

Mansfield Milburg Francisco

# The Cathedrals of Southern France



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# Mansfield M. F. Milburg Francisco

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### INTRODUCTION

TOO often – it is a half-acknowledged delusion, however – one meets with what appears to be a theory: that a book of travel must necessarily be a series of dull, discursive, and entirely uncorroborated opinions of one who may not be even an intelligent observer. This is mere intellectual pretence. Even a humble author – so long as he be an honest one – may well be allowed to claim with Mr. Howells the right to be serious, or the reverse, "with his material as he finds it;" and that "something personally experienced can only be realized on the spot where it was lived." This, says he, is "the prime use of travel, and the attempt to create the reader a partner in the enterprise" ... must be the excuse, then, for putting one's observations on paper.

He rightly says, too, that nothing of perilous adventure is to-day any more like to happen "in Florence than in Fitchburg."

A "literary tour," a "cathedral tour," or an "architectural tour," requires a formula wherein the author must be wary of making questionable estimates; but he may, with regard to generalities, – or details, for that matter, – state his opinion plainly; but he should state also his reasons. With respect to church architecture no average reader, any more than the average observer, willingly enters the arena of intellectual combat, but rather is satisfied – as he should be, unless he is a Freeman, a Gonse, or a Corroyer – with an ampler radius which shall command even a juster, though no less truthful, view.

Not from one book or from ten, in one year or a score can this be had. The field is vast and the immensity of it all only dawns upon one the deeper he gets into his subject. A dictionary of architecture, a compendium or gazetteer of geography, or even the unwieldy mass of fact tightly held in the fastnesses of the Encyclopædia Britannica will not tell one – in either a long or a short while – all the facts concerning the cathedrals of France.

Some will consider that in this book are made many apparently trifling assertions; but it is claimed that they are pertinent and again are expressive of an emotion which mayhap always arises of the same mood.

Notre Dame at Rodez is a "warm, mouse-coloured cathedral;" St. Cécile d'Albi is at once "a fortress and a church," and the once royal city of Aigues-Mortes is to-day but "a shelter for a few hundred pallid, shaking mortals."

Such expressions are figurative, but, so far as words can put it, they are the concentrated result of observation.

These observations do not aspire to be considered "improving," though it is asserted that they are informative.

Description of all kinds is an art which requires considerable forethought in order to be even readable. And of all subjects, art and architecture are perhaps the most difficult to treat in a manner which shall not arouse an intolerant criticism.

Perhaps some credit will be attained for the attempts herein made to present in a pleasing manner many of the charms of the ecclesiastical architecture of southern France, where a more elaborate and erudite work would fail of its object. As Lady Montagu has said in her "Letters," – "We travellers are in very hard circumstances. If we say nothing new, we are dull, and have observed nothing. If we tell any new thing, we are laughed at as fabulous and romantic."

This book is intended as a contribution to travel literature – or, if the reader like, to that special class of book which appeals largely to the traveller.

Most lovers of art and literature are lovers of churches; indeed, the world is yearly containing more and more of this class. The art expression of a people, of France in particular, has most often first found its outlet in church-building and decoration. Some other countries have degenerated sadly from the idea.

In recent times the Anglo-Saxon has mostly built his churches, – on what he is pleased to think are "improved lines," – that, more than anything else, resemble, in their interiors, playhouses, and in their exteriors, cotton factories and breweries.

This seemingly bitter view is advanced simply because the writer believes that it is the church-members, using the term in its broad sense, who are responsible for the many outrageously unseemly church-buildings which are yearly being erected; not the architects – who have failings enough of their own to answer for.

It is said that a certain great architect of recent times was responsible for more bad architecture than any man who had lived before or since. Not because he produced such himself, but because his feeble imitators, without his knowledge, his training, or his ambition, not only sought to follow in his footsteps, but remained a long way in the rear, and stumbled by the way.

This man built churches. He built one, Trinity Church, in Boston, U. S. A., which will remain, as long as its stones endure, an entirely successful transplantation of an exotic from another land. In London a new Roman Catholic cathedral has recently been erected after the Byzantine manner, and so unexpectedly successful was it in plan and execution that its author was "medalled" by the Royal Academy; whatever that dubious honour may be worth.

Both these great men are dead, and aside from these two great examples, and possibly the Roman Catholic cathedral, and the yet unachieved cathedral of St. John the Divine, in New York City, where, in an English-speaking land, has there been built, in recent times, a religious edifice of the first rank worthy to be classed with these two old-world and new-world examples?

They do these things better in France: Viollet-le-Duc completed St. Ouen at Rouen and the cathedral at Clermont-Ferrand, in most acceptable manner. So, too, was the treatment of the cathedral at Moulins-sur-Allier – although none of these examples are among the noblest or the most magnificent in France. They have, however, been completed successfully, and in the true spirit of the original.

To know the shops and boulevards of Paris does not necessarily presume a knowledge of France. This point is mentioned here from the fact that many have claimed a familiarity with the cathedrals of France; when to all practical purposes, they might as well have begun and ended with the observation that Notre Dame de Paris stands on an island in the middle of the Seine.

The author would not carp at the critics of the first volume of this series, which appeared last season. Far from it. They were, almost without exception, most generous. At least they granted, *unqualifiedly*, the reason for being for the volume which was put forth bearing the title: "Cathedrals of Northern France."

The seeming magnitude of the undertaking first came upon the author and artist while preparing the first volume for the press. This was made the more apparent when, on a certain occasion, just previous to the appearance of the book, the author made mention thereof to a friend who *did* know Paris – better perhaps than most English or American writers; at least he ought to have known it better.

When this friend heard of the inception of this book on French cathedrals, he marvelled at the fact that there should be a demand for such; said that the subject had already been overdone; and much more of the same sort; and that only yesterday a certain Miss – had sent him an "author's copy" of a book which recounted the results of a journey which she and her mother had recently made in what she sentimentally called "Romantic Touraine."

Therein were treated at least a good half-dozen cathedrals; which, supplementing the always useful Baedeker or Joanne, and a handbook of Notre Dame at Paris and another of Rouen, covered – thought the author's friend at least – quite a representative share of the cathedrals of France.

This only substantiates the contention made in the foreword to the first volume: that there were doubtless many with a true appreciation and love for great churches who would be glad to know more of them, and have the ways – if not the means – smoothed in order to make a visit thereto the more simplified and agreeable. Too often – the preface continued – the tourist, alone or personally conducted in droves, was whirled rapidly onward by express-train to some more popularly or fashionably famous spot, where, for a previously stipulated sum, he might partake of a more lurid series of amusements than a mere dull round of churches.

"Cities, like individuals, have," says Arthur Symonds, "a personality and individuality quite like human beings."

This is undoubtedly true of churches as well, and the sympathetic observer – the enthusiastic lover of churches for their peculiarities, none the less than their general excellencies – is the only person who will derive the maximum amount of pleasure and profit from an intimacy therewith.

Whether a great church is interesting because of its antiquity, its history, or its artistic beauties matters little to the enthusiast. He will drink his fill of what offers. Occasionally, he will find a combination of two – or possibly all – of these ingredients; when his joy will be great.

Herein are catalogued as many of the attributes of the cathedrals of the south of France – and the records of religious or civil life which have surrounded them in the past – as space and opportunity for observation have permitted.

More the most sanguine and capable of authors could not promise, and while in no sense does the volume presume to supply exhaustive information, it is claimed that all of the churches included within the classification of cathedrals – those of the present and those of a past day – are to be found mentioned herein, the chief facts of their history recorded, and their notable features catalogued.

## **PART I**

### **Southern France in General**

#### **I**

### **THE CHARM OF SOUTHERN FRANCE**

The charm of southern France is such as to compel most writers thereon to become discursive. It could not well be otherwise. Many things go to make up pictures of travel, which the most polished writer could not ignore unless he confined himself to narrative pure and simple; as did Sterne.

One who seeks knowledge of the architecture of southern France should perforce know something of the life of town and country in addition to a specific knowledge of, or an immeasurable enthusiasm for, the subject.

Few have given Robert Louis Stevenson any great preëminence as a writer of topographical description; perhaps not all have admitted his ability as an unassailable critic; but the fact is, there is no writer to whom the lover of France can turn with more pleasure and profit than Stevenson.

There is a wealth of description of the country-side of France in the account of his romantic travels on donkey-back, or, as he whimsically puts it, "beside a donkey," and his venturesome though not dangerous "Inland Voyage." These early volumes of Stevenson, while doubtless well known to lovers of his works, are closed books to most casual travellers. The author and artist of this book here humbly acknowledge an indebtedness which might not otherwise be possible to repay.

Stevenson was devout, he wrote sympathetically of churches, of cathedrals, of monasteries, and of religion. What his predilections were as to creed is not so certain. Sterne was more worldly, but he wrote equally attractive prose concerning many things which English-speaking people have come to know more of since his time. Arthur Young, "an agriculturist," as he has been rather contemptuously called, a century or more ago wrote of rural France after a manner, and with a profuseness, which few have since equalled. His creed, likewise, appears to be unknown; in that, seldom, if ever, did he mention churches, and not at any time did he discuss religion.

In a later day Miss M. E. B. Edwards, an English lady who knows France as few of her countrywomen do, wrote of many things more or less allied with religion, which the ordinary "travel books" ignored – much to their loss – altogether.

Still more recently another English lady, Madam Marie Duclaux, – though her name would not appear to indicate her nationality, – has written a most charming series of observations on her adopted land; wherein the peasant, his religion, and his aims in life are dealt with more understandingly than were perhaps possible, had the author not been possessed of a long residence among them.

Henry James, of all latter-day writers, has given us perhaps the most illuminating accounts of the architectural joy of great churches, châteaux and cathedrals. Certainly his work is marvellously appreciative, and his "Little Tour in France," with the two books of Stevenson before mentioned, Sterne's "Sentimental Journey," – and Mr. Tristram Shandy, too, if the reader likes, – form a quintette of voices which will tell more of the glories of France and her peoples than any other five books in the English language.

When considering the literature of place, one must not overlook the fair land of Provence or the "Midi of France" – that little-known land lying immediately to the westward of Marseilles, which is seldom or never even tasted by the hungry tourist.



To know what he would of these two delightful regions one should read Thomas Janvier, Félix Gras, and Mèrimée. He will then have far more of an insight into the places and the peoples than if he perused whole shelves of histories, geographies, or technical works on archæology and fossil remains.

If he can supplement all this with travel, or, better yet, take them hand-in-hand, he will be all the more fortunate.

At all events here is a vast subject for the sated traveller to grasp, and *en passant* he will absorb not a little of the spirit of other days and of past history, and something of the attitude of reverence for church architecture which is apparently born in every Frenchman, – at least to a far greater degree than in any other nationality, – whatever may be his present-day attitude of mind toward the subject of religion in the abstract.

France, be it remembered, is not to-day as it was a century and a half ago, when it was the fashion of English writers to condemn and revile it as a nation of degraded serfs, a degenerate aristocracy, a corrupt clergy, or as an enfeebled monarchy.

Since then there has arisen a Napoleon, who, whatever his faulty morals may have been, undoubtedly welded into a united whole those widely divergent tendencies and sentiments of the past, which otherwise would not have survived. This was prophetic and far-seeing, no matter what the average historian may say to the contrary; and it has in no small way worked itself toward an ideal successfully, if not always by the most practical and direct path.

One thing is certain, the lover of churches will make the round of the southern cathedrals under considerably more novel and entrancing conditions than in those cities of the north or mid-France. Many of the places which shelter a great cathedral church in the south are of little rank as centres of population; as, for instance, at Mende in Lozère, where one suddenly finds oneself set down in the midst of a green basin surrounded by mountains on all sides, with little to distract his attention from its remarkably picturesque cathedral; or at Albi, where a Sunday-like stillness always seems to reign, and its fortress-church, which seems to regulate the very life of the town, stands, as it has since its foundation, a majestic guardian of well-being.

There is but one uncomfortable feature to guard against, and that is the *mistral*, a wind which blows down the Rhône valley at certain seasons of the year, and, in the words of the habitant, "blows all before it." It is not really as bad as this, but its breath is uncomfortably cold, and it does require a firm purpose to stand against its blast.

Then, too, from October until March, south of Lyons, the nights, which draw in so early at this season of the year, are contrastingly and uncomfortably cold, as compared with the days, which seem always to be blessed with bright and sunshiny weather.

It may be argued that this is not the season which appeals to most people as being suitable for travelling. But why not? Certainly it is the fashion to travel toward the Mediterranean during the winter months, and the attractions, not omitting the allurements of dress clothes, gambling-houses, and *bals masqués* are surely not more appealing than the chain of cities which extend from Chambéry and Grenoble in the Alps, through Orange, Nîmes, Arles, Perpignan, Carcassonne, and the slopes of the Pyrenees, to Bayonne.

In the departments of Lozère, Puy de Dôme, Gard and Auvergne and Dordogne, the true, unspoiled Gallic flavour abides in all its intensity. As Touraine, or at least Tours, claims to speak the purest French tongue, so this region of streams and mountains, of volcanic remains, of Protestantism, and of an – as yet – unspoiled old-worldliness, possesses more than any other somewhat of the old-time social independence and disregard of latter-day innovations.

Particularly is this so – though perhaps it has been remarked before – in that territory which lies between Clermont-Ferrand and Valence in one direction, and Vienne and Rodez in another, to extend its confines to extreme limits.

Here life goes on gaily and in animated fashion, in a hundred dignified and picturesque old towns, and the wise traveller will go a-hunting after those which the guide-books complain of – not without a sneer – as being dull and desultory. French, and for that matter the new régime of English, historical novelists are too obstinately bent on the study of Paris, "At all events," says Edmund Gosse, "since the days of Balzac and George Sand, and have neglected the provincial boroughs."

They should study mid-France on the spot; and read Stevenson and Mérimée while they are doing it. It will save them a deal of worrying out of things – with possibly wrong deductions – for themselves.

The climatic conditions of France vary greatly. From the gray, wind-blown shores of Brittany, where for quite three months of the autumn one is in a perpetual drizzle, and the equally chilly and bare country of the Pas de Calais, and the more or less sodden French Flanders, to the brisk, sunny climate of the Loire valley, the Cevennes, Dauphiné, and Savoie, is a wide range of contrast. Each is possessed of its own peculiar characteristics, which the habitant alone seems to understand in all its vagaries. At all events, there is no part of France which actually merits the opprobrious deprecations which are occasionally launched forth by the residents of the "garden spot of England," who see no topographical beauties save in their own wealds and downs.

France is distinctly a self-contained land. Its tillers of the soil, be they mere agriculturists or workers in the vineyards, are of a race as devoted and capable at their avocations as any alive.

They do not, to be sure, eat meat three times a day – and often not once a week – but they thrive and gain strength on what many an English-speaking labourer would consider but a mere snack.

Again, the French peasant is not, like the English labourer, perpetually reminded, by the independence of the wealth surrounding him, of his own privations and dependence. On the contrary, he enjoys contentment with a consciousness that no human intervention embitters his condition, and that its limits are only fixed by the bounds of nature, and somewhat by his own industry.

Thus it is easy to inculcate in such a people somewhat more of that spirit of "*l'amour de la patrie*," or love of the land, which in England, at the present time, appears to be growing beautifully less.

So, too, with love and honour for their famous citizens, the French are enthusiastic, beyond any other peoples, for their monuments, their institutions, and above all for their own province and department.

With regard to their architectural monuments, still more are they proud and well-informed, even the labouring classes. Seldom, if ever, has the writer made an inquiry but what it was answered with interest, if not with a superlative intelligence, and the Frenchman of the lower classes – be he a labourer of the towns or cities, or a peasant of the country-side – is a remarkably obliging person.

In what may strictly be called the south of France, that region bordering along the Mediterranean, Provence, and the southerly portion of Languedoc, one is manifestly environed with a mellowness and brilliance of sky and atmosphere only to be noted in a sub-tropical land, a feature which finds further expression in most of the attributes of local life.

The climate and topographical features take on a contrastingly different aspect, as does the church architecture and the mode of life of the inhabitants here in the southland.

Here is the true romance country of all the world. Here the Provençal tongue and its literature have preserved that which is fast fleeting from us in these days when a nation's greatest struggle is for commercial or political supremacy. It was different in the days of Petrarch and of Rabelais.

But there are reminders of this glorious past yet to be seen, more tangible than a memory alone, and more satisfying than mere written history.

At Orange, Nîmes, and Arles are Roman remains of theatres, arenas, and temples, often perfectly preserved, and as magnificent as in Rome itself.

At Avignon is a splendid papal palace, to which the Holy See was transferred by Clement V. at the time of the Italian partition, in the early fourteenth century, while Laura's tomb, or the site of it, is also close at hand.

At Clermont-Ferrand, in Auvergne, Pope Urban, whose monument is on the spot, urged and instigated the Crusades.

The Christian activities of this land were as strenuous as any, and their remains are even more numerous and interesting. Southern Gaul, however, became modernized but slowly, and the influences of the Christian spirit were not perhaps as rapid as in the north, where Roman sway was more speedily annulled. Still, not even in the churches of Lombardy or Tuscany are there more strong evidences of the inception and growth of this great power, which sought at one time to rule the world, and may yet.

## II THE CHURCH IN GAUL

Guizot's notable dictum, "If you are fond of romance and history," may well be paraphrased in this wise: "If you are fond of history, read the life histories of great churches."

Leaving dogmatic theory aside, much, if not quite all, of the life of the times in France – up to the end of the sixteenth century – centred more or less upon the Church, using the word in its fullest sense. Aside from its religious significance, the influence of the Church, as is well known and recognized by all, was variously political, social, and perhaps economic.

So crowded and varied were the events of Church history in Gaul, it would be impossible to include even the most important of them in a brief chronological arrangement which should form a part of a book such as this.

It is imperative, however, that such as are mentioned should be brought together in some consecutive manner in a way that should indicate the mighty ebb and flow of religious events of Church and State.

These passed rapidly and consecutively throughout Southern Gaul, which became a part of the kingdom of the French but slowly.

Many bishoprics have been suppressed or merged into others, and again united with these sees from which they had been separated. Whatever may be the influences of the Church, monastic establishments, or more particularly, the bishops and their clergy, to-day, there is no question but that from the evangelization of Gaul to the end of the nineteenth century, the parts played by them were factors as great as any other in coagulating and welding together the kingdom of France.

The very large number of bishops which France has had approximates eight thousand eminent and virtuous names; and it is to the memory of their works in a practical way, none the less than their devotion to preaching the Word itself, that the large number of magnificent ecclesiastical monuments have been left as their heritage.

There is a large share of veneration and respect due these pioneers of Christianity; far more, perhaps, than obtains for those of any other land. Here their activities were so very great, their woes and troubles so very oppressive, and their final achievement so splendid, that the record is one which stands alone.

It is a glorious fact – in spite of certain lapses and influx of fanaticism – that France has ever recognized the sterling worth to the nation of the devotion and wise counsel of her churchmen; from the indefatigable apostles of Gaul to her cardinals, wise and powerful in councils of state.

The evangelization of Gaul was not an easy or a speedy process. On the authority of Abbé Morin of Moulins, who, in *La France Pontificale*, has undertaken to "chronologize all the bishops and archbishops of France from the first century to our day," Christianity came first to Aix and Marseilles with Lazare de Béthanie in 35 or 36 A. D.; followed shortly after by Lin de Besançon, Clement de Metz, Demètre de Gap, and Ruf d'Avignon.

Toward the end of the reign of Claudian, and the commencement of that of Nero (54-55 A. D.), there arrived in Gaul the seven Apostle-bishops, the founders of the Church at Arles (St. Trophime), Narbonne (St. Paul), Limoges (St. Martial), Clermont (St. Austremonie), Tours (St. Gatien), Toulouse (St. Saturnin), and Trèves (St. Valère).

It was some years later that Paris received within its walls St. Denis, its first Apostle of Christianity, its first bishop, and its first martyr.

Others as famous were Taurin d'Evreux, Lucien de Beauvais, Eutrope de Saintes, Aventin de Chartres, Nicaise de Rouen, Sixte de Reims, Savinien de Sens, and St. Crescent – the disciple of St. Paul – of Vienne.

From these early labours, through the three centuries following, and down through fifteen hundred years, have passed many traditions of these early fathers which are well-nigh legendary and fabulous.

The Abbé Morin says further: "We have not, it is true, an entirely complete chronology of the bishops who governed the Church in Gaul, but the names of the great and noble army of bishops and clergy, who for eighteen hundred years have succeeded closely one upon another, are assuredly the most beautiful jewels in the crown of France. Their virtues were many and great, – eloquence, love of *la patrie*, indomitable courage in time of trial, mastery of difficult situation, prudence, energy, patience, and charity." All these grand virtues were practised incessantly, with some regrettable eclipses, attributable not only to misfortune, but occasionally to fault. A churchman even is but human.

With the accession of the third dynasty of kings, – the Capetians, in 987, – the history of the French really began, and that of the Franks, with their Germanic tendencies and elements, became absorbed by those of the Romanic language and character, with the attendant habits and customs.

Only the Aquitanians, south of the Loire, and the Burgundians on the Rhône, still preserved their distinct nationalities.

The feudal ties which bound Aquitaine to France were indeed so slight that, when Hugh Capet, in 990, asked of Count Adelbert of Périgueux, before the walls of the besieged city of Tours: "Who made thee count?" he was met with the prompt and significant rejoinder, "Who made thee king?"

At the close of the tenth century, France was ruled by close upon sixty princes, virtually independent, and yet a still greater number of prelates, – as powerful as any feudal lord, – who considered Hugh Capet of Paris only as one who was first among his peers. Yet he was able to extend his territory to such a degree that his hereditary dynasty ultimately assured the unification of the French nation. Less than a century later Duke William of Normandy conquered England (1066); when began that protracted struggle between France and England which lasted for three hundred years.

Immediately after the return of the pious Louis VII. from his disastrous crusade, his queen, Eleanor, the heiress of Poitou and Guienne, married the young count Henry Plantagenet of Maine and Anjou; who, when he came to the English throne in 1153, "inherited and acquired by marriage" – as historians subtly put it – "the better half of all France."

Until 1322 the Church in France was divided into the following dioceses:

- Provincia Remensis (Reims)
- Provincia Rotomagensis (All Normandy)
- Provincia Turonensis (Touraine, Maine, Anjou, and Brittany)
- Provincia Burdegalensis (Poitou, Saintonge, Angumois, Périgord, and Bordelais)
- Provincia Auxitana (In Gascoigne)
- Provincia Bituricensis (Berri, Bourbonnais, Limosin, and Auvergne)
- Provincia Senonensis (Sens)
- Provincia Lugdunensis (Bourgogne and Lyonnais)
- Provincia Viennensis (Vienne on the Rhône)
- Provincia Narbonensis (Septimania)
- Provincia Arelatensis (Arles)
- Provincia Aquensis (Aix-en-Provence)
- Provincia Ebredunensis (The Alpine Valleys)

The stormy days of the reign of Charles V. (late fourteenth century) throughout France were no less stringent in Languedoc than elsewhere.

Here the people rose against the asserted domination of the Duke of Anjou, who, "proud and greedy," was for both qualities abhorred by the Languedocians.

He sought to restrain civic liberty with a permanent military force, and at Nîmes levied heavy taxes, which were promptly resented by rebellion. At Montpellier the people no less actively protested, and slew the chancellor and seneschal.

By the end of the thirteenth century, social, political, and ecclesiastical changes had wrought a wonderful magic with the map of France. John Lackland (*sans terre*) had been compelled by Philippe-Auguste to relinquish his feudal possessions in France, with the exception of Guienne. At this time also the internal crusades against the Waldenses and Albigenses in southern France had powerfully extended the royal flag. Again, history tells us that it was from the impulse and after influences of the crusading armies to the East that France was welded, under Philippe-le-Bel, into a united whole. The shifting fortunes of France under English rule were, however, such as to put little stop to the progress of church-building in the provinces; though it is to be feared that matters in that line, as most others of the time, went rather by favour than by right of sword.

Territorial changes brought about, in due course, modified plans of the ecclesiastical control and government, which in the first years of the fourteenth century caused certain administrative regulations to be put into effect by Pope John XXII. (who lies buried beneath a gorgeous Gothic monument at Avignon) regarding the Church in the southern provinces.

So well planned were these details that the Church remained practically under the same administrative laws until the Revolution.

Albi was separated from Bourges (1317), and raised to the rank of a metropolitan see; to which were added as suffragans Cahors, Rodez, and Mende, with the newly founded bishoprics of Castres and Vabres added. Toulouse was formed into an archbishopric in 1327; while St. Pons and Alet, as newly founded bishoprics, were given to the ancient see of Narbonne in indemnification for its having been robbed of Toulouse. The ancient diocese of Poitiers was divided into three, and that of Agen into two by the erection of suffragans at Maillezais, Luçon, Sarlat, and Condom. By a later papal bull, issued shortly after their establishment, these bishoprics appear to have been abolished, as no record shows that they entered into the general scheme of the revolutionary suppression.

On August 4, 1790, all chapters of cathedral churches, other than those of the metropolises (the mother sees), their bishops, and in turn their respective curés, were suppressed. This ruling applied as well to all collegiate churches, secular bodies, and abbeys and priories generally.

Many were, of course, reestablished at a subsequent time, or, at least, were permitted to resume their beneficent work. But it was this general suppression, in the latter years of the eighteenth century, which led up to the general reapportioning of dioceses in that composition of Church and State thereafter known as the Concordat.

Many causes deflected the growth of the Church from its natural progressive pathway. The Protestant fury went nearly to fanaticism, as did the equally fervent attempts to suppress it. The "Temples of Reason" of the Terrorists were of short endurance, but they indicated an unrest that has only in a measure moderated, if one is to take later political events as an indication of anything more than a mere uncontrolled emotion.

Whether a great future awaits Protestantism in France, or not, the power of the Roman Church is undoubtedly waning, in attracting congregations, at least.

Should a Wesley or a Whitfield arise, he might gain followers, as strong men do, and they would draw unto them others, until congregations might abound. But the faith could hardly become the avowed religion of or for the French people. It has, however, a great champion in the powerful newspaper, *Le Temps*, which has done, and will do, much to popularize the movement.

The Protestantism of Lot and Lot et Garonne is considerable, and it is of very long standing. It is recorded, too, that as late as October, 1901, the Commune of Murat went over *en masse* to

Protestantism because the Catholic bishop at Cahors desired his communicants to rise from their beds at what they considered an inconveniently early hour, in order to hear mass.

This movement in Languedoc was not wholly due to the tyranny of the Duke of Anjou; it was caused in part by the confiscation or assumption of the papal authority by France. This caused not only an internal unrest in Italy, but a turbulence which spread throughout all the western Mediterranean, and even unto the Rhine and Flanders. The danger which threatened the establishment of the Church, by making the papacy a dependence of France, aroused the Italian prelates and people alike, and gave rise to the simultaneous existence of both a French and an Italian Pope.

Charles V. supported the French pontiff, as was but natural, thus fermenting a great schism; with its attendant controversies and horrors.

French and Italian politics became for a time inexplicably mingled, and the kingdom of Naples came to be transferred to the house of Anjou.

The Revolution, following close upon the Jansenist movement at Port Royal, and the bull Unigenitus of the Pope, resulted in such riot and disregard for all established institutions, monarchical, political, and religious, that the latter – quite as much as the others – suffered undue severity.

The Church itself was at this time divided, and rascally intrigue, as well as betrayal, was the order of the day on all sides. Bishops were politicians, and priests were but the tools of their masters; this to no small degree, if we are to accept the written records.

Talleyrand-Périgord, Bishop of Autun, was a member of the National Assembly, and often presided over the sittings of that none too deliberate body.

In the innovations of the Revolution, the Church and the clergy took, for what was believed to be the national good, their full and abiding share in the surrender of past privileges.

At Paris, at the instance of Mirabeau, they even acknowledged, in some measure, the principle of religious liberty, in its widest application.

The appalling massacres of September 2, 1792, fell heavily upon the clergy throughout France; of whom one hundred and forty were murdered at the *Carmes* alone.

The Archbishop of Arles on that eventful day gave utterance to the following devoted plea:

*"Give thanks to God, gentlemen, that He calls us to seal with our blood the faith we profess. Let us ask of Him the grace of final perseverance, which by our own merit we could not obtain."*

The Restoration found the Church in a miserable and impoverished condition. There was already a long list of dioceses without bishops; of cardinals, prelates, and priests without charges, many of them in prison.

Congregations innumerable had been suppressed and many sees had been abolished.

The new dioceses, under the Concordat of 1801, one for each department only, were of vast size as compared with those which had existed more numerous before the Revolution.

In 1822 thirty new sees were added to the prelature. To-day there are sixty-seven bishoprics and seventeen archbishoprics, not including the colonial suffragans, but including the diocese of Corsica, whose seat is at Ajaccio.

Church and State are thus seen to have been, from the earliest times, indissolubly linked throughout French dominion.

The king – while there was a king – was the eldest son of the Church, and, it is said, the Church in France remains to-day that part of the Roman communion which possesses the greatest importance for the governing body of that faith. This, in spite of the tendency toward what might be called, for the want of a more expressive word, irreligion. This is a condition, or a state, which is unquestionably making headway in the France of to-day – as well, presumably, as in other countries – of its own sheer weight of numbers.

One by one, since the establishment of the Church in Gaul, all who placed any limits to their ecclesiastical allegiance have been turned out, and so turned into enemies, – the Protestants, the Jansenists, followers of the Bishop of Ypres, and the Constitutionalists. Reconciliation on either side is, and ever has been, apparently, an impossibility.

Freedom of thought and action is undoubtedly increasing its license, and the clergy in politics, while a thing to be desired by many, is, after all, a thing to be feared by the greater number, – for whom a popular government is made. Hence the curtailment of the power of the monks – the real secular propagandists – was perhaps a wise thing. We are not to-day living under the conditions which will permit of a new Richelieu to come upon the scene, and the recent act (1902) which suppressed so many monastic establishments, convents, and religious houses of all ranks, including the Alpine retreat of "La Grande Chartreuse," may be taken rather as a natural process of curtailment than a mere vindictive desire on the part of the State to concern itself with "things that do not matter." On the other hand, it is hard to see just what immediate gain is to result to the nation.



### III

## THE CHURCH ARCHITECTURE OF SOUTHERN FRANCE

The best history of the Middle Ages is that suggested by their architectural remains. That is, if we want tangible or ocular demonstration, which many of us do.

Many of these remains are but indications of a grandeur that is past and a valour and a heroism that are gone; but with the Church alone are suggested the piety and devotion which still live, at least to a far greater degree than many other sentiments and emotions; which in their struggle to keep pace with progress have suffered, or become effete by the way.

To the Church, then, or rather religion – if the word be preferred – we are chiefly indebted for the preservation of these ancient records in stone.

Ecclesiastical architecture led the way – there is no disputing that, whatever opinions may otherwise be held by astute archæologists, historians, and the antiquarians, whose food is anything and everything so long as it reeks of antiquity.

The planning and building of a great church was no menial work. Chief dignitaries themselves frequently engaged in it: the Abbot Suger, the foremost architect of his time – prime minister and regent of the kingdom as he was – at St. Denis; Archbishop Werner at Strasbourg; and William of Wykeham in England, to apportion such honours impartially.

Gothic style appears to have turned its back on Italy, where, in Lombardy at all events, were made exceedingly early attempts in this style. This, perhaps, because of satisfying and enduring classical works which allowed no rivalry; a state of affairs to some extent equally true of the south of France. The route of expansion, therefore, was northward, along the Rhine, into the Isle of France, to Belgium, and finally into England.

No more true or imaginative description of Gothic forms has been put into literature than those lines of Sir Walter Scott, which define its characteristics thus:

"... Whose pillars with clustered shafts so trim,  
With base and capital flourished 'round,  
Seemed bundles of lances which garlands had bound."

In modern times, even in France, church-building neither aspired to, nor achieved, any great distinction.

Since the Concordat what have we had? A few restorations, which in so far as they were carried out in the spirit of the original were excellent; a few added members, as the west front and spires of St. Ouen at Rouen; the towers and western portal at Clermont-Ferrand; and a few other works of like magnitude and worth. For the rest, where anything of bulk was undertaken, it was almost invariably a copy of a Renaissance model, and often a bad one at that; or a descent to some hybrid thing worse even than in their own line were the frank mediocrities of the era of the "Citizen-King," or the plush and horsehair horrors of the Second Empire.

Most characteristic, and truly the most important of all, are the remains of the Gallo-Roman period. These are the most notable and forceful reminders of the relative prominence obtained by mediæval pontiffs, prelates, and peoples.

These relations are further borne out by the frequent juxtaposition of ecclesiastical and civic institutions of the cities themselves, – fortifications, palaces, châteaux, cathedrals, and churches, the former indicating no more a predominance of power than the latter.

A consideration of one, without something more than mere mention of the other, is not possible, and incidentally – even for the church-lover – nothing can be more interesting than the great works of fortification – strong, frowning, and massive – as are yet to be seen at Béziers, Carcassonne, or Avignon. It was this latter city which sheltered within its outer walls that monumental reminder of the papal power which existed in this French capital of the "Church of Rome" – as it must still be called – in the fourteenth century.

To the stranger within the gates the unconscious resemblance between a castellated and battlemented feudal stronghold and the many churches, – and even certain cathedrals, as at Albi, Béziers, or Agde, – which were not unlike in their outline, will present some confusion of ideas.

Between a crenelated battlement or the machicolations of a city wall, as at Avignon; or of a hôtel de ville, as at Narbonne; or the same detail surmounting an episcopal residence, as at Albi, which is a veritable *donjon*; or the Palais des Papes, is not a difference even of degree. It is the same thing in each case. In one instance, however, it may have been purely for defence, and in the other used as a decorative accessory; in the latter case it was no less useful when occasion required. This feature throughout the south of France is far more common than in the north, and is bound to be strongly remarked.

Two great groups or divisions of architectural style are discernible throughout the south, even by the most casual of observers.

One is the Provençal variety, which clings somewhat closely to the lower valley of the Rhône; and the other, the Aquitanian (with possibly the more restricted Auvergnian).

These types possess in common the one distinctive trait, in some form or other, of the round-arched vaulting of Roman tradition. It is hardly more than a reminiscence, however, and while not in any way resembling the northern Gothic, at least in the Aquitanian species, hovers on the borderland between the sunny south and the more frigid north.

The Provençal type more nearly approximates the older Roman, and, significantly, it has – with less interpolation of modern ideas – endured the longest.

The Aquitanian style of the cathedrals at Périgueux and Angoulême, to specialize but two, is supposed to – and it does truly – bridge the gulf between the round-arched style which is *not* Roman and the more brilliant and graceful type of Gothic.

With this manner of construction goes, of course, a somewhat different interior arrangement than that seen in the north.

A profound acquaintance with the subject will show that it bears a certain resemblance to the disposition of parts in an Eastern mosque, and to the earlier form of Christian church – the basilica.

In this regard Fergusson makes the statement without reservation that the Eglise de Souillac more nearly resembles the Cairène type of Mohammedan mosque than it does a Christian church – of any era.

A distinct feature of this type is the massive pointed arch, upon which so many have built their definition of Gothic. In truth, though, it differs somewhat from the northern Gothic arch, but is nevertheless very ancient. It is used in early Christian churches, – at Acre and Jaffa, – and was adopted, too, by the architects of the Eastern Empire long before its introduction into Gaul.

The history of its transportation might be made interesting, and surely instructive, were one able to follow its orbit with any definite assurance that one was not wandering from the path. This does not seem possible; most experts, real or otherwise, who have tried it seem to flounder and finally fall in the effort to trace its history in consecutive and logical, or even plausible, fashion.

In illustration this is well shown by that wonderful and unique church of St. Front at Périgueux, where, in a design simple to severity, it shows its great unsimilarity to anything in other parts of France; if we except La Trinité at Anjou, with respect to its roofing and piers of nave.

It has been compared in general plan and outline to St. Marc's at Venice, "but a St. Marc's stripped of its marbles and mosaics."

In the Italian building its founders gathered their inspiration for many of its structural details from the old Byzantine East. At this time the Venetians were pushing their commercial enterprises to all parts. North-western France, and ultimately the British Isles, was the end sought. We know, too, that a colony of Venetians had established itself as far northward as Limoges, and another at Périgueux, when, in 984, this edifice, which might justly be called Venetian in its plan, was begun.

No such decoration or ornamentation was presumed as in its Adriatic prototype, but it had much beautiful carving in the capitals of its pillars and yet other embellishments, such as pavements, monuments, and precious altars, which once, it is said, existed more numerous than now.

Here, then, was the foundation of a new western style, differing in every respect from the Provençal or the Angevinian.

Examples of the northern pointed or Gothic are, in a large way, found as far south as Bayonne in its cathedral; in the spires of the cathedral at Bordeaux; and less grandly, though elegantly, disposed in St. Nazaire in the old *Cité de Carcassonne*; and farther north at Clermont-Ferrand, where its northern-pointed cathedral is in strong contrast to the neighbouring Notre Dame du Port, a remarkable type distinctly local in its plan and details.

From this point onward, it becomes not so much a question of defining and placing types, as of a chronological arrangement of fact with regard to the activities of the art of church-building.

It is doubtless true that many of the works of the ninth and tenth centuries were but feeble imitations of the buildings of Charlemagne, but it is also true that the period was that which was bringing about the development of a more or less distinct style, and if the Romanesque churches of France were not wholly Roman in spirit they were at least not a debasement therefrom.

Sir Walter Scott has also described the Romanesque manner of church-building most poetically, as witness the following quatrain:

"Built ere the art was known  
By pointed aisle and shafted stalk  
The arcades of an alleys walk  
To emulate in stone."

However, little remains in church architecture of the pre-tenth century to compare with the grand theatres, arenas, monuments, arches, towers, and bridges which are still left to us. Hence comparison were futile. Furthermore, there is this patent fact to be reckoned with, that the petty followers of the magnificent Charlemagne were not endowed with as luxurious a taste, as large a share of riches, or so great a power; and naturally they fell before the idea they would have emulated.

As a whole France was at this period amid great consternation and bloodshed, and traces of advancing civilization were fast falling before wars and cruelties unspeakable. There came a period when the intellect, instead of pursuing its rise, was, in reality, degenerating into the darkness of superstition.

The church architecture of this period – so hostile to the arts and general enlightenment – was undergoing a process even more fatal to its development than the terrors of war or devastation.

It is a commonplace perhaps to repeat that it was the superstition aroused by the Apocalypse that the end of all things would come with the commencement of the eleventh century. It was this, however, that produced the stagnation in church-building which even the ardour of a few believing churchmen could not allay. The only great religious foundation of the time was the Abbey of Cluny in the early years of the tenth century.

When the eleventh century actually arrived, Christians again bestirred themselves, and the various cities and provinces vied with each other in their enthusiastic devotion to church-building, as if to make up for lost time.

From this time onward the art of church-building gave rise to that higher skill and handicraft, the practice of architecture as an art, of which ecclesiastical art, as was but natural, rose to the greatest height.

The next century was productive of but little change in style, and, though in the north the transition and the most primitive of Gothic were slowly creeping in, the well-defined transition did not come until well forward in the twelfth century, when, so soon after, the new style bloomed forth in all its perfected glory.

The cathedrals of southern France are manifestly not as lively and vigorous as those at Reims, Amiens, or Rouen; none have the splendour and vast extent of old glass as at Chartres, and none of the smaller examples equal the symmetry and delicacy of those at Noyon or Senlis.

Some there be, however, which for magnificence and impressiveness take rank with the most notable of any land. This is true of those of Albi, Le Puy, Périgueux, and Angoulême. Avignon, too, in the *ensemble* of its cathedral and the papal palace, forms an architectural grouping that is hardly rivalled by St. Peter's and the Vatican itself.

In many of the cities of the south of France the memory of the past, with respect to their cathedrals, is overshadowed by that of their secular and civic monuments, the Roman arenas, theatres, and temples. At Nîmes, Arles, Orange, and Vienne these far exceed in importance and beauty the religious establishments.

The monasteries, abbeys, and priories of the south of France are perhaps not more numerous, nor yet more grand, than elsewhere, but they bring one to-day into more intimate association with their past.

The "Gallia-Monasticum" enumerates many score of these establishments as having been situated in these parts. Many have passed away, but many still exist.

Among the first of their kind were those founded by St. Hilaire at Poitiers and St. Martin at Tours. The great Burgundian pride was the Abbey of Cluny; much the largest and perhaps as grand as any erected in any land. Its church covered over seventy thousand square feet of area, nearly equalling in size the cathedrals at Amiens and at Bourges, and larger than either those at Chartres, Paris, or Reims. This great church was begun in 1089, was dedicated in 1131, and endured for more than seven centuries. To-day but a few small fragments remain, but note should be made of the influences which spread from this great monastic establishment throughout all Europe; and were second only to those of Rome itself.

The lovely cloistered remains of Provence, Auvergne, and Aquitaine, the comparatively modern Charterhouse – called reminiscently the Escorial of Dauphiné – near Grenoble, the communistic church of St. Bertrand de Comminges, La Chaise Dieu, Clairvaux, and innumerable other abbeys and monasteries will recall to mind more forcibly than aught else what their power must once have been.

Between the seventh and tenth centuries these institutions flourished and developed in all of the provinces which go to make up modern France. But the eleventh and twelfth centuries were the golden days of these institutions. They rendered unto the land and the people immense service, and their monks studied not only the arts and sciences, but worked with profound intelligence at all manner of utile labour. Their architecture exerted a considerable influence on this growing art of the nation, and many of their grand churches were but the forerunners of cathedrals yet to be. After the twelfth century, when the arts in France had reached the greatest heights yet attained, these religious establishments were – to give them historical justice – the greatest strength in the land.

In most cases where the great cathedrals were not the works of bishops, who may at one time have been members of monastic communities themselves, they were the results of the efforts of laymen who were direct disciples of the architect monks.

The most prolific monastic architect was undoubtedly St. Bénigne of Dijon, the Italian monk whose work was spread not only throughout Brittany and Normandy, but even across the Channel to England.

One is reminded in France that the nation's first art expression was made through church-building and decoration. This proves Ruskin's somewhat involved dicta, that, "architecture is the art which disposes and adorns the edifices raised by man ... a building raised to the honour of God has surely a use to which its architectural adornment fits it."

From whatever remote period the visible history of France has sprung, it is surely from its architectural remains – of which religious edifices have endured the most abundantly – that its chronicles since Gallo-Roman times are built up.

In the south of France, from the Gallic and Roman wars and invasions, we have a basis of tangibility, inasmuch as the remains are more numerous and definite than the mere pillars of stone and slabs of rock to be found in Bretagne, which apocryphally are supposed to indicate an earlier civilization. The *menhirs* and *dolmens* may mean much or little; the subject is too vague to follow here, but they are not found east of the Rhône, so the religion of fanaticism, of whatever species of fervour they may have resulted from, has left very little impress on France as a nation.

After the rudest early monuments were erected in the south, became ruined, and fell, there followed gateways, arches, aqueducts, arenas, theatres, temples, and, finally, churches; and from these, however minute the stones, the later civilizing and Christianizing history of this fair land is built up.

It is not possible to ignore these secular and worldly contemporaries of the great churches. It would be fatal to simulate blindness, and they could not otherwise be overlooked.

After the church-building era was begun, the development of the various styles was rapid: Gothic came, bloomed, flourished, and withered away. Then came the Renaissance, not all of it bad, but in the main entirely unsuitable as a type of Christian architecture.

Charles VIII. is commonly supposed to have been the introducer of the Italian Renaissance into France, but it was to Francois I. – that great artistic monarch and glorifier of the style in its domestic forms at least – that its popularization was due, who shall not say far beyond its deserts? Only in the magnificent châteaux, variously classed as Feudal, Renaissance, and Bourbon, did it partake of details and plans which proved glorious in their application. All had distinctly inconsistent details grafted upon them; how could it have been otherwise with the various fortunes of their houses?

There is little or nothing of Gothic in the château architecture of France to distinguish it from the more pronounced type which can hardly be expressed otherwise than as "the architecture of the French châteaux." No single word will express it, and no one type will cover them all, so far as defining their architectural style. The castle at Tarascon has a machicolated battlement; Coucy and Pierrefonds are towered and turreted as only a French château can be; the ruined and black-belted château of Angers is aught but a fortress; and Blois is an indescribable mixture of style which varies from the magnificent to the sordid. This last has ever been surrounded by a sentiment which is perhaps readily enough explained, but its architecture is of that decidedly mixed type which classes it as a mere hybrid thing, and in spite of the splendour of the additions by the houses of the Salamander and the Hedgehog, it is a species which is as indescribable (though more effective) in domestic architecture as is the Tudor of England.

With the churches the sentiments aroused are somewhat different. The Romanesque, Provençal, Auvergnian, or Aquitanian, all bespeak the real expression of the life of the time, regardless of whether individual examples fall below or rise above their contemporaries elsewhere.

The assertion is here confidently made, that a great cathedral church is, next to being a symbol of the faith, more great as a monument to its age and environment than as the product of its individual builders; crystallizing in stone the regard with which the mission of the Church was held in the community. Church-building was never a fanaticism, though it was often an enthusiasm.

There is no question but that church history in general, and church architecture in particular, are becoming less and less the sole pursuit of the professional. One does not need to adopt a transcendent doctrine by merely taking an interest, or an intelligent survey, in the social and political aspects of the Church as an institution, nor is he becoming biassed or prejudiced by a true appreciation of the symbolism and artistic attributes which have ever surrounded the art of church-building of the Roman Catholic Church. All will admit that the æsthetic aspect of the church edifice has always been the superlative art expression of its era, race, and locality.

## PART II

### South of the Loire

#### I

### INTRODUCTORY

The region immediately to the southward of the Loire valley is generally accounted the most fertile, abundant, and prosperous section of France. Certainly the food, drink, and shelter of all classes appear to be arranged on a more liberal scale than elsewhere; and this, be it understood, is a very good indication of the prosperity of a country.

Touraine, with its luxurious sentiment of châteaux, counts, and bishops, is manifestly of the north, as also is the border province of Maine and Anjou, which marks the progress and development of church-building from the manifest Romanesque types of the south to the arched vaults of the northern variety.

Immediately to the southward – if one journeys but a few leagues – in Poitou, Saintonge, and Angoumois, or in the east, in Berri, Marche, and Limousin, one comes upon a very different sentiment indeed. There is an abundance for all, but without the opulence of Burgundy or the splendour of Touraine.

Of the three regions dealt with in this section, Poitou is the most prosperous, Auvergne the most picturesque, – though the Cevennes are stern and sterile, – and Limousin the least appealing.

Limousin and, in some measure, Berri and Marche are purely pastoral; and, though greatly diversified as to topography, lack, in abundance, architectural monuments of the first rank.

Poitou, in the west, borders upon the ocean and is to a great extent wild, rugged, and romantic. The forest region of the Bocage has ever been a theme for poets and painters. In the extreme west of the province is the Vendée, now the department of the same name. The struggles of its inhabitants on behalf of the monarchical cause, in the early years of the Revolution, is a lurid page of blood-red history that recalls one of the most gallant struggles in the life of the monarchy.

The people here were hardy and vigorous, – a race of landlords who lived largely upon their own estates but still retained an attachment for the feudatories round about, a feeling which was unknown elsewhere in France.

Poitiers, on the river Clain, a tributary of the Vienne, is the chief city of Poitou. Its eight magnificent churches are greater, in the number and extent of their charms, than any similar octette elsewhere.

The valley of the Charente waters a considerable region to the southward of Poitiers. "*Le bon Roi*" Henri IV. called the stream the most charming in all his kingdom. The chief cities on its banks are La Rochelle, the Huguenot stronghold; Rochefort, famed in worldly fashion for its cheeses; and Angoulême, famed for its "*Duchesse*," who was also worldly, and more particularly for its great domed cathedral of St. Pierre.

With Auvergne one comes upon a topographical aspect quite different from anything seen elsewhere.

Most things of this world are but comparative, and so with Auvergne. It is picturesque, certainly. Le Puy has indeed been called "by one who knows," "the most picturesque place in the world." Clermont-Ferrand is almost equally attractive as to situation; while Puy de Dôme, Riom, and St. Nectaire form a trio of naturally picturesque topographical features which it would be hard to equal within so small a radius elsewhere.

The country round about is volcanic, and the face of the landscape shows it plainly. Clermont-Ferrand, the capital, was a populous city in Roman times, and was the centre from which the spirit of the Church survived and went forth anew after five consecutive centuries of devastation and bloodshed of Vandals, Visigoths, Franks, Saracens, Carolingians and Capetians.

Puy de Dôme, near Clermont-Ferrand, is a massive rocky mount which rises nearly five thousand feet above the sea-level, and presents one of those uncommon and curious sights which one can hardly realize until he comes immediately beneath their spell.

Throughout this region are many broken volcanic craters and lava streams. At Mont Doré-le-Bains are a few remains of a Roman thermal establishment; an indication that these early settlers found – if they did not seek – these warm springs of a unique quality, famous yet throughout the world.

An alleged "Druid's altar," more probably merely a *dolmen*, is situated near St. Nectaire, a small watering-place which is also possessed of an impressively simple, though massive, Romanesque church.

At Issioure is the *Eglise de St. Pol*, a large and important church, built in the eleventh century, in the Romanesque manner. Another most interesting great church is *La Chaise Dieu* near Le Puy, a remarkable construction of the fourteenth century. It was originally the monastery of the *Casa Dei*. It has been popularly supposed heretofore that its floor was on a level with the summit of Puy de Dôme, hence its appropriate nomenclature; latterly the assertion has been refuted, as it may be by any one who takes the trouble to compare the respective elevations in figures. This imposing church ranks, however, unreservedly among the greatest of the mediæval monastic establishments of France.

The powerful feudal system of the Middle Ages, which extended from the Atlantic and German Oceans nearly to the Neapolitan and Spanish borders – afterward carried still farther into Naples and Britain – finds its most important and striking monument of central France in the Château of Polignac, only a few miles from Le Puy. This to-day is but a ruin, but it rises boldly from a depressed valley, and suggests in every way – ruin though it be – the mediæval stronghold that it once was.

Originally it was the seat of the distinguished family whose name it bears. The Revolution practically destroyed it, but such as is left shows completely the great extent of its functions both as a fortress and a palace.

These elements were made necessary by long ages of warfare and discord, – local in many cases, but none the less bloodthirsty for that, – and while such institutions naturally promulgated the growth of Feudalism which left these massive and generous memorials, it is hard to see, even to-day, how else the end might have been obtained.

Auvergne, according to Fergusson, who in his fact has seldom been found wanting, "has one of the most beautiful and numerous of the 'round-Gothic' styles in France ... classed among the perfected styles of Europe."

Immediately to the southward of Le Puy is that marvellous country known as the Cevennes. It has been commonly called sterile, bare, unproductive, and much that is less charitable as criticism.

It is not very productive, to be sure, but a native of the land once delivered himself of this remark: "*Le mûrier a été pendant longtemps l'arbre d'or du Cevenol.*" This is prima-facie evidence that the first statement was a libel.

In the latter years of the eighteenth century the Protestants of the Cevennes were a large and powerful body of dissenters.

A curious work *in English*, written by a native of Languedoc in 1703, states "that they were at least ten to one Papist. And 'twas observed, in many Places, the Priest said mass only for his Clerk, Himself, and the Walls."



These people were not only valiant but industrious, and at that time held the most considerable trade in wool of all France.

To quote again this eighteenth-century Languedocian, who aspired to be a writer of English, we learn:

"God vouchsafed to Illuminate this People with the Truths of the Gospel, several Ages before the Reformation... The *Waldenses* and *Albigenses* fled into the Mountains to escape the violence of the Crusades against them... Cruel persecution did not so wholly extinguish the Sacred Light in the *Cevennes*, but that some parts of it were preserved among its Ashes."

As early as 1683 the Protestants in many parts of southern France drew up a *Project* of non-compliance with the Edicts and Declarations against them.

The inhabitants in general, however, of the wealthy cities of Montpellier, Nîmes and Uzès were divided much as factions are to-day, and the Papist preference prevailing, the scheme was not put into execution. Because of this, attempted resistance was made only in some parts of the Cevennes and Dauphiné. Here the dissenters met with comfort and assurance by the preachings of several ministers, and finally sought to go out proselytizing among their outside brethren in affliction. This brought martyrdom, oppression, and bloodshed; and finally culminated in a long series of massacres. Children in large numbers were taken from their parents, and put under the Romish faith, as a precaution, presumably, that future generations should be more tractable and faithful.

It is told of the Bishop of Alais that upon visiting the curé at Vigan, he desired that forty children should be so put away, forthwith. The curé could find but sixteen who were not dutiful toward the Church, but the bishop would have none of it. Forty was his quota from that village, and forty must be found. Forty *were* found, the rest being made up from those who presumably stood in no great need of the care of the Church, beyond such as already came into their daily lives.

It seems outrageous and unfair at this late day, leaving all question of Church and creed outside the pale, but most machination of arbitrary law and ruling works the same way, and pity 'tis that the Church should not have been the first to recognize this tendency. However, these predilections on the part of the people are scarcely more than a memory to-day, in spite of the fact that Protestantism still holds forth in many parts. Taine was undoubtedly right when he said that it was improbable that such a religion would ever satisfy the French temperament.

Limousin partakes of many of the characteristics of Auvergne and Poitou. Its architectural types favour the latter, and its topographical features the former. The resemblance is not so very great in either case, but it is to be remarked. Its chief city, Limoges, lies to the northward of the *Montagnes du Limousin*, on the banks of the Vienne, which, through the Loire, enters the Atlantic at St. Nazaire.

In a way, its topographical situation, as above noted, accounts far more for its tendencies of life, the art expression of its churches, and its ancient enamels and pottery of to-day, than does its climatic situation. It is climatically of the southland, but its industry and its influences have been greatly northern.

With the surrounding country this is not true, but with its one centre of population – Limoges – it is.

## **II**

### **L'ABBAYE DE MAILLEZAIS**

Maillezais is but a memory, so far as its people and power are concerned. It is not even a Vendean town, as many suppose, though it was the seat of a thirteenth-century bishopric, which in the time of Louis Quatorze was transferred to La Rochelle.

Its abbey church, the oldest portion of which dates from the tenth to the twelfth centuries, is now but a ruin.

In the fourteenth century the establishment was greatly enlarged and extensive buildings added.

To-day it is classed, by the Commission des Monuments Historiques, among those treasures for which it stands sponsor as to their antiquity, artistic worth, and future preservation. Aside from this and the record of the fact that it became, in the fourteenth century, the seat of a bishop's throne, – with Geoffroy I. as its first occupant, – it must be dismissed without further comment.

### III

## ST. LOUIS DE LA ROCHELLE

The city of La Rochelle will have more interest for the lover of history than for the lover of churches.

Its past has been lurid, and the momentous question of the future rights of the Protestants of France made this natural stronghold the battle-ground where the most stubborn resistance against Church and State was made.

The siege of 1573 was unsuccessful. But a little more than half a century later the city, after a siege of fourteen months, gave way before the powerful force brought against it by Cardinal Richelieu in person, supported by Louis XIII.

For this reason, if for no other, he who would know from personal acquaintance the ground upon which the mighty battles of the faith were fought will not pass the Huguenot city quickly by.

The Huguenot stronghold of La Rochelle naturally might not be supposed to possess a very magnificent Roman cathedral. As a matter of fact it does not, and it has only ranked as a cathedral city since 1665, when the bishopric was transferred from Maillezais. The city was in the hands of the Huguenots from 1557 until the siege of 1628-1629; and was, during all this time, the bulwark of the Protestant cause in France.

The present cathedral of St. Louis dates only from 1735.

Its pseudo-classic features classify it as one of those structures designated by the discerning Abbé Bourassé as being "cold-blooded and lacking in lustre."

It surely is all of that, and the pity is that it offers no charm whatever of either shape or feature.

It is of course more than likely that Huguenot influence was here so great as to have strangled any ambition on the part of the mediæval builders to have erected previously anything more imposing. And when that time was past came also the demise of Gothic splendour. The transition from the pointed to the superimposed classical details, which was the distinctive Renaissance manner of church-building, was not as sudden as many suppose, though it came into being simultaneously throughout the land.

There is no trace, however, in the cathedral of St. Louis, of anything but a base descent to features only too well recognized as having little of churchly mien about them; and truly this structure is no better or worse as an art object than many others of its class. The significant aspect being that, though it resembles Gothic not at all, neither does it bear any close relationship to the Romanesque.

The former parish church of St. Barthèlemy, long since destroyed, has left behind, as a memory of its former greatness, a single lone tower, the work of a Cluniac monk, Mognon by name. It is worth hours of contemplation and study as compared with the minutes which could profitably be devoted to the cathedral of St. Louis.

## IV CATHÉDRALE DE LUÇON

When the see of Luçon was established in the fourteenth century it comprehended a territory over which Poitiers had previously had jurisdiction. A powerful abbey was here in the seventh century, but the first bishop, Pierre de la Veyrie, did not come to the diocese until 1317. The real fame of the diocese, in modern minds, lies in the fact that Cardinal Richelieu was made bishop of Luçon in the seventeenth century (1606 to 1624).

The cathedral at Luçon is a remarkable structure in appearance. A hybrid conglomerate thing, picturesque enough to the untrained eye, but ill-proportioned, weak, effeminate, and base.

Its graceful Gothic spire, crocketed, and of true dwindling dimensions, is superimposed on a tower which looks as though it might have been modelled with a series of children's building-blocks. This in its turn crowns a classical portal and colonnade in most uncanny fashion.

In the first stage of this tower, as it rises above the portal, is what, at a distance, appears to be a diminutive *rosace*. In reality it is an enormous clock-face, to which one's attention is invariably directed by the native, a species of local admiration which is universal throughout the known world wherever an ungainly clock exists.

The workmanship of the building as a whole is of every century from the twelfth to the seventeenth, with a complete "restoration" in 1853. In the episcopal palace is a cloistered arcade, the remains of a fifteenth-century work.

A rather pleasing situation sets off this pretentious but unworthy cathedral in a manner superior to that which it deserves.

## V ST. FRONT DE PÉRIGUEUX

The grandest and most notable tenth-century church yet remaining in France is unquestionably that of St. Front at Périgueux.

From the records of its history and a study of its distinctive constructive elements has been traced the development of the transition period which ultimately produced the Gothic splendours of the Isle of France.

It is more than reminiscent of St. Marc's at Venice, and is the most notable exponent of that type of roofing which employed the cupola in groups, to sustain the thrust and counterthrust, which was afterward accomplished by the ogival arch in conjunction with the flying buttress.

Here are comparatively slight sustaining walls, and accordingly no great roofed-over chambers such as we get in the later Gothic, but the whole mass is, in spite of this, suggestive of a massiveness which many more heavily walled churches do not possess. Paradoxically, too, a view over its roof-top, with its ranges of egg-like domes, suggests a frailty which but for its scientifically disposed strains would doubtless have collapsed ere now.

This ancient abbatial church succeeded an earlier *basilique* on the same site. Viollet-le-Duc says of it: "It is an importation from a foreign country; the most remarkable example of church-building in Gaul since the barbaric invasion."

The plan of the cathedral follows not only the form of St. Marc's, but also approximates its dimensions. The remains of the ancient basilica are only to be remarked in the portion which precedes the foremost cupola.

St. Front has the unusual attribute of an *avant-porch*, – a sort of primitive narthen, as was a feature of tenth-century buildings (see plan and descriptions of a tenth-century church in appendix), behind which is a second porch, – a vestibule beneath the tower, – and finally the first of the group, of five central cupolas.

The *clocher* or belfry of St. Front is accredited as being one of the most remarkable eleventh-century erections of its kind in any land. It is made up of square stages, each smaller than the other, and crowned finally by a conic cupola.

Its early inception and erection here are supposed to account for the similarity of others – not so magnificent, but like to a marked degree – in the neighbouring provinces.

Here is no trace of the piled-up tabouret style of later centuries, and it is far removed from the mosque-like minarets which were the undoubted prototypes of the mediæval *clochers*. So, too, it is different, quite, from the Italian *campanile* or the *beffroi* which crept into civic architecture in the north; but whose sole example in the south of France is believed to be that curious structure which still holds forth in the papal city of Avignon.

Says Bourassé: "The cathedral of St. Front at Périgueux is unique." Its foundation dates with certitude from between 1010 and 1047, and is therefore contemporary with that of St. Marc's at Venice – which it so greatly resembles – which was rebuilt after a fire between 977 and 1071.

The general effect of the interior is as impressive as it is unusual, with its lofty cupolas, its weighty and gross pillars, and its massive arches between the cupolas; all of which are purely constructive elements.

There are few really ornamental details, and such as exist are of a severe and unprogressive type, being merely reminiscent of the antique.

In its general plan, St. Front follows that of a Grecian cross, its twelve wall-faces crowned by continuous pediments. Eight massive pillars, whose functions are those of the later developed buttress, flank the extremities of the cross, and are crowned by pyramidal cupolas which, with the

main roofing, combine to give that distinctive character to this unusual and "foreign" cathedral of mid-France.

St. Front, from whom the cathedral takes its name, became the first bishop of Périgueux when the see was founded in the second century.

## VI ST. PIERRE DE POITIERS

IN 1317 the diocese of Poitiers was divided, and parts apportioned to the newly founded bishoprics of Maillezais and Luçon. The first bishop of Poitiers was St. Nectaire, in the third century. By virtue of the Concordat of 1801 the diocese now comprehends the Departments of Vienne and Deux-Sèvres.

The cathedral of St. Pierre de Poitiers has been baldly and tersely described as a "mere Lombard shell with a Gothic porch." This hardly does it justice, even as to preciseness. The easterly portion is Lombard, without question, and the nave is of the northern pointed variety; a not unusual admixture of feature, but one which can but suggest that still more, much more, is behind it.

The pointed nave is of great beauty, and, in the westerly end, contains an elaborate *rosace*—an infrequent attribute in these parts.

The aisles are of great breadth, and are quite as lofty in proportion. This produces an effect of great amplitude, nearly as much so as of the great halled churches at Albi or the aisleless St. André at Bordeaux, and contrasts forcibly in majesty with the usual Gothic conception of great height, as against extreme width.

Of Poitiers Professor Freeman says: "It is no less a city of counts than Angers; and if Counts of Anjou grew into Kings of England, one Countess of Poitiers grew no less into a Queen of England; and when the young Henry took her to wife, he took all Poitou with her, and Aquitaine and Gasconne, too, so great was his desire for lands and power." Leaving that aspect apart—to the historians and apologists—it is the churches of Poitiers which have for the traveller the greatest and all-pervading interest.

Poitiers is justly famed for its noble and numerous mediæval church edifices. Five of them rank as a unique series of Romanesque types—the most precious in all France. In importance they are perhaps best ranked as follows: St. Hilaire, of the tenth and eleventh centuries; the Baptistère, or the Temple St. Jean, of the fourth to twelfth centuries; Notre Dame de la Grande and St. Radegonde, of the eleventh and twelfth centuries; and La Cathédrale, dating from the end of the Romanesque period. Together they present a unique series of magnificent churches, as is truly claimed.

When one crosses the Loire, he crosses the boundary not only into southern Gaul but into southern Europe as well; where the very aspects of life, as well as climatic and topographical conditions and features, are far different from those of the northern French provinces.

Looking backward from the Middle Ages—from the fourteenth century to the fourth—one finds the city less a city of counts than of bishops.

Another aspect which places Poitiers at the very head of ecclesiastical foundations is that it sustained, and still sustains, a separate religious edifice known as the Baptistère. It is here a structure of Christian-Roman times, and is a feature seldom seen north of the Alps, or even out of Italy. There is, however, another example at Le Puy and another at Aix-en-Provence. This Baptistère de St. Jean was founded during the reign of St. Hilaire as bishop of Poitiers, a prelate whose name still lives in the Église St. Hilaire-le-Grand.

The cathedral of St. Pierre is commonly classed under the generic style of Romanesque; more particularly it is of the Lombard variety, if such a distinction can be made between the two species with surety. At all events it marks the dividing-line—or period, when the process of evolution becomes most marked—between the almost pagan plan of many early Christian churches and the coming of Gothic.

In spite of its prominence and its beauty with regard to its accessories, St. Pierre de Poitiers does not immediately take rank as the most beautiful, nor yet the most interesting, among the churches of the city: neither has it the commanding situation of certain other cathedrals of the

neighbouring provinces, such as Notre Dame at Le Puy, St. Maurice at Angers, or St. Front at Périgueux. In short, as to situation, it just misses what otherwise might have been a commanding location.

St. Radegonde overhangs the river Clain, but is yet far below the cathedral, which stands upon the eastern flank of an eminence, and from many points is lost entirely to view. From certain distant vantage-ground, the composition is, however, as complete and imposing an ensemble as might be desired, but decidedly the nearer view is not so pleasing, and somewhat mitigates the former estimate.

There is a certain uncouthness in the outlines of this church that does not bring it into competition with that class of the great churches of France known as *les grandes cathédrales*.

The general outline of the roof – omitting of course the scanty transepts – is very reminiscent of Bourges; and again of Albi. The ridge-pole is broken, however, by a slight differentiation of height between the choir and the nave, and the westerly towers scarcely rise above the roof itself.

The easterly termination is decidedly unusual, even unto peculiarity. It is not, after the English manner, of the squared east-end variety, nor yet does it possess an apse of conventional form, but rather is a combination of the two widely differing styles, with considerably more than a suggested apse when viewed from the interior, and merely a flat bare wall when seen from the outside. In addition three diminutive separate apses are attached thereto, and present in the completed arrangement a variation or species which is distinctly local.

The present edifice dates from 1162, its construction being largely due to the Countess Eleanor, queen to the young Earl Henry.

The high altar was dedicated in 1199, but the choir itself was not finished until a half-century later.

There is no triforium or clerestory, and, but for the aisles, the cathedral would approximate the dimensions and interior outlines of that great chambered church at Albi; as it is, it comes well within the classification called by the Germans *hallenkirche*.

Professor Freeman has said that a church that has aisles can hardly be called a typical Angevin church; but St. Pierre de Poitiers is distinctly Angevin in spite of the loftiness of its walls and pillars.

The west front is the most elaborate constructive element and is an addition of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with flanking towers of the same period which stand well forward and to one side, as at Rouen, and at Wells, in England.

The western doorway is decorated with sculptures of the fifteenth century, in a manner which somewhat suggests the work of the northern builders; who, says Fergusson, "were aiding the bishops of the southern dioceses to emulate in some degree the ambitious works of the Isle of France."

The ground-plan of this cathedral is curious, and shows, in its interior arrangements, a narrowing or drawing in of parts toward the east. This is caused mostly by the decreasing effect of height between the nave and choir, and the fact that the attenuated transepts are hardly more than suggestions – occupying but the width of one bay.

The nave of eight bays and the aisles are of nearly equal height, which again tends to produce an effect of length.

There is painted glass of the thirteenth century in small quantity, and a much larger amount of an eighteenth-century product, which shows – as always – the decadence of the art. Of this glass, that of the *rosace* at the westerly end is perhaps the best, judging from the minute portions which can be seen peeping out from behind the organ-case.

The present high altar is a modern work, as also – comparatively – are the tombs of various churchmen which are scattered throughout the nave and choir. In the sacristy, access to which is gained by some mystic rite not always made clear to the visitor, are supposed to be a series of painted portraits of all the former bishops of Poitiers, from the fourteenth century onward. It must



be an interesting collection if the outsider could but judge for himself; as things now are, it has to be taken on faith.

A detail of distinct value, and a feature which shows a due regard for the abilities of the master workman who built the cathedral, though his name is unknown, is to be seen in the tympana of the canopies which overhang the stalls of the choir. Here is an acknowledgment – in a tangible if not a specific form – of the architectural genius who was responsible for the construction of this church. It consists of a sculptured figure in stone, which bears in its arms a compass and a T square. This suggests the possible connection between the Masonic craft and church-building of the Middle Ages; a subject which has ever been a vexed question among antiquaries, and one which doubtless ever will be.

The episcopal residence adjoins the cathedral on the right, and the charming Baptistère St. Jean is also close to the walls of, but quite separate from, the main building of the cathedral.

The other architectural attractions of Poitiers are nearly as great as its array of churches.

The Musée is exceedingly rich in archæological treasures. The present-day Palais de Justice was the former palace of the Counts of Poitou. It has a grand chamber in its *Salle des Pas-perdus*, which dates from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries as to its decorations. The ramparts of the city are exceedingly interesting and extensive. In the modern hôtel de ville are a series of wall decorations by Puvis de Chavannes. The Hôtel d'Aquitaine (sixteenth century), in the Grand Rue, was the former residence of the Priors of St. John of Jerusalem.

The *Chronique de Maillezais* tells of a former bishop of Poitiers who, about the year 1114, sought to excommunicate that gay prince and poet, William, the ninth Count of Poitiers, the earliest of that race of poets known as the troubadours. Coming into the count's presence to repeat the formula of excommunication, he was threatened with the sword of that gay prince. Thinking better, however, the count admonished him thus: "No, I will not. I do not love you well enough to send you to paradise." He took upon himself, though, to exercise his royal prerogative; and henceforth, for his rash edict, the bishop of Poitiers was banished for ever, and the see descended unto other hands.

The generally recognized reputation of William being that of a "*grand trompeur des dames*," this action was but a duty which the honest prelate was bound to perform, disastrous though the consequences might be. Still he thought not of that, and was not willing to accept palliation for the count's venial sins in the shape of that nobleman's capacities as the first chanter of his time, – poetic measures of doubtful morality.

## VII ST. ETIENNE DE LIMOGES

"*Les Limosinats* leave their cities poor, and they return poor, after long years of labour."

– *De la Bédolliere*.

Limoges was the capital around which centred the life and activities of the *pays du Limousin* when that land marked the limits of the domain of the Kings of France. (Guienne then being under other domination.)

The most ancient inhabitants of the province were known as *Lemovices*, but the transition and evolution of the vocable are easily followed to that borne by the present city of Limoges, perhaps best known of art lovers as the home of that school of fifteenth century artists who produced the beautiful works called *Emaux de Limoges*.

The earliest specimens of what has come to be popularly known as Limoges enamel date from the twelfth century; and the last of the great masters in the splendid art died in 1765.

The real history of this truly great art, which may be said to have taken its highest forms in ecclesiology, – of which examples are frequently met with in the sacristies of the cathedral churches of France and elsewhere – is vague to the point of obscurity. A study of the subject, deep and profound, is the only process by which one can acquire even a nodding acquaintance with all its various aspects.

It reached its greatest heights in the reign of that artistic monarch, François I. To-day the memory and suggestion of the art of the enamelists of Limoges are perpetuated by, and, through those cursory mentors, the guide-books and popular histories, often confounded with, the production of porcelain. This industry not only flourishes here, but the famous porcelain earth of the country round about is supplied even to the one-time royal factory of Sèvres.

St. Martial was the first prelate at Limoges, in the third century. The diocese is to-day a suffragan of Bourges, and its cathedral of St. Etienne, while not a very ancient structure, is most interesting as to its storied past and varied and lively composition.

Beneath the western tower are the remains of a Romanesque portal which must have belonged to an older church; but to all intents and purposes St. Etienne is to-day a Gothic church after the true northern manner.

It was begun in 1273 under the direct influence of the impetus given to the Gothic development by the erection of Notre Dame d'Amiens, and in all its parts, – choir, transept, and nave, – its development and growth have been most pleasing.

From the point of view of situation this cathedral is more attractively placed than many another which is located in a city which perforce must be ranked as a purely commercial and manufacturing town. From the Pont Neuf, which crosses the Vienne, the view over the gardens of the bishop's palace and the Quai de l'Evêché is indeed grand and imposing.

Chronologically the parts of this imposing church run nearly the gamut of the Gothic note – from the choir of the thirteenth, the transepts of the fourteenth and fifteenth, to the nave of the early sixteenth centuries. This nave has only latterly been completed, and is preceded by the elegant octagonal tower before mentioned. This *clocher* is a thirteenth-century work, and rises something over two hundred and four feet above the pavement.

In the north transept is a grand rose window after the true French mediæval excellence and magnitude, showing once again the northern spirit under which the cathedral-builders of Limoges worked.

In reality the façade of this north transept might be called the true front of the cathedral. The design of its portal is elaborate and elegant. A series of carved figures in stone are set against the wall of the choir just beyond the transept. They depict the martyrdom of St. Etienne.

The interior will first of all be remarked for its abundant and splendidly coloured glass. This glass is indeed of the quality which in a later day has often been lacking. It dates from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, except a part, readily discernible, which is of the nineteenth.

The remains of a precious choir-screen are yet very beautiful. It has been removed from its original position and its stones arranged in much disorder. Still it is a manifestly satisfying example of the art of the stone-carver of the Renaissance period. It dates from 1543. Bishop Langeac (d. 1541), who caused it to be originally erected, is buried close by, beneath a contemporary monument. Bishops Bernard Brun (d. 1349) and Raynaud de la Porte (d. 1325) have also Renaissance monuments which will be remarked for their excess of ornament and elaboration.

In the crypt of the eleventh century, presumably the remains of the Romanesque church whose portal is beneath the western tower, are some remarkable wall paintings thought to be of a contemporary era. If so, they must rank among the very earliest works of their class.

The chief treasures of the cathedral are a series of enamels which are set into a reredos (the canon's altar in the sacristy). They are the work of the master, Noel Loudin, in the seventeenth century.

In the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville is a monumental fountain in bronze and porcelain, further enriched after the manner of the mediæval enamel workers.

The *collection de ceramique* in the Musée is unique in France, or for that matter in all the world.

The *ateliers de Limoges* were first established in the thirteenth century by the monks of the Abbey of Solignac.

A remarkable example of the work of the *émailleurs limousins* is the twelfth-century reliquary of Thomas à Becket, one-time Archbishop of Canterbury.

At the rear of the cathedral the Vienne is crossed by the thirteenth-century bridge of St. Etienne. Like the cathedrals, châteaux, and city walls, the old bridges of France, where they still remain, are masterworks of their kind. To connect them more closely with the cause of religion, it is significant that they mostly bore the name of, and were dedicated to, some local saint.

## VIII

### ST. ODILON DE ST. FLOUR

Though an ancient Christianizing centre, St. Flour is not possessed of a cathedral which gives it any great rank as a "cathedral town."

The bishopric was founded in 1318, by Raimond de Vehens, and the present cathedral of St. Odilon is on the site of an ancient basilica. It was begun in 1375, dedicated in 1496, and finished – so far as a great church ever comes to its completion – in 1556.

Its exterior is strong and massive, but harmonious throughout. Its façade has three portals, flanked by two square towers, which are capped with modern *couronnes*.

The interior shows five small naves; that is, the nave proper, with two aisles on either side.

Beside the western doorway are somewhat scanty traces of mediæval mural paintings depicting Purgatory, while above is the conventionally disposed organ *buffet*.

A fine painting of the late French school is in one of the side chapels, and represents an incident from the life of St. Vincent de Paul. In another chapel is a bas-relief in stone of "The Last Judgment," reproduced from that which is yet to be seen in the north portal of Notre Dame de Reims. In the chapel of St. Anthony of Padua is a painting of the "Holy Family," and in another – that of Ste. Anne – a remarkable work depicting the "Martyred St. Symphorien at Autun."

In the lower ranges of the choir is some fine modern glass by Thévenot, while high above the second range is a venerated statue of *Le Christ Noir*.

From this catalogue it will be inferred that the great attractions of the cathedral at St. Flour are mainly the artistic accessories with which it has been embellished.

There are no remarkably beautiful or striking constructive elements, though the plan is hardy and not unbeautiful. It ranks among cathedrals well down in the second class, but it is a highly interesting church nevertheless.

A chapel in the nave gives entrance to the eighteenth-century episcopal palace, which is in no way notable except for its beautifully laid-out gardens and terraces. The sacristy was built in 1382 of the remains of the ancient Château de St. Flour, called De Brezons, which was itself originally built in the year 1000.

## IX

### ST. PIERRE DE SAINTES

The chief architectural feature of this ancient town – the *Mediolanum Santonum*, chief town of the Santoni – is not its rather uninspiring cathedral (rebuilt in 1585), nor yet the church of St. Eutrope (1081 – 96) with its underground crypt – the largest in France.

As a historical monument of rank far more interest centres around the Arc de Triomphe of Germanicus, which originally formed a part of the bridge which spans the Charente at this point. It was erected in the reign of Nero by Caius Julius Rufus, a priest of Roma and Augustus, in memory of Germanicus, Tiberius, his uncle, and his father, Drusus.

The bridge itself, or what was left of it, was razed in the nineteenth century, which is of course to be regretted. A monument which could have endured a matter of eighteen hundred years might well have been left alone to take its further chances with Father Time. Since then the bridge has been rebuilt on its former site, a procedure which makes the hiatus and the false position of the arch the more apparent. The cloister of the cathedral, in spite of the anachronism, is in the early Gothic manner, and the campanile is of the fifteenth century.

Saintes became a bishopric, in the province of Bordeaux, in the third century. St. Eutrope – whose name is perpetuated in a fine Romanesque church of the city – was the first bishop. The year 1793 saw the suppression of the diocesan seat here, in favour of Angoulême.

In the main, the edifice is of a late date, in that it was entirely rebuilt in the latter years of the sixteenth century, after having suffered practical devastation in the religious wars of that time.

The first mention of a cathedral church here is of a structure which took form in 1117 – the progenitor of the present edifice. Such considerable repairs as were necessary were undertaken in the fifteenth century, but the church seen to-day is almost entirely of the century following.

The most remarkable feature of note, in connection with this *ci-devant* cathedral, is unquestionably the luxurious flamboyant tower of the fifteenth century.

This really fine tower is detached from the main structure and occupies the site of the church erected by Charlemagne in fulfilment of his vow to Pepin, his father, after defeating Gaiffre, Duc d'Aquitaine.

In the interior two of the bays of the transepts – which will be readily noted – date from the twelfth century, while the nave is of the fifteenth, and the vaulting of nave and choir – hardy and strong in every detail – is, in part, as late as the mid-eighteenth century.

The Église de St. Eutrope, before mentioned, is chiefly of the twelfth century, though its crypt, reputedly the largest in all France, is of a century earlier.

Saintes is renowned to lovers of ceramics as being the birthplace of Bernard Pallisy, the inventor of the pottery glaze; and is the scene of many of his early experiments. A statue to his memory adorns the Place Bassompierre near the Arc de Triomphe.

## X CATHÉDRALE DE TULLE

The charm of Tulle's cathedral is in its imposing and dominant character, rather than in any inherent grace or beauty which it possesses.

It is not a beautiful structure; it is not even picturesquely disposed; it is grim and gaunt, and consists merely of a nave in the severe Romanesque-Transition manner, surmounted by a later and non-contemporary tower and spire.

In spite of this it looms large from every view-point in the town, and is so lively a component of the busy life which surrounds it that it is – in spite of its severity of outline – a very appealing church edifice in more senses than one.

Its tall, finely-proportioned tower and spire, which indeed is the chief attribute of grace and symmetry, is of the fourteenth century, and, though plain and primitive in its outlines, is far more pleasing than the crocketed and rococo details which in a later day were composed into something which was thought to be a spire.

In the earliest days of its history, this rather bare and cold church was a Benedictine monastery whose primitive church dated as far back as the seventh century. There are yet remains of a cloister which may have belonged to the early church of this monastic house, and as such is highly interesting, and withal pleasing.

The bishopric was founded in 1317 by Arnaud de St. Astier. The Revolution caused much devastation here in the precincts of this cathedral, which was first stripped of its *trésor*, and finally of its dignity, when the see was abolished.

## XI ST. PIERRE D'ANGOULÊME

Angoulême is often first called to mind by its famous or notorious Duchesse, whose fame is locally perpetuated by a not very suitable column, erected in the Promenade Beaulieu in 1815. There is certainly a wealth of romance to be conjured up from the recollection of the famous Counts of Angoulême and their adherents, who made their residence in the ancient château which to-day forms in part the Hôtel de Ville, and in part the prison. Here in this château was born Marguerite de Valois, the Marguerite of Marguerites, as François I. called her; here took welcome shelter, Marie de Medici after her husband's assassination; and here, too, much more of which history tells.

What most histories do not tell is that the cathedral of St. Pierre d'Angoulême, with the cathedral of St. Front at Périgueux and Notre Dame de Poitiers, ranks at the very head of that magnificent architectural style known as Aquitanian.

St. Ansone was the first bishop of the diocese – in the third century. The see was then, as now, a suffragan of Bordeaux. Religious wars, here as throughout Aquitaine, were responsible for a great unrest among the people, as well as the sacrilege and desecration of church property.

The most marked spoliation was at the hands of the Protestant Coligny, the effects of whose sixteenth-century ravages are yet visible in the cathedral.

A monk – Michel Grillet – was hung to a mulberry-tree, – which stood where now is the Place du Murier (mulberry), – by Coligny, who was reviled thus in the angry dying words of the monk: "You shall be thrown out of the window like Jezebel, and shall be ignominiously dragged through the streets." This prophecy did not come true, but Coligny died an inglorious death in 1572, at the instigation of the Duc de Guise.

This cathedral ranks as one of the most curious in France, and, with its alien plan and details, has ever been the object of the profound admiration of all who have studied its varied aspects.

Mainly it is a twelfth-century edifice throughout, in spite of the extensive restorations of the nineteenth century, which have eradicated many crudities that might better have been allowed to remain. It is ranked by the Ministère des Beaux Arts as a *Monument Historique*.

The west front, in spite of the depredations before, during, and after the Revolution, is notable for its rising tiers of round-headed arches seated firmly on proportionate though not gross columns, its statued niches, the rich bas-reliefs of the tympanum of its portal, the exquisite arabesques, of lintel, frieze, and archivolt, and, above all, its large central arch with *Vesica piscis*, and the added decorations of emblems of the evangels and angels. In addition to all this, which forms a gallery of artistic details in itself, the general disposition of parts is luxurious and remarkable.

As a whole, St. Pierre is commonly credited as possessing the finest Lombard detail to be found in the north; some say outside of Italy. Certainly it is prodigious in its splendour, whatever may be one's predilections for or against the expression of its art.

The church follows in general plan the same distinctive style. Its tower, too, is Lombard, likewise the rounded apside, and – though the church is of the elongated Latin or cruciform ground-plan – its possession of a great central dome (with three others above the nave – and withal aisleless) points certainly to the great domed churches of the Lombard plain for its ancestry.

The western dome is of the eleventh century, the others of the twelfth. Its primitiveness has been more or less distorted by later additions, made necessary by devastation in the sixteenth century, but it ranks to-day, with St. Front at Périgueux, as the leading example of the style known as Aquitanian.

Above the western portal is a great window, very tall and showing in its glass a "Last Judgment."

A superb tower ends off the *croisillon* on the north and rises to the height of one hundred and ninety-seven feet. "Next to the west front and the domed roofing of the interior, this tower ranks as the third most curious and remarkable feature of this unusual church." This tower, in spite of its appealing properties, is curiously enough not the original to which the previous descriptive lines applied; but their echo may be heard to-day with respect to the present tower, which is a reconstruction, of the same materials, and after the same manner, so far as possible, as the original.



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