

THE CATHEDRAL.

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windows, stained in deep tones, and on which are traced in colored picture the stories of the Bible, were made in English studios.

In St. Colomba's chapel the wrought iron candlesticks that shoot out their twisted branches several feet above our heads were wrested from perhaps a more congenial background in the ballroom of some Italian palace. And these branching candlesticks are not all that Italy contributes, for the celebrated Barberini tapestries, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but destined some day to hang on the dull gray cathedral walls, were made in Rome nearly three hundred years ago. Set in the floor before the high altar, and framed in a rim of hammered brass, will be a tile more than thirteen centuries old from the antique shrine at Ephesus, where, as tradition tells us, St. John the Divine was buried.

Truly, as the eye roves from color to color and from stone to metal and glass, the fancy rides on the winds and stories of the far places which have contributed to the wonderful assemblage, and even catches of the native songs of those distant countries, strike across one's memory.

Something else that appeals to the imagination, though the eye is at a loss to detect it, is the fact that many of the measurements of the cathedral would prove irregular if one wished to hunt them down with tape and rule. For instance, the choir arcades that give the appearance of being parallel are really not parallel. They converge slightly. Nor are the points level from which the arcades spring. The spacing of the arches of choir and ambulatory is uneven. The floor of the cathedral, that one would be sure was as level as a still pool, actually slants upward toward the east. And, hardest of all to believe, the eight huge granite columns, the most conspicuous feature of the building, are unequally spaced. The interesting thing about these measurements is that they have been deliberately made uneven so that they will appear to the eye to be even.

Many other things detain the one whose imagination has been awakened by the banks of Gothic angels that rise before the eastern chapel, playing on their Oriental instruments, or whose interest is attracted by noticing that electricity is to be the only means of lighting, the supplementary gas being evidently no longer necessary.

As the sun gets low and its slant rays coming through the pale western windows grow longer and mellow, the moment has come to climb. Once or twice already we have passed the tiny, twisting stairway that winds its way up through a projecting turret, and at every landing there is on one side an open balustrade looking over the interior of the church, and on the other a narrow, pointed window set into eight foot thick walls. Through the window one can peer down over Morningside Heights and the tremendous sweep of the city's dull red roofs.

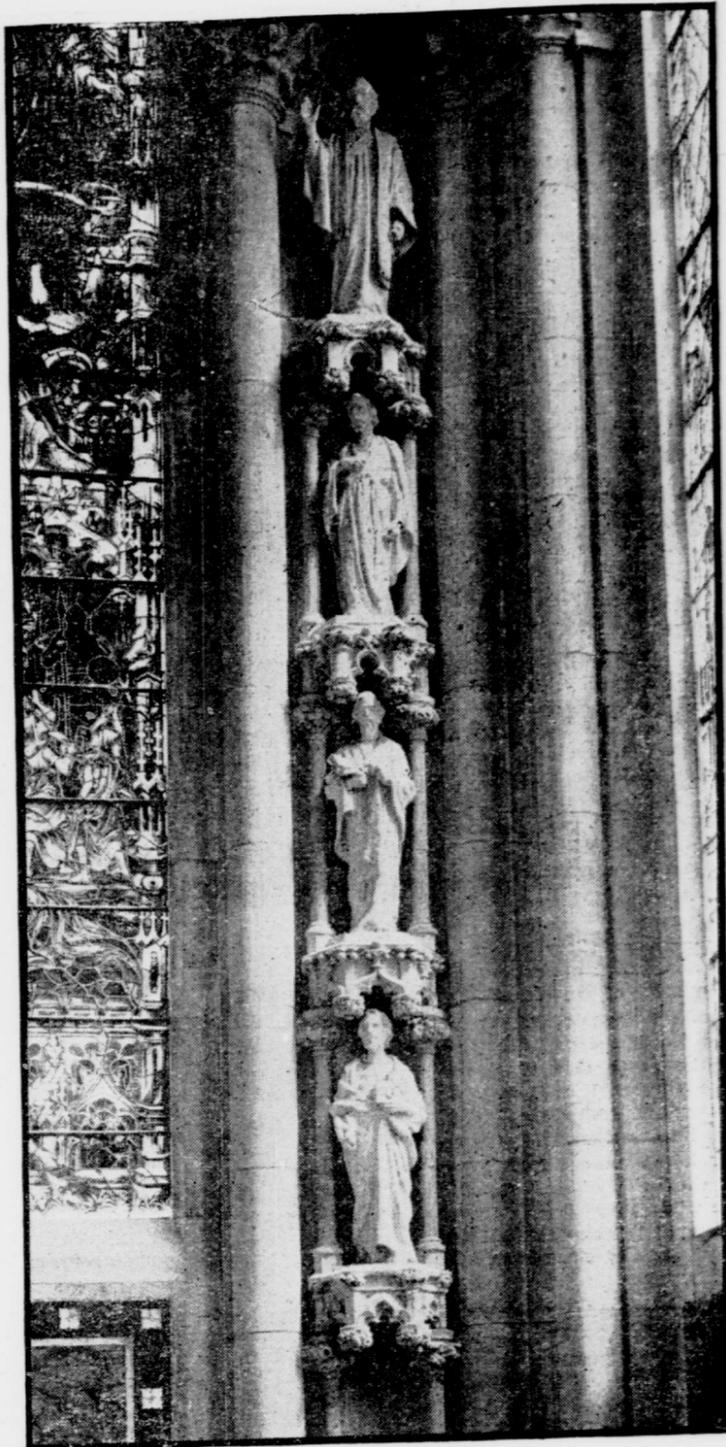
It is by this stairway that the explorer gains access to the choir galleries, where the ponderous organs will be placed next fall just before the cathedral is opened for use. These galleries are high enough to give a commanding view of all the spaces, both above and below, and form the choicest spot from which to view a stately pageant.

But people will not use them as they would have in the old centuries, when cathedrals were built to be the people's forum, the centre of their civic as well as their religious life; when they gathered there to rejoice over victory, or to be taught whatever they knew of the world's stories, or to be audience to the first dramas, the mystery or miracle plays and the later moralities. Those dusky cathedrals of Europe are monuments to the first effort of people in the Dark Ages toward proclaiming their rights against the despot lords, and were built to provide a common meeting place not only for worship but for law and learning and for pleasure. To-day we build city halls instead, and theatres and courthouses.

It gives one a sense of strangeness to stand in that big, empty gallery and think of all the uses of which the great cathedral has been shorn; and yet the form remains the same. Tradition comes to our rescue. Without tradition and the knowledge of the history of the old cathedral building days we should be at a loss to know what to make of this huge creature up whose mighty sides we are climbing, for, see! as we pass this pointed window there is a fantastic silhouette on the glass—evidently the shadow of a gargoyle which shoots out its head from a nearby lead. We do not believe in evil spirits in these days, or at least we do not still think that gargoyles can save us from them. Yet the grotesque little figures are there in memory of what men used to need.

A big building like this has a life of its own and a fascination that would justify it if it had no use at all. There is so much labored hand-work on every stone that it is hard to look at one without in fancy seeing a man at work on it, and to look at a stone and see a man makes the stone itself as good as alive.

There is a workman near by swung high on his pulley chair engaged in that wonderfully patient scraping and brushing process which has to cover every bit of stone, no matter whether it is half an inch or a hundred feet from the floor. And another chance obtains to see fine work if one will crawl out on the scaffolding built up



A NICHE OF SAINTS.

from the choir gallery, for, once there, it is possible to stand beside the cutter who is making little granite flowers on the capital of one of the 90-foot columns, and watch him rounding off tiny petals that no one may ever see again after his eyes have left them.

Many poems have been written about the hundreds of years of labor put on European cathedrals, symposiums as to the loving toil laid in with the stones, and it has all seemed like a dream. Here we have the thing to witness in the building, but more of us go each month to Europe to muse over the completed thing than wander up to our Heights in a year to watch the same marvellous work in process.

Upward still the climber goes. He is high in the arches now, nearly one hundred and twenty-five feet above the mosaic floor. The birds are flying near him, for, of course, they have taken possession of all the comfortable ledges in the interior. They are good judges of architecture, and take as naturally to fine specimens of it as they do to trees. This is, in fact, so noticeable it is surprising that bird designs are not more used in the decoration of buildings than they are.

There is a very narrow gallery running around the top of the ambulatory wall from which one can get a queer, distorted view of the interior. The pitch is so tremendous that things below look out of perspective, as they do in a photograph which has been taken from a height with the camera at an angle. Even looking down from a high shoulder of the Matterhorn upon the moraine at its feet hardly gives one such an immediate feeling of steepness. But the whole interior can be seen from there, from the altar at one's feet, beyond to the choir stalls, and further still to the great open space where the congregation will gather.

Just now the air is misty with powdered granite and with the fine white dust that floats about the builders. All the floor space is strewn with materials and with sections of the organ casing. There is even a railroad track running from the main front entrance as far as the choir, on which a truck travels to carry heavy pieces of stone from the ateliers outside. The whole place as viewed from that high gallery looks lonely and unawake. Next December 27, St. John's Day, the cathedral will be dedicated, and thereafter that strange spirit life which gradually steals into the walls and floors and all the hidden corners of a building as soon as people have made it the scene of their rest, their labors or their prayers will pass into the stones and make them mellow and lend them



VIEW OF THE CATHEDRAL.

This is the back of the great unfinished structure. It dominates a gloriously broad view that will never be obstructed. The houses and little shops. More people will see this rear demands of public curiosity are satisfied.

color and charm.

There is one more point of vantage to gain before the sunlight has ebbed and the sky colors have faded. It is found by winding up to the very top of the turret stairway and there climbing through a square hole. Outside one stands on the sloping roof just below the Angel Gabriel, who is blowing his traditional horn toward the east. It is a windy nook to crouch in and slants down to immediate destruction on both sides of one's feet. But there, more than anywhere else, lurks a sense of the building's massive

TILE FROM THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF ST. JOHN OF EPHESUS, TO BE SET IN THE FLOOR BEFORE THE HIGH ALTAR.

The inscription reads thus: "Whosoever shall have prayed at this spot will have pressed with his feet a tile from the ancient church of St. John the Divine at Ephesus, built by the Emperor Justinian in the year DXL, over the traditional site of St. John's Grave."

