and doorway of which Carter has left sketches<sup>8</sup> seem to be perpendicular in date. In his time the

(8). See Carter's *Ancient Architecture of England*, and his drawings in the British Museum. A copy of one of these drawings is published in *Canon Church's Chapters in the Early History of Wells*.

vault itself was paved a little above the level of the water which ran through the middle of the room ; and the pavement crossed the stream in the middle of its length, leaving a dipping place above and below. One of these was approached by another step down for convenient access when the water was low. The building was intended for dipping water and for washing linen ; and the water required for the cathedral was drawn here until the introduction of the modern supply pipes. It is true that there was a *camera necessaria* in connexion with the cloister, but that was probably situate somewhere to the south of the Lady chapel, and was reached through the small doorway now blocked by the privy attached to the library. Though this dipping place has been generally called a *gong*, there is no indication whatever that such was its purpose, and the suggestion is entirely opposed to the sanitary ideas of the medieval period.

Owing to the cruciform plan of Stillington's chapel a small courtyard was left between it and the transept of the cathedral ; to carry away the rainfall from this court a surface drain was formed, part of which still remains between the ends of the two transepts.

The builders were anxious that the chapel should be thoroughly dry, and, perhaps on account of the natural dampness of the site, they took the then unusual course of building in below the floor a damp-proof course of slates, the nail marks in which shew that they had previously been used upon a roof.

Since the greater part of the west wall of Stillington's chapel is still standing, and we have been fortunate enough to find many of the stones from the vault, it is possible to form a very clear idea of the appearance of the shell of the building. The outside was comparatively plain, but relieved apparently by an open quatrefoil parapet, with no doubt pinnacles over the buttresses. The windows had pointed heads filled with Somerset tracery, and broad traceried transoms



connected together by a large string course, which ran from window to window round the buttresses, and so formed with the transom a horizontal band round the building.

Internally the effect was very rich ; walls and roof were entirely covered with freestone panelling. A vertical band of panels, each with a traceried head, filled the splay of window-jamb and arch, and another similar band occupied the narrow space between the window and the vaulting shaft and between the window-head and the wall rib. Overhead was a fan vault with a circular pendant in the centre of each bay ; and the space between fans and pendant was filled in with panels of fanciful shape. The only plain surfaces were those beneath the windows, and the floor which seems to have been a simple one of stone. This floor is two feet above the floor of the old chapel and seven-and-half inches above the cloister floor.<sup>9</sup> The chapel is approached from the cloister by three shallow steps up to the doorway and one down again into the building, forming a rebate for the door to close against.

Although Stillington's connection with Somerset was of a merely formal nature, there can be no doubt that a local architect was employed, who must certainly have studied the rebuilding of Sherborne church, even if he was not the designer of that work. The choir of Sherborne is said to have been begun after the fire of 1446, and the nave in 1475, so that the nave was exactly contemporary with our building, and it is the nave which most nearly resembles the Wells chapel.

The resemblances between Sherborne church and Stillington's chapel are very striking. The mouldings throughout are very similar, those of the vaulting shafts and ribs identical, with capitals similarly formed by a mere band of carving between two beads following the wavy outline of the group of shafts.<sup>10</sup>

(9). The level of the cloister floor has never varied more than an inch or two from the earliest times.

(10). This capital occurs only in the nave at Sherborne.

The construction of the vaults is precisely similar: the fans are polygonal (not circular), and the ribs generally out of long stones rebated for the filling, with only the tracery out of the solid; at Wells the filling is of a light porous stone, which may be artificial, and the filling of part of the vault at Sherborne is said to have been of plaster until the late restoration. Both roofs were covered with bosses, and one at Wells carved with an angel supporting a shield is similar to the corbels under the nave vaulting shafts at Sherborne. Further, the vault over the crossing of Wells cathedral, which must have been contemporary with Stillington's work, is almost identical with the vault over the crossing at Sherborne. The west window of Stillington's chapel (or, at least, so much of it as remains) has tracery of the same character as is employed in the nave clerestory at Sherborne, and reproduces one of the most striking features of the Sherborne windows, the insertion of two great mullions reaching unbroken from the sill to the arch, and cutting right through the pattern of the tracery, which is the ordinary Somerset pattern slightly modified. These mullions have the same unusual section on the outer face, both at Wells and Sherborne, and the same mouldings are found on window jambs at both places.

The interior of Sherborne church is wonderfully rich, but the Wells chapel was even more highly elaborated. An additional row of panels surrounded the windows, all the panels and transoms had richer tracery, the ribs of the vault were more closely crowded together, and a large pendant with flying ribs attached hung down in the centre of each bay. But colour was wanting; except that the filling of the vault was white-washed, nothing was done to hide the natural face of the stone; not even the bosses were painted.

Owing to the similarity found to exist between this chapel and the church (especially the nave) of Sherborne, the design of the roof can be recovered, with a considerable degree of certainty, from the stones which still exist. In the middle of the

choir a number of these stones were found embedded in stone-dust and rubbish as clean as though they were just worked, and lying face downwards, just as they fell when the supports of the vault had been sufficiently weakened. And a similar find was made in the north transept. A comparison of these stones proves (as might be expected) that the vaults of choir and transept differed in design. When the ground was levelled some years ago other stones were found and preserved; these must have come from the parts where we have now found none, that is from the nave, crossing, and south transept. Naturally enough these seem to have come from three different patterns of vault, and two of these stones are identical with stones found in the choir and north transept. So that it is pretty certain that only three types of vault were employed, one for nave and choir, another for the transepts, and a third over the crossing.<sup>11</sup>

The central pendant must in every case have been smashed to pieces on striking the ground, but it served to break the fall of the adjoining stones, eleven of which have been preserved, some in a very perfect state. These form portions of three distinct rings, one belonging to each of the different patterns of vault. The rings vary in diameter from four feet five inches to five feet one inch, and the panelling on the outside is differently arranged in each case, but the pendants seem to have been much alike. Each supported a small fan, bounded by the circular ring just mentioned, and divided into eight wedge-shaped panels with cusped heads; but there also started from the boss of the pendant four small detached ribs, which flew across below the fan and died into four bosses on the ring.

The great fans which spring from the vaulting shafts have each quadrant divided into four by principal ribs, with (in the

(11). These stones have now been marked as follows :—Those previously found, with letters A, B, C, etc. ; those now found in choir, with figures 1, 2, 3, etc. ; those found in north transept thus 1x, 2x, 3x, etc. ; and one from under this transept arch, 1xx. The most important of these stones have been placed in the east cloister, the remainder are in the undercroft of the chapter house.

upper part) intermediate mullions between. And the central rib of one quadrant meets the corresponding rib of the next quadrant upon the circular rib surrounding the pendant. But, in order to make the bays of different width harmonize together, the circles are kept nearly equal in size; consequently the intersection of the diagonals falls in the nave four inches outside, and in the transept seven inches inside, the centre line of the ring; but a large boss conceals the inaccuracy and gives the necessary support to the heavy masonry within the ring.

From the large number of stones belonging to the outer ring of the fan, all of which agree (except for a slight variation in the depth of the cusped head), it seems certain that the fan was similar throughout the building, but the space between the fans and the central ring was filled very differently in the different bays. In the nave and choir this space was divided into wedge-shaped panels cusped alternately at opposite ends. So far as this bay has been drawn out it is almost certainly correct, but there is not sufficient evidence quite to complete the pattern.<sup>12</sup> In the transepts this space was filled with large triangular panels freely cusped. The precise arrangement of these is very uncertain, but the general character is shewn by the existence of such stones as 3x, 4x, 3xx, 8x, and 9x, all of which belong to this bay. The stone 2x may be in either of the two positions shewn; M probably belongs to this bay; and L must either be in the place shewn or else occupy a similar position in the bay of the crossing. But the evidence for this central bay is unfortunately very meagre: only one stone, E, can be definitely located here, and that suggests a stellar arrangement of ribs round the centre, but nothing is really known about this part of the vault; it is not even certain whether this central bay was exactly square. On each

(12). The stone marked 10x was found in the transept, but this stone had not been used in the position for which it was originally intended; it had been roughly altered to fit in another place.

side of this bay there was a panelled arch, of which one stone only remains, marked 1xx, carved with a representation of an angel supporting a shield with S. Andrew's cross upon it.

There is also a capital which belongs to the vaulting shaft between this panelled arch and the fan vault, and this is carved with a *Rose in splendour*, the badge of Edward IV.

If the work had been originally set out with greater accuracy it would have been possible to carry the restoration further, and perhaps even to have completed all but the central bay; but unfortunately the mason's geometry was not equal to the task of determining with accuracy the inclinations of the various lines and planes involved, and consequently every stone had to be readjusted on the scaffold so as to fit into its actual place in the roof. As the work left the banker it had a beautiful finish; the lines are so true that it would have been possible to determine the directions and curvatures of the ribs from comparatively short lengths. But almost every stone has had the beds and joints roughly axed upon the scaffold. So that we are forced to the conclusion that the mason's lines—the only lines which we can recover with exactitude—are invariably wrong, or at least untrustworthy. Precisely the same thing may be noticed at Sherborne: there too the mason has been at fault, and the stones fail to meet with precision, especially over the windows, where the regularity of the fan is broken through. In consequence of this inaccuracy it has been impossible to determine the curvature of the ribs, but I feel convinced that they were flatter than the window arches; so that, as at Sherborne and Redcliffe churches, the point of the arch over the window was higher than the first boss along the cross-ridge of the vault, instead of being lower as it would be if the fan was regularly and symmetrically formed. The effect is to detach the vault from the wall, to diminish the thrust, and by increasing its independence to give a certain vigorous appearance to the vault, which greatly adds to its charm.

At the west end of the chapel it was not possible to have any glass below the level of the library parapet ; but directly this was passed the blind panelling was suddenly changed to window, a short distance above the springing of the arch. The top course now remaining is this window-sill, which is by some freak of the sculptor ornamented with a row of ball-flowers, looking perfectly natural in spite of their late date.

In the centre of this wall is a tiny quatrefoil opening, forming a hagioscope at a convenient height above the library floor. The sill of the blind window is gable-shaped, being raised in the middle above the head of the west door. At the point of this gable four plug-holes have been pierced ; there are two more in the transom, and another set of four near the top of the central light ; a series of images or other decorations must have been fixed here.

Probably a corona hung from the roof below each pendant, for there are, round each, four circular holes symmetrically placed as though for chains.

Very little is known of the internal arrangements and fittings. At the west end the window recesses and panelling spring from a bench table ; but how far this treatment was carried cannot be told, and no indication has been found of the position of the screen, or of Stillington's monument. But right in the centre of the building a walled grave, containing bones, was found several feet below the pavement. This must be the burying place of some person of distinction, and is probably that of Precentor Overay, who by his will, dated 1493, left his body to be buried in the new Lady chapel by the cloister, "ante ostium introitus in cancellum dicte capelle retro sepulturam bone memorie domini mei Roberti nuper Bathon. et Wellen. episcopi."<sup>13</sup> If this identification is correct it follows that the chancel screen was on the east side of the crossing, and that Stillington was buried somewhere in the middle of the eastern limb. Some fragments of delicate

(13). Will printed by the *Rev. F. W. Weaver*, in the *Reliquary*.

monumental work have been found, including a part of the Archangel Gabriel bearing a pot of lilies. These were dug up mainly in the chancel and may be supposed to be part of Stillington's monument. Another curious find has been a bit of plaster cornice of the fifteenth century, which perhaps formed part of another monument.

Altars in the transepts (the base of one remains) took the place of the side altars in the old chapel dedicated to S. Nicolas and S. Katherine, and opposite one of these an interment was found.

Among the miscellaneous objects found in the digging, may be mentioned some portions apparently of a quatrefoil parapet, some large crockets, and various specimens of broken crockery of different designs.

The northern stair turret of Stillington's chapel comes within a few feet of the cathedral stair turret, and after it was built a connection was formed between the two. The curious feature about it is the fact that the doorway was made at a height of about eighteen feet, instead of being at the floor level, which would seem to be a more convenient position. Probably the connection was made at this level for some definite reason, the clue to which is now lost.

In the cloister there are two curious penthouses, some three feet wide, formed by stone roofs resting on a detached shaft midway between two pairs of buttresses. Each was approached by a doorway from the cloister and was entirely open to the weather. They are situate symmetrically one on each side of the entrance to the Lady chapel, and have rather the appearance of sentry boxes from which the chapel doorway might be watched; but they need explanation.

On the east wall of the cloister, just to the south of the chapel doorway, there is a curious piece of sculpture, representing the instruments of the torture, arranged so as to form the letters IHS. This is *in situ*, with mouldings round and a bracket on one side to support a lamp or an image; and, imme-

diately below, the stone bench table has been cut away. This again requires explanation.

Nearly over this there used to be a sculpture of the Ascension, which has now been moved into the church, and fixed in the north-east transept; but this, it is stated, was not *in situ*.

On the north side of the chapel, and entered from the cloister, there was a small room about nine feet six inches square. It was separated from the cloister by a stone screen the upper part of which remains. The date is clearly very late, certainly after 1500. And it is suggested that this was an office of some kind—possibly a place for the sale of candles and other *objets de piété*.

The southern portion of the library seems also to be of very late date. It is certainly later than the choristers' school-rooms, erected over the western cloister by Beckington's executors in the time of Stillington, and it differs in many respects from the earlier part of the library. The windows looking on the palm churchyard are made to match the older windows and the gurgoyles on this side match those put in by Beckington's executors. But the east wall contained no windows and no gurgoyles; on this side the thick wall was retained up to the top, and there must have been rainwater pipes from the first. The roof too is much poorer than in the old part.

About 1670, Treasurer Richard Busby restored and refitted the library at a cost of £100. He inserted the square windows on the east side, and all the internal panelling and bookcases. Probably he also built the library privy.

The roof mark, of which indications remain against the library stair turret, belongs merely to some modern sheds, the plan of which is shewn on Carter's plan of the cathedral.

The story of the growth of these buildings is completed. It only remains to add a word upon the destruction of the Lady chapel. In 1552 the Bishop and the Dean and Chapter granted the chapel to Sir John Gates, on condition that he



should take it down and level the site within the period of four-and-quarter years. Probably they regarded the building as one intended for superstitious uses, and therefore better removed. But we could wish that they had taken a different view of their duties and responsibilities. The Somerset Perpendicular is distinct from any other school of architecture, and the principal works now existing in that style are S. Mary Redcliffe, Sherborne Abbey, and Bath Abbey. But so far as we can judge from the remains it seems probable that this chapel was actually the *chef d'œuvre* of the school; and that it surpassed even Sherborne and Redcliffe churches in beauty, or at any rate in elaboration.

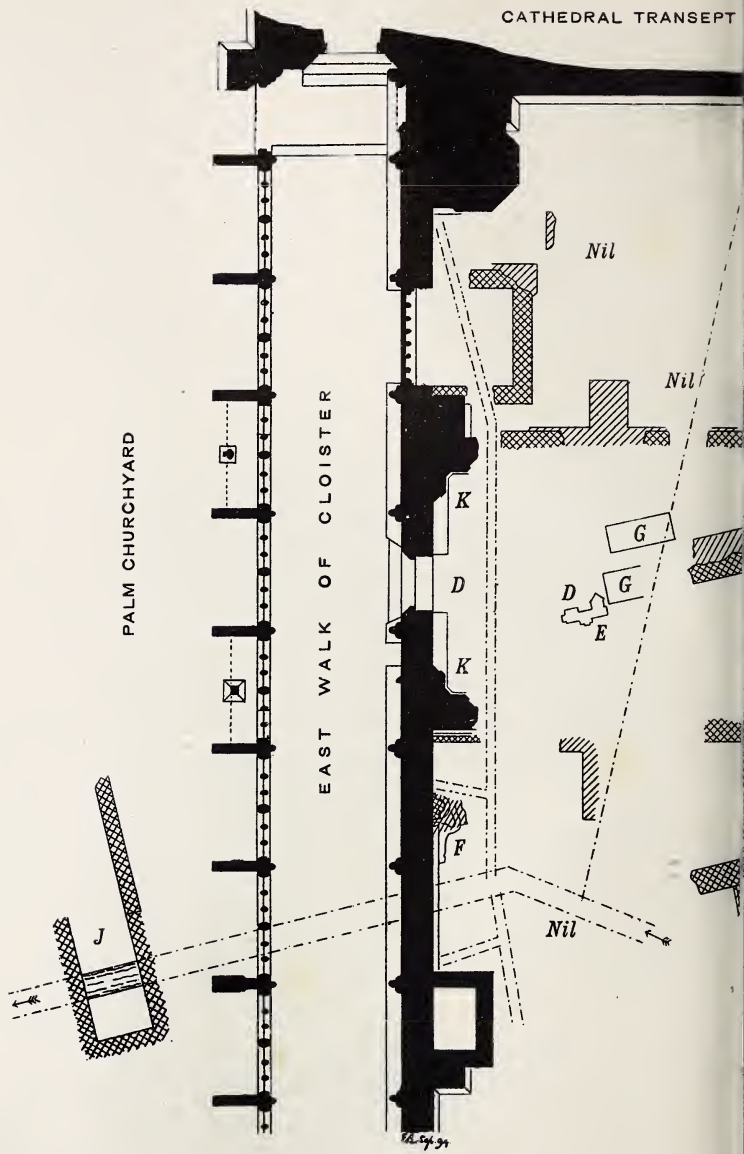
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PLATE I represents a general plan of the excavations. Here existing buildings are shewn a solid black, and the foundations discovered are scored in; the double scoring indicates those portions of the footings that are nearest to the floor level, and that consequently correspond most nearly to the form of the walls above the floor. The dotted lines shew the directions of drains; those built of stone are shewn by double lines, while the single lines indicate pipes. On this drawing nothing has been marked but what has been actually seen and measured.

The following particulars may be noted :—

- A.—Stone preparation for floor of vestry, about one foot below the datum. [The *datum* taken throughout has been the level of Stillington's floor, which is about the level of the present turf.] This floor seems, curiously enough, to have been about three feet lower than the floor of the cathedral.
- B.—Stone preparation for floor, four feet below datum.
- C.—Stone preparation for floor, bonded into wall about two feet below datum; and mortar bed for tile floor at the same level.
- D.D.—Mortar bed for tile floor as last.

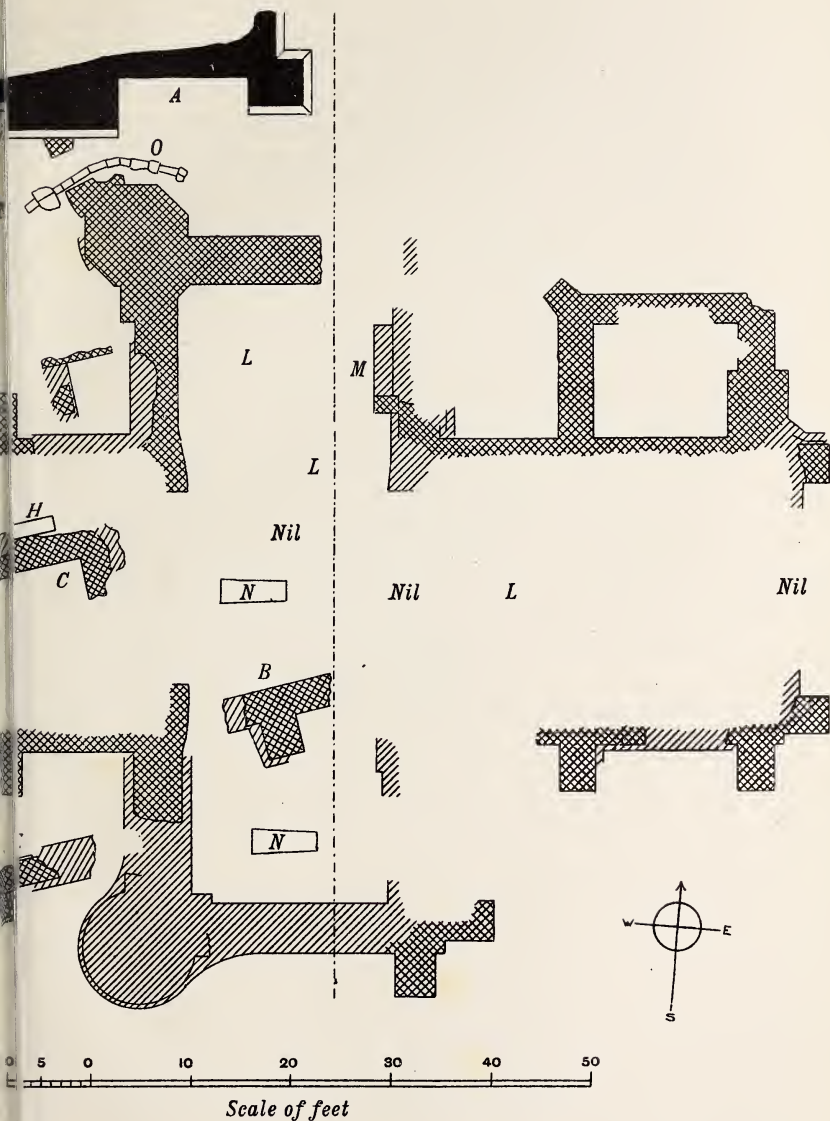
CATHEDRAL TRANSEPT



PALM CHURCHYARD

EAST WALK OF CLOISTER

1856.94

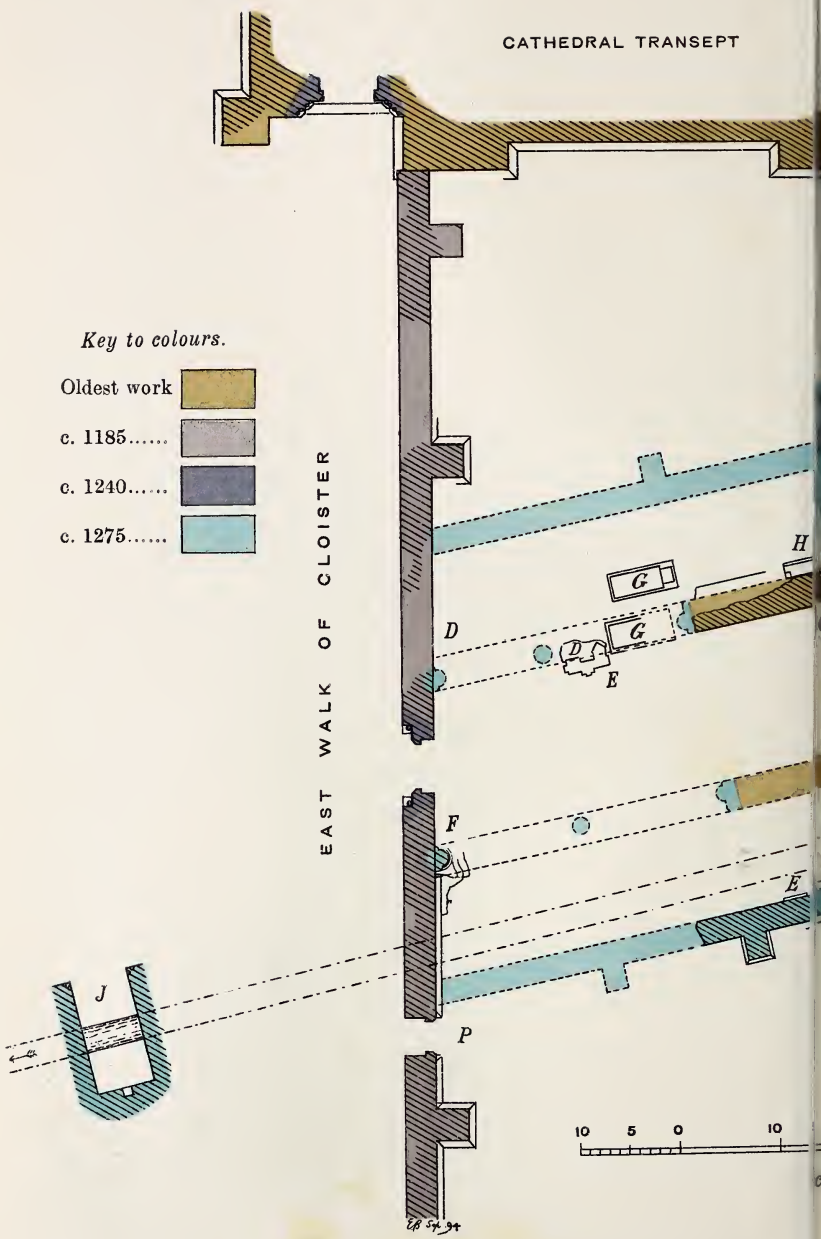


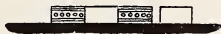
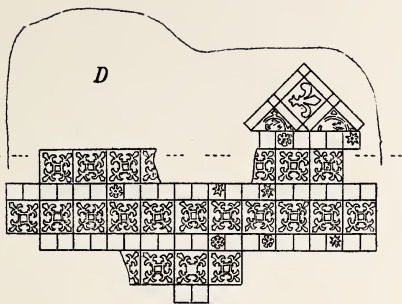
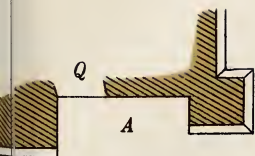
CATHEDRAL TRANSEPT

Key to colours.

- Oldest work
- c. 1185.....
- c. 1240.....
- c. 1275.....

EAST WALK OF CLOISTER

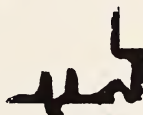




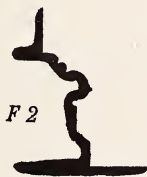
TILE FLOORS AT E E.



J 2



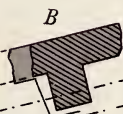
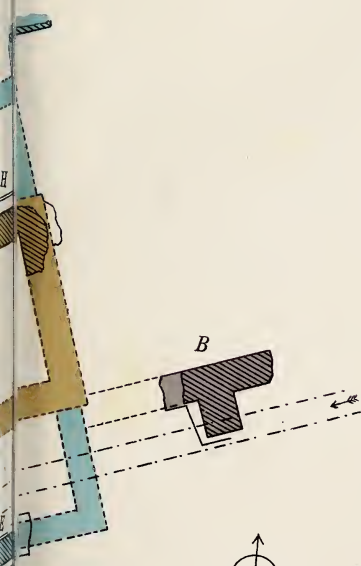
R 2



F 2



Scale for details



20 30 40 50

feet

*E.E.*—Tile floor *in situ*. These pieces of tile floor have not been disturbed but have been carefully covered in again. The depth of this floor varies from two feet to two feet four inches.

*F.*—Circular base to respond, standing on stone paving one foot nine inches below datum. The bed for this paving continues for about three feet towards the south.

*G.G.*—Stone coffins about one foot below the tile floor.

*H.*—Apparently part of the base of a monument.

*J.*—The dipping place. The floor of this would have been about nine or ten feet below the datum.

*K.K.*—Paving of Stillington's chapel *in situ*;—the datum from which all other levels are taken.

*L.L.L.*—The places where parts of the stone vault were found.

*M.*—Base of altar.

*N.N.*—Coffins built up out of small pieces of freestone, at a considerable depth below the floor.

*O.*—Stone surface drain.

*Nil.*—Where this occurs trenches have been sunk, but nothing found.

PLATE 2 is a restoration of the plan as it is conceived to have existed at the end of the thirteenth century. The parts which still remain at least as high as the floor line are scored in; the outlines of foundations below the floor line are shewn by hard lines, and the suggested outlines of walls which have disappeared, by dotted lines. The work of different dates is distinguished by the different colours.

On this plan the conduit is shewn to take a straight course underneath the south aisle of the chapel.

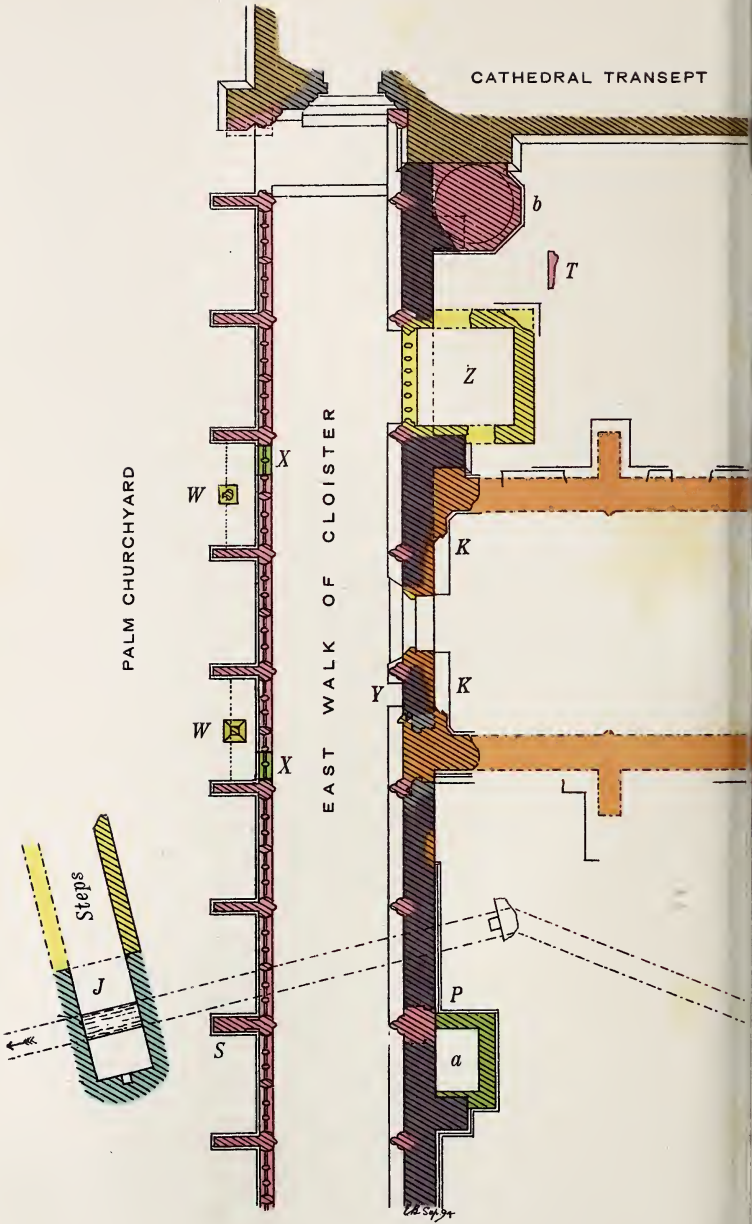
The following references are additional to those given under Plate 1:—

*P.*—A small original doorway in the cloister wall, which probably led to the *camera necessaria*, situate in a small court on the south side of the chapel.

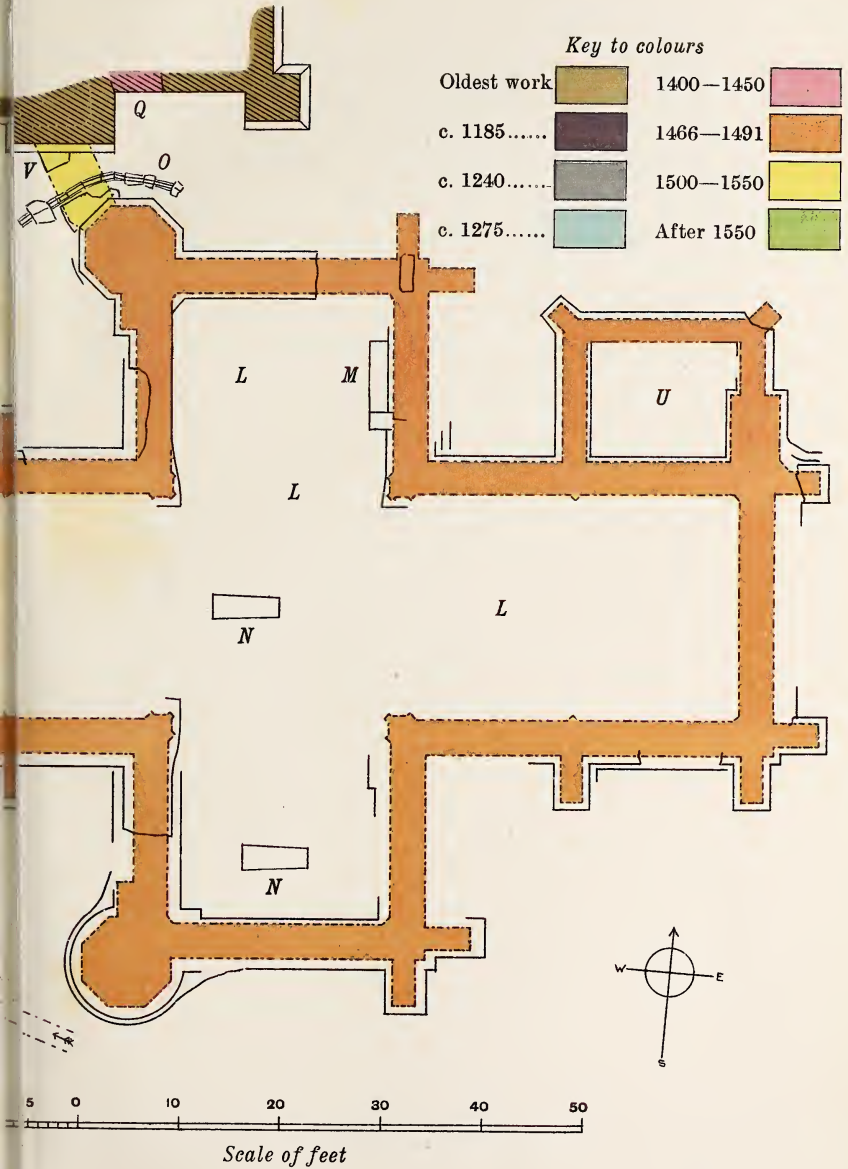
- Q.*—The original doorway leading from S. Martin's chapel in the cathedral to the small building at *A*, which is supposed to have been a vestry.
- J2.*—The moulding on the jamb and arch at the north end of the dipping place *J*. The central member of this moulding has been carefully broken off all round, but the dotted line cannot be far wrong. Carter's sketch of the moulding is meaningless, owing to his omission to note this piece of destruction, which has the curious effect of converting an early moulding into a fair imitation of a late one.
- R2.*—The arch mould of the original doorway *R*, near the south end of the cloister wall, which is beyond the limits of the plan, but is shewn in elevation on Plate 4. The jamb mould is similar but without the label. Both the stops to the label have disappeared.
- F2.*—The section through the base to the respond *F*.

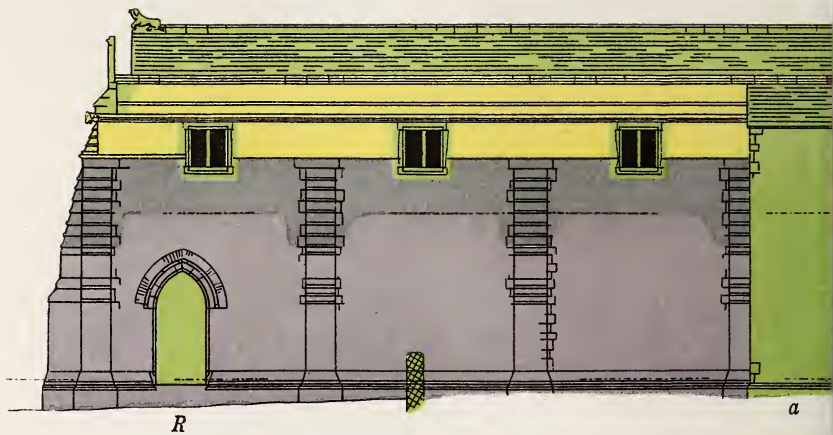
PLATE 3 is a similar restoration of the later buildings upon the site, and it is drawn so as to correspond in all respects to Plate 2.

- S.*—A large buttress marking the end of the library as first erected. The part of the cloister to the south of this buttress is rather later in date than the northern half.
- T.*—A small fragment of wall parallel to the cloister wall, which may possibly be connected with the weathercourse under the library windows.
- U.*—Vestry, with stair turret in south-east corner.
- V.*—Building added later to connect the stair turret of the chapel with that of the cathedral transept.
- W.W.*—Two penthouses formed outside the cloister windows. Though very similar in size and arrangement they differ in design and seem to have been built at different times. The windows of this east walk were glazed above the transom but not below. Across the lower lights of all





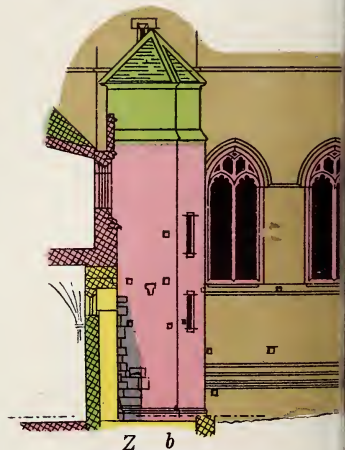




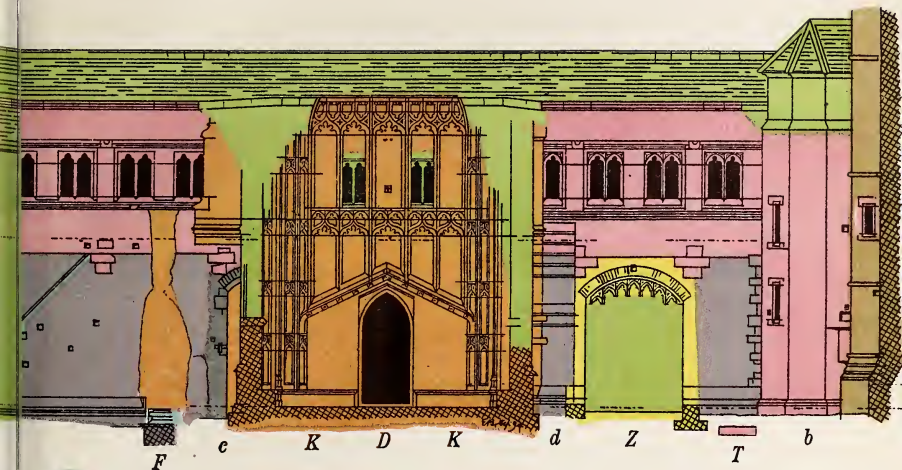
EAST ELEVATION OF

*Key to colours.*

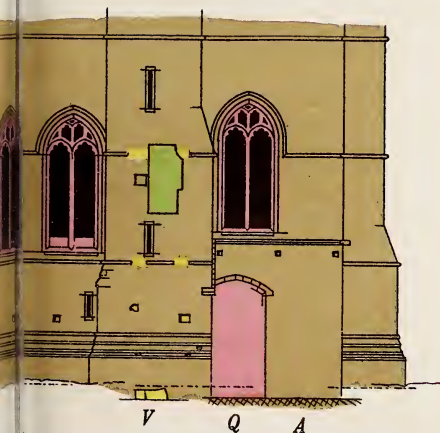
- Oldest work..
- c. 1185.....
- c. 1240.....
- c. 1275.....
- 1400—1450..
- 1466—1491..
- 1500—1550..
- After 1550...



SOUTH ELEVATION OF PA



EAST CLOISTER WALL.



PORTION OF CATHEDRAL TRANSEPT.

the cloister windows there was placed a wooden bar, probably to prevent people climbing through. This was done after the erection of the penthouses, but before the doors leading into them were closed up.

X.X.—The doorways leading into the penthouses. These are now closed, and mullions inserted to correspond with the other windows.

Y.—The position of the carving IHS.

Z.—The late building, supposed to be an office. Its floor was on the same level as the cloister floor.

a. The library privy.

b. The library stair turret.

PLATE 4 contains two elevations of the east side of the cloister wall, and the lower part of the south end of the cathedral transept. These are drawn to the same scale as the plans, and here the parts which are in section are scored. The same colours are used as on the plans.

The solid stop to the cloister plinth is here shewn at *F*. This plinth reappears at a higher level at *d* on the north side of the chapel; the buttress at *d*, and the other, whose quoins still shew behind the turret *b*, differed slightly from the buttresses further south. The buttress *d* has been reduced in height, so as to finish under the weathercourse.

Above *F* will be noticed the scar in the wall, caused by the making good when the early chapel was taken down. The lower part of this filling seems to indicate roughly the height of the original chapel, and the upper and thinner part is apparently a sign of the raising of the chapel in Bitton's time. It is here that the fragments of lias columns and Purbeck marble are to be found. The base of Bitton's respond is also shewn at *F*.

Part of Jocelin's doorway is visible at *c*. On the right of the doorway marked *P*, the south wall of Bitton's aisle butted against the cloister wall; and here may be seen three mortice

holes for bonding in, and, higher up, the groove for the roof. Nearly under this the conduit appears in section.

The work undertaken by Bubwith's executors also appears on this drawing, and the cut made through the weathercourse under the windows, which exactly corresponds with the groove in the older wall for Bitton's aisle roof. Two sets of the corbelstones are visible on the north side of Stillington's chapel, and three more on the south side. On the other elevation, at *Q*, is seen the early vestry doorway, which was walled up by Bicknell's executors, with the weathercourse and mortice holes over for the vestry roof.

The west end of Stillington's chapel is shown over *K D K*, with the tiny quatrefoil hagioscope into the library, and the series of plugholes in the centre light, which indicate a row of images or other ornaments. And it will be noticed that the parapet here is slightly higher than along the rest of the elevation. This is due to the fact that this part of the parapet is, in fact, the sill of Stillington's window; the sloping piece of parapet on each side is of a rather simpler section than is employed in the other parts, and is, in all probability, of the date of the destruction of the chapel by Sir John Gates. The part of the parapet next the stair turret has the same simple section, and this leads to the supposition that the upper part at least of this turret was also taken down and rebuilt at about the same period; but both these alterations may have been part of Busby's work in 1670. The two library windows were pierced through Stillington's work after the destruction of the chapel.

On the transept elevation *V* is the position where connexion was made between the two stair turrets. At the base a piece of foundation remains. Two mortice holes in the plinth and two more over, two cuts through the stringcourse, and the blocked doorway above, tell a clear tale of two thin walls carrying a passage from turret to turret. The shape of one of the mortice holes shews that there was a stringcourse along the west side of this building.

Over the tracery at *Z* there is a mortice hole for the roof over the small room which stood here.

The slate roof over the library is a modern substitute for the original lead flat ; and the parapet at the south end has also been varied.

There are many other mortice holes, the purpose of which has not been discovered. Right over the conduit there are four such holes (though one of these may possibly be connected with Bitton's roof). And there are two more close to Jocelin's doorway at *C* ; one of which is curious from its elongated shape and the fact that it cuts completely across one of the freestone quoins.

On the south side of the library turret there are several more holes, some of which may be mere putlog holes, while others may probably be ascribed to the modern sheds shewn on Carter's plan. But there has also been some other building here, for the early plinth has been hacked off the cloister wall, not only for the small room *Z*, but right up to the library turret. This was done subsequently to the building of the base of the turret, which is clearly not designed to join on to a building on this side ; and it is equally plain that whatever stood here must have been removed before the erection of the room marked *Z*. It did not extend further to the south than the next early buttress marked *d*, for here the early plinth reappears uninjured ; so that it did not correspond in length with the library weathercourse which is carried past the top of this buttress. The foundation *T* gives a clue to its width, but its date must be left an open question. One of the most puzzling features about the whole group of buildings is this combination, in work apparently contemporary, of a weathercourse and corbelstones under the library windows, with a stair turret plainly intended to stand clear on its south side as it now does.

On the east side of this turret, in front of the cathedral transept, there has been a timber structure of some sort. The mortice holes here are cleanly cut and of various sizes, some

large enough to receive heavy timbers, and one deliberately cut slightly out of square. In the transept there is one hole below the plinth, then a range of four just above the plinth, and three more at the level of the window sills. In the sides of the transept turrets there are two corresponding holes just below the stringcourse under the windows, and in one case there is the mark of an iron stay lower down. And on the east face of the library turret there are three more holes.

PLATE 5 represents a plan of three bays of Stillington's vault, and the colour shews the stones actually existing. The letters and figures on this plate are those which have been used to identify the different stones, and have no connexion with the reference letters used elsewhere. This drawing has been very fully explained in the text. It is believed that the bay of nave and choir is a correct restoration as far as it goes ; but the transept bay is only intended to shew the general character of that vault, and no attempt has been made to fill in the central bay of the crossing, or the panelled arches on each side of it. For the sake of clearness the carving on the bosses has been omitted. The section through a pendant does not pretend to do more than indicate its general form and the position of the detached ribs.

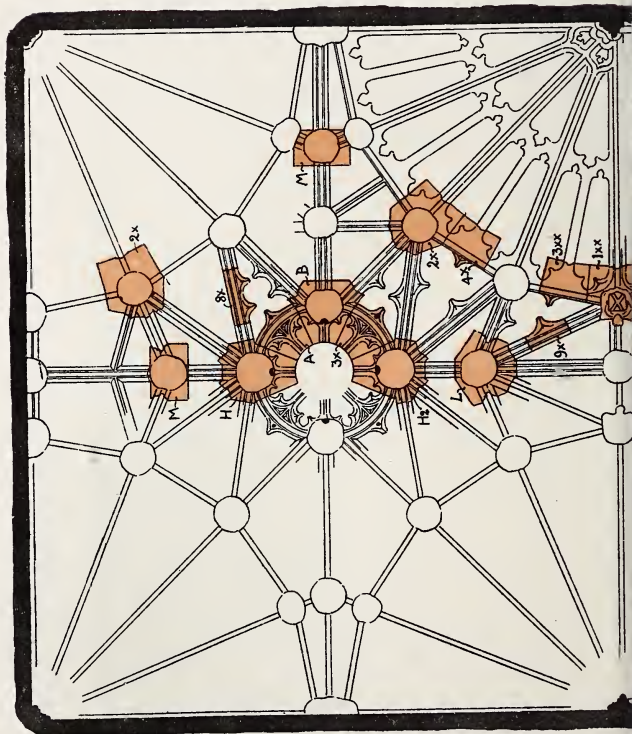
It will be noticed that the fan in nave and choir is not quite uniform ; the panels next the wall-rib appear smaller than the others. If, however, (as has been assumed) the wall-rib had a more pointed outline than the other ribs, these two panels would have actually been about the same size as the others ; and the break in the uniformity of the fan would not have been easily noticeable from the floor of the chapel.

The difference in the system of cusping employed in the fans and in the filling between the fans should also be observed.

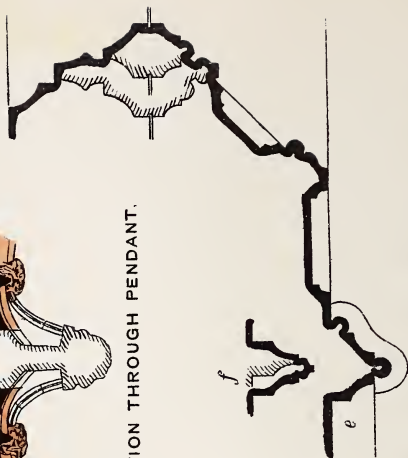
One window has been shewn on the plan, the evidence for which is very complete, and the mouldings have been drawn out to a larger scale. Here *e* is the jamb of the panelled

WELLS LADY CHAPEL.

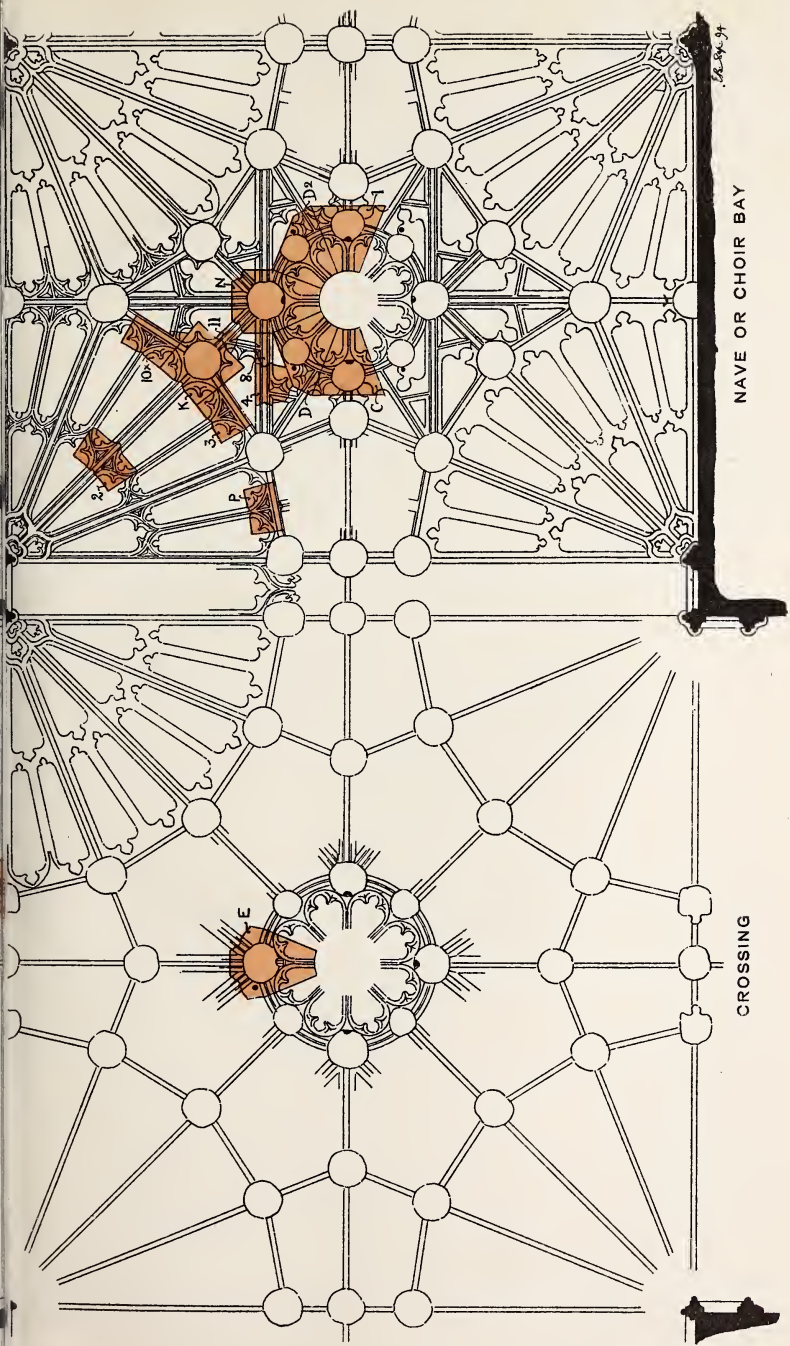
TRANSEPT BAY.



SECTION THROUGH PENDANT.

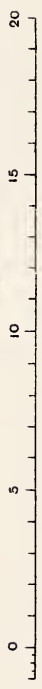






NAVE OR CHOIR BAY

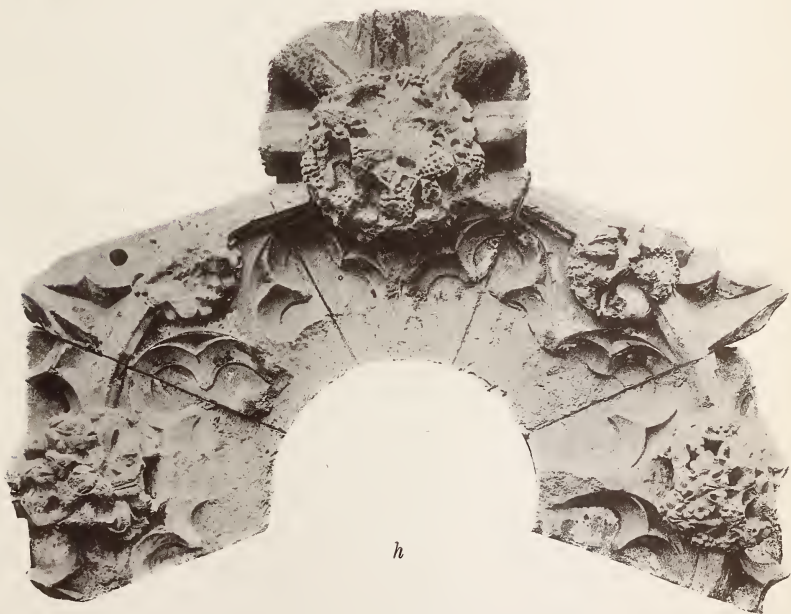
CROSSING



Scale of feet



*g*



*h*



*k*

arch and *f* the vaulting ribs. The peculiar outline of the large mullion will be noticed, and the fact that the external moulding of the jamb consists only of three coarse hollows.

ON PLATE 6 are photographed some of the stones from Stillington's vault. The upper set marked *g* form part of the ring in the centre of the transept vault. The lower set marked *h* occupied a corresponding place in the vault of nave and choir. Most of the bosses are covered with foliage, but on one are two lion-cubs at play. The cavities in the bosses intended to receive the small detached ribs are clearly visible, and so are some of the circular holes pierced through the vault for chains.

PLATE 7 shews two more stones from Stillington's chapel. At *j* the boss from the arch between transept and crossing, which on Plate 5 is marked 1xx; and at *k* the capital belonging to the same or a corresponding arch. The angel boss is in two pieces, which unfortunately were not fitted together quite accurately when the photograph was taken;—the left arm and wing should be a little lower down. The head has gone, but the right-hand side of the figure is in fair preservation. The saltire on the shield is, of course, for S. Andrew, the patron saint of Wells. Beyond the right arm is a portion of the panelled arch, and beyond the left the beginning of a fan.

The lop-sided aspect of the capital is due to its having been worked for a position between one of the panelled arches and the adjoining fan roof. The vaulting shafts generally consist of three rolls and two hollow chamfers symmetrically arranged; but (as the plan on Plate 5 shews) next the panelled arches the sinking for the panel takes the place of one roll and hollow, and the capital assumes the curious form shewn by the wavy line round the shaft on the detail. The treatment of Edward IV's badge is quaint, with the solar rays bent round the stone and curved in towards the walls.

\* \* For Rev. Canon G. F. Browne's paper, on "Sculptured Stone found on Site of Chapel 'by the Cloister' in Burial Ground of Wells Cathedral Church," see page 275.