
The Cathedral of Strasburg

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Death of the

Virgin Maria.

Historical Sketch
of the
Cathedral of Strasbourg

Twenty fourth Edition

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[2]

The interior of the
Cathedral.

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I. HISTORY

Among the wonderful monuments to which the religious art of the middle ages has given rise and which will for ever excite the admiration of men, the church of *Notre-Dame* or Cathedral of Strasburg occupies one of the first ranks. By its dimensions, the richness of the ornaments and figures that adorn its exterior, by the majesty of its nave, and by its light steeple, which towers towards Heaven with as much grace as boldness, this house of God proclaims afar its destination and leaves a deep and indelible impression on the soul of any one who gazes on it.

Exhibiting in all its different parts models of every epoch of christian architecture, this Cathedral is for the artist a subject of serious study and for the inhabitant of Strasburg a venerable monument, which recalls to his mind the principal events of the ancient history of our city.

According to some old traditions, the Cathedral is built on a spot, which, from the remotest times, had been devoted to worship. Originally this spot formed a hill sloping westward into a cavity, which was filled up many centuries ago. Around it, the Celts, the first inhabitants of our country, built their huts: its summit was covered by the sacred wood, in the midst of which rose the druidical *dolmen*. It was there that those barbarians offered sacrifices to Esus, their God of war,^[4] sacrifices which, in times of public calamity, were human victims.

After the conquest of Gaul by the Romans, a regular and fortified town was very soon founded on the place hitherto occupied by the scattered habitations of the Celts. The old name of *Argentorat* was alone preserved; it signified a town where the river is crossed over. It was there, according to tradition, that a temple dedicated to Hercules and Mars succeeded the druidical forest. There is nothing unlikely in these traditions; the high ground on which the Cathedral stands speaks as much in their favour as the pagan statues found in the neighbourhood¹.

¹A brass statue of Hercules, called *Krutzmann*, was found among the christian statues that decorated the Cathedral; it was taken down in 1525 and is no longer extant. A Hercules of stone, found no doubt when digging the foundations, is yet seen in a niche of the northward tower, where it juts out into the nave. A small stone figure of Mars, coming also from the Cathedral, was preserved in the town-library, but it appeared to be modern.

With respect to the first erection of a christian church in this place, history is destitute of authentic facts. Some old chronicles report that about the middle of the fourth century, saint Amand built a church on the ruins of a Roman temple, but the existence of this supposed first bishop of Strasburg is even very doubtful. During the first years of the fifth century, the invasion of barbarians filled the provinces of Gaul with terror and devastation; the German tribes that crossed the Rhine plundered the Roman city of *Argentorat* and its temples. Nobody knows whether from that time new inhabitants

settled in the midst of these ruins, or whether they served but as temporary abodes to the hordes successively coming into Gaul.

It was only after the conquest of that extensive country by^[5] the Franks that, about 510, Clovis had a church built at Argentorat, no doubt on the spot where the Cathedral now stands. The architecture of that church was as coarse and barbarous as the spirit of those times; it was built of wood and supported by earthen walls, extending from East to West; on this latter end was the front-gate and before it a portico; besides the principal nave it had two aisles; the western side opening into a yard that served as a passage to the priest's house.

In proportion as the town, the name of which was by the Franks changed into Strasburg, increased in importance and population, the Merovegian kings granted greater favours to the church founded by one of their predecessors. The valuable donations they bestowed on the bishopric of Strasburg, enabled the inhabitants to embellish and enlarge the Cathedral. In 675 Dagobert II granted to bishop Arbogast the town of Ruffach with the castle of Isenburg and a vaste domain that he freed from tax and royal jurisdiction and which on that account was called superior *Mundat*. A no less important gift was that from Count Rudhart, who made over to the church of Strasburg, in 748, Ettenheim with several neighbouring villages on the right bank of the Rhine. Many other eminent personages of this country increased successively by their liberality the wealth of the episcopal see. A great advantage was granted by Charlemain in 775, which was to exempt the subjects of the bishopric from all tolls and taxes imposed upon the traders travelling through the empire. At that time considerable sums had already been employed to adorn the interior of the Cathedral. In the year 826, the abbot Ermold the Black, living in exile at Strasburg, speaks with enthusiasm of the *beautiful temple of the Virgin* and of the other altars that decorate it. This ecclesiastic, with great ardour changed the metal of the antique statues he could yet find into sacred vases; a bronze^[6] Hercules, two cubits high, alone escaped the pursuit of his pious zeal; after preserving it several centuries in the Cathedral, it was at last sold, and is now at Issy near Paris.

A fire, which in 873 destroyed a portion of the church and all its archives, occasioned, no doubt, important repairs, and this event was the cause of a new royal confirmation of all the possessions of the church. In 1002 it was plundered, profaned and set on fire by the soldiers of Hermann, duke of Suabia and Alsacia, who was then contending with Henry of Bavaria for the imperial crown, Strasburg and its bishop Wernher having declared for the latter. Subdued by Henry II, Hermann was compelled to repair the damage caused to the church by placing at bishop Wernher's disposal the income of the abbey of Saint-Stephen of which he was the patron. With these funds, which the bishop increased by means of a new levy of taxes and by indulgences, he was preparing to restore his Cathedral, when in 1007 a thunderbolt achieved its destruction.

He then formed the project of rebuilding the church on a plan of much larger dimensions and after the style of architecture that was then making its first appearance. The revenues of the bishopric, contributions furnished by the clergy of Alsacia and large sums of money granted by the head of the empire, afforded Wernher the necessary resources for the execution of his plan. This was examined and discussed in the presence of several master-architects whom he had sent for. The plan once fixed upon, stones were brought from the fine quarries of free-stone in the Kronthal. The peasants and bondsmen of the country brought them to the town where they were cut in the square then called *Frohnhof*, between the Cathedral and the present palace. It was during these labours that in 1042 the emperor Henry II came to Strasburg; the dignified and austere deportment of the clergy of^[7] the high chapter, the tranquillity prevailing under the roof of the episcopal church, made such an impression on this prince, that he for a moment resolved to resign the crown and solicit his admittance among the canons of the Cathedral. The bishop appeared at first to accede to this wish; but it was only to prescribe to Henry, henceforth his subordinate, to resume the imperial authority which Providence had bestowed on him; the emperor acquiesced and perpetuated the remembrance of his pious wish by the foundation of a royal prebend.

When, in 1015, a sufficient quantity of materials was collected, they set to work by digging the ground. At the depth of more than five fathoms they drove down stakes, filled the space between them with clay mixed with lime, fragments of bricks and coal; and on this solid base were laid the foundation stones.

Tradition gives an account of a hundred and even two hundred thousand men being employed in the construction of this church, which work, thanks to the religious [enthusiasm](#) of that epoch and the labours performed by vassals and workmen *for the salvation of their souls*, advanced very rapidly.

In the year 1027 bishop Wernher set out for Constantinople, and never returned to his native land. From that time we have but imperfect and uncertain accounts touching the progress of the building. All we know is, that in 1028 they had built up to the roof. It seems likely from that account that this monument, built in the byzantine style, at once so elegant and so simple, was soon after completed by the erection of a tower, and that it remained in the same state till, owing to sundry circumstances and, perhaps, to bad construction, it began to need important repair. It is impossible to determine the time when repairing the church took place; however, this happened probably not before the middle of the thirteenth century and in the then new style, since called the Gothic^[8] order. This opinion is confirmed by the ancient seal of our city, which likely enough and according to the custom of those times, represents the front of the Cathedral.

That it had a tower in 1130 is a certain fact; for Kœnigscoven speaks of its destruction by fire in the course of that year; successive fires, in 1140, 1150, 1176 also materially injured the beautiful edifice; besides, the continual wars and tumultuous commotions

of the time prevented the bishops from undertaking essential repairs. It appears that these causes, by degrees, brought on the complete ruin of bishop Wernher's constructions; for unquestionably the part included between the nave and the two towers dates but from the thirteenth century, and cannot have been begun before the middle of it. What remained of the old church was pulled down at that time and a new and more spacious edifice was erected, built in the style then spreading over all Europe. Considering the immense size of this monument, it is easy to imagine that the work went on but slowly, and an old chronicle mentions that on the 7th September 1275 they finished the middle part of the superior arch-roofs, with the exception of the towers in front. By whom these labours were directed is altogether unknown.

It was bishop Conrad of Lichtenberg who undertook to rebuild the parts that were still in a state of ruin and thus at last to accomplish this great work of the Cathedral¹.

¹«... *Ipsa ecclesia in meliorum statuum reedificetur* ...» (See a charter of bishop Conrad of Lichtenberg, published by M. L. SPACE 1841, p. 6).

In order to execute this design, he published indulgences all over the country; and after collecting large sums of money in the town, he applied to the ecclesiastics of his diocese, asking their own gifts and offerings as well as those of the faithful under their direction; in a synod held in the diocese, the^[9] clergy agreed to give up, during four years, a fourth part of their revenues. Conrad entrusted the direction of this work to Master Erwin of Steinbach, who, according to some old documents, was a native of Mayence. This great architect began by rebuilding the nave, the arch-roofs of which were completed in 1275. Then he commenced the façade of the church and its towers from a plan so bold and sublime that the conception of it places Erwin for ever at the head of the architects of the middle age¹. In 1276 they laid the foundation of the northern tower; to consecrate the spot, the bishop walked solemnly round it, then took a trowel in his hand and thrust it into the ground, as a sign for beginning the work. They relate that a quarrel having occurred between two workmen who both wished to work with the trowel the bishop had held in his hand, one of them was killed. This murder was considered as a very bad omen; Conrad ordered their labour to be suspended for nine days; they were only resumed after he had consecrated the place anew. The following year, on saint Urban's day (25th May), Conrad himself laid the first stone of the tower. In the midst of his warfares, this bishop always entertained much affection for his Cathedral, as he beheld the gradual rising of this *glorious work*, as an old inscription terms it²; in his heartfelt joy he used to compare it to the flowers of May that bloom in the sun³. To the very end of his life Conrad of Lichtenberg neglected nothing^[10] to urge on the progress of his work of predilection; after his death, in 1299, he received in it a sepulchre worthy of him; his statue is still to be seen in saint John's chapel. Yet, during the life of Conrad, the Cathedral was shaken by several earthquakes in 1279, 1289, 1291; that of 1289 was so violent that the columns in the interior of the building threatened for a moment to fall down. But a very favourable circumstance

happened in 1292, which was the surrender of the *Œuvre-Notre-Dame* to the magistrate of the city, who was henceforth charged with the management of the revenues allotted to the keeping in repair of the Church and consequently also to the completion of it. A few years after, in 1298, a new misfortune happened to the Cathedral. A fire, caused by the imprudence of a cavalier of Albert I, during the sojourn of that prince at Strasburg, consumed all the timberwork and threatened even the pillars and walls. However the damage was promptly repaired. In 1302 a bloody conflict between two citizens of the town, which took place in the very chancel of the church, required again a new consecration of it.

1They still preserve in the records of the convent of the *Œuvre Notre-Dame* several old drawings on parchment of the façade and towers; these curious designs belong to different epochs; according to the opinion of the *connaisseurs*, the oldest would most likely be that of Erwin himself.

2*Anno Domini MCCLXXVII in die beati Urbani hoc gloriosum opus inchoavit magister Erwinus de Steinbach.* This inscription was formerly placed in the vault of the northern portal.

3In a letter of indulgence.

After the death of bishop Conrad of Lichtenberg, who in the year 1299 was killed in a battle near Friburg, his brother and successor, Frederic, showed no less ardour for the continuation of this building; in 1303 he invited the curates throughout Alsacia to exhort those of their faithful parishioners who had horses and carts, to convey stones for the edifice; in 1308 the magistrate of Strasburg, no doubt at the request of bishop John, promised freepasses to all those who would bring stones or wood, and he secured wine and wheat for the workmen.

Erwin superintended the works until 1318, when he died on the 14th of January. All the children of this grand master were artists worthy of him: Sabina, his daughter, carved several^[11] statues for the Cathedral; one of his sons, who died in 1330, built the fine church of Haslach; his other son, John, succeeded him in directing the works of the Cathedral, and he died in 1339. In 1331 bishop Berthold of Bueck built the chapel of saint Catherine, which also contains his tomb. The disturbances and calamities that desolated Strasburg during a great part of the fourteenth century, the revolution of 1332 that altered the form of the government of the town, the ravage caused by the black plague in 1349 with the insurrections accompanying it, the contest of bishop Berthold with his chapter and with the emperor, all this retarded of course the progress of the construction of the Cathedral. Nevertheless they terminated in 1365 the northern tower; Kœnigshoven calls it the new tower, perhaps, because they purposed erecting a pyramid on it, which was quite an innovation in the architecture of that time. The southern tower, which the chronicler calls the ancient one, because it was not intended to be raised higher, was finished at the same time. The name of the artist who made the plan of the pyramid and spire of the northern tower is still unknown; nor is it known who built the steeple which formerly rose above the *grande rosace*, or rose.

In 1368 the church was again struck by lightning without receiving much damage; in 1384 a fire that broke out in the organ, burnt all the interior with the exception of the chancel. Ever since that time large vats were set in the different parts of the building and guardians placed in the interior and in the towers. In 1429, John Hültz of Cologne was sent for to complete this great work; ten years after, he finished the spire; on Midsummer's day 1439, in the presence of a great multitude, he laid the last stone, exactly a hundred and sixty two years after Conrad of Lichtenberg had placed the first stone of this monument; a statue of the Virgin^[12] Mary was also erected on the knob terminating the spire¹.

¹It was taken down in 1488.

At the time of the reformation the Cathedral passed over to the protestants; it is true that on account of their worship, they caused several chapels to be closed and some altars to be removed, but they made no material change, nor spoiled any thing; on the contrary, they watched with care over the magnificent building and even caused important repairs to be made in it. Several times it was very much injured by fire and by lightning, particularly in the years 1540, 1555, 1568, 1624 and 1625. In 1654 the spire was destroyed by lightning; the skilful architect Heckler was obliged to rebuild it sixty five feet high. By the capitulation of 1681 the Cathedral was restored to the catholics, who immediately began to repair it, but unfortunately in that wretched style then prevailing, and when not the least intelligence of christian art existed any longer, they pulled down the lobby made by Erwin, so much admired in the middle age as a masterpiece of elegance; in 1692 they adorned the interior of the choir with wainscots of wood painted and gilt; in 1732 they widened it to the detriment of a portion of the nave, and ten years later galleries were made for the orchestra. To punish, as it would seem, those who were thus spoiling this wonderful monument, an earthquake shook it in 1728; in 1759 it was struck by lightning and considerably injured; the lead on the roof of the nave was entirely melted, and the fine cupola or arched roof that crowned the dome fell into pieces; the roof was then covered with copper, but the cupola was not rebuilt. New destructions awaited the Cathedral in 1793; in their fury of levelling, the men who then ruled the country caused two hundred and thirty four effigies of saints and kings to be taken down from their niches, of which^[13] very few only were saved; the crazy jacobin Teterel even proposed pulling down the spire, because, by its height extending far beyond that of the ordinary houses, it was condemning the principle of equality; the motion not being carried on. Teterel obtained the assurance at least, that a large red cap made of tin should be placed on the top of the Cathedral, and it was to be seen among other curiosities in the town-library, before its destruction.

The year 1870, so full of important events for Strasburg, was also fatal for the Cathedral, and during the seven weeks' cannonading of the town the beautiful building was constantly threatened with ruin. In the first period of the siege of Strasburg, the Germans tried to force the surrender by the bombardment and partial destruction of the inner

town. In the night of the 23rd of August began for the frightened inhabitants the real time of terror; however that night the rising conflagrations, for instance in St. Thomas' church, were quickly put out. But in the following night the New-Church, the Library of the town, the Museum of paintings and many of the finest houses became a heap of ruins, and under the hail of shells all efforts to extinguish the fire were useless. For the Cathedral the night from the 25th to 26th of August was the worst. Towards midnight the flames broke out from the roof perforated by shells, and increased by the melting copper, they rose to a fearful height beside the pyramid of the spire. The sight of this grand volume of flames, rising above the town, was indescribable and tinged the whole sky with its glowing reflection. And the guns went on thundering and shattering parts of the stone ornaments which adorned the front and sides of the Cathedral. The whole roof came down and the fire died out only for want of fuel. The following morning the ground in the interior was covered with ruins, and through the holes in the vault of the nave one could see the^[14] blue sky. The beautiful Organ built by Silbermann was pierced by a shell and the magnificent painted windows were in great part spoiled. Fortunately the celebrated astronomical Clock had escaped unhurt.

As the Military Command continued for some time to occupy a post of observation on the platform, the Cathedral was unfortunately still longer the aim of German guns which every day surrounded the building with ruins. On the 4th of September two shells hit the crown of the Cathedral and hurled the stonemasses to incredible distances; on the 15th a shot came even into the point below the Cross, which was bent on one side, and had its threatened fall only prevented by the iron bars of the lightning conductor which held it.

After the entrance of the Germans into the reconquered town, the difficult and dangerous work of restauration of the point of the spire was begun at once and happily ended a few months after. They work also constantly to make the other damages disappear, and in a short time the magnificent house of God will be restored to all its ancient splendour.



[15]



The Crypta.

II. DESCRIPTION.

The first aspect of the Cathedral produces on the mind a deep impression. One is seized with admiration and amazed at the first view of this noble edifice whose steeple towers up so gracefully and majestically. No doubt that examined in all its particular parts, one may also be struck with the disproportion that exists between them; the nave is not in harmony with the dimensions of the tower, the chancel and transept still less so: but although this want of uniformity may lessen the symmetry of the monument, the impression it at first produces is no less extraordinary. And besides, have not those different styles a particular interest for those who study the history of architecture? In the Cathedral are, as it were, brought together all the styles or orders of architecture of the middle ages, from the byzantine art with its grave simplicity, down to the last glimmerings of the gothic art, now declining, and its works lined with an excess of superfluous ornaments. The byzantine taste prevails in the first constructions of the chancel and aisles and even somewhat in the lower part of the nave; higher up, the style in which the ogive was built extends to the other constructions and finally succeeds to the former entirely.

The *façade* of the church, of an imposing magnitude, cannot^[16] be sufficiently admired; the massive walls are hidden by *clochetoons*, arcades, small pillars and innumerable statues; these decorations all wrought to great perfection, give to that part of the edifice a nicety that makes it resemble a work coming from the hands of a chaser. But how to describe, in the short space which the limits of this sketch admit, all the details, all the particular parts of our Cathedral? There is in it such a profusion, such a richness, that to be properly explored, it would require volumes. We must therefore limit ourselves to some brief indications of the most interesting and essential parts¹. Moreover a description of all the allegorical statues and figures that adorn particularly the inferior parts of the building, would be here so much the more superfluous, as an intelligent spectator may easily understand them. All these fine ornaments are meant to symbolize the mysteries of Redemption, taken from the principal facts in Scripture and from the fundamental doctrines of the christian faith. In this respect the lower tier is the most remarkable; the middle one has neither the same beauty nor the same religious signification; the third is the least satisfactory both as regards execution and artistical conception.

¹We refer the reader who wishes to study the Cathedral in all its parts, to the following works: Grandidier, *Essais historiques et topographiques sur l'église Cathédrale de Strasbourg*, Strasb. 1782, in 8o.—H. Schreiber, *Das Münster zu Strassburg*, Freib. 1828, in 8o, avec 11 lithographies gr. in-fol.—*Vues pittoresques de la Cathédrale de Strasbourg*, dessins par Chapuy et texte par Schweighäuser, 3 livr. in-fol. Strasb. 1827. *La Cathédrale de Strasbourg et ses détails*, par A. Friedrich, 4 liv. gr. in-fol., renfermant 57 planches accompagnées d'un texte explicatif et historique. We regret to say that but one number of this fine work has been published (in 1839).—*Kunst und Alterthum in Elsass-Lothringen*, von Prot. F. X. Kraus, I. Band. With numerous wood-engravings. 1877.



[17]

Porch of Saint-Lawrence.

The whole of the façade is formed of the two fore-parts of the northern and southern towers and of the large central porch; these three distinct portions are separated by [counterforts](#) or pillars which divide, as it were, the frontispiece into three broad vertical bands, each of which has its portico. These porticos and their frontons are ornamented with a great many statues and bas-reliefs, some of which pulled down during the revolution, have since been replaced. The large figures in the left portico are twelve virgins, wearing diadems and trampling down human forms representing^[18] the seven deadly sins. On both sides of the right hand portico are seen the ten virgins of the parable; to the group of the wise virgins on the right is joined the statue of Jesus-Christ; the foolish virgins composing the group on the left side, have among them an allegoric figure expressing the lust of the world: on her head is a wreath, in one hand she holds an apple, the ancient symbol of lust; her back bears hideous vipers, to portray the sad fate which must be the inevitable result of inordinate earthly desires.

All these statues, now blackened by the centuries that have passed over them, have all a stern appearance, like those that deck the magnificent middle porch representing either prophets of the Old Testament, Apostles or fathers of the Church. In the arches of these

three porticos are figures of a smaller size, which like the bas-reliefs of the tympan, exhibit either scenes taken from Scripture, or saints and angels. In the tympan on the right hand door, Jesus is seen seated on a rainbow, and over him is the Resurrection of the dead and the Judgment-day. On the butting pillar that divides both folds of the middle porch¹, is placed a blessed Virgin holding an infant Christ in her arms. The fronton of this portal is formed by two triangles and adorned with many figures; that on the summit of the interior triangle, which first strikes the eye, is king Solomon seated under a canopy; on both sides of him are fourteen lions raised on steps or benches that draw near towards the top and join near a Virgin Mary sitting with the infant Christ on one arm and holding a globe in her other hand; she is the Patroness of the church. Above her a radiated head, representing God the Father, forms the point of the triangle that encircles the inside fronton, which^[19] is decked with figures playing on different musical instruments. On the sides facing the North and South, the two towers have each a large window with most beautiful *rosaces*. Over the window on the South side is seen a very old sculpture, the grotesque figures of which represent the night revelling of sorcerers. The frontons of the other porticos are also adorned with *rosaces*.

¹The beautiful folds of the middle door, mounted with artful bronze ornaments which were executed in Paris after the designs of the architect of our cathedral, Mr. Klotz, were hung up in 1879.

On the second tier of the middle porch is a large rose-window that occupies the whole width of it. It is surrounded by a detached arch, which as much on account of the elegance of its workmanship, as of the boldness of its construction, is one of the most admirable parts of the Cathedral. The large painted windows have been repaired by skilful artists, Mr. Ritter and Mr. Müller. Where the second tier begins, at the bottom of the rose-window, are four equestrian statues, placed in niches in the counterforts, three of which, those of Clovis, Dagobert and Rodolphe of Habsburg, were erected in 1291, the fourth, that of Louis XIV, was placed only in 1828. Clovis and Dagobert were the benefactors of the church of Strasburg. Rodolphe stands there, less on account of his liberalities to the Cathedral, than for having been to the last the valiant friend of the Republic of Strasburg. King Louis XIV accompanies the three others, rather from adulation than any other cause. On the upper tier of the façade are placed the equestrian statues of king Pepin the Short, of Charlemain, Otho the Great and Henry I the Fowler. On the south-side are seen in the first tier the emperors Otho II, Otho III and Henry II; in the upper tier of the same side, the equestrian statues of Conrad II, Henry III and the statue of Henry IV. On the north-side of the façade are the equestrian statues of Charles Martel, the Franconian majordomo; of Louis the Debonair and Lotharius, the son of Louis the Debonair; at last in the upper tier, the statues of Charles the Bald, king^[20] of the West-Franconians and the equestrian statues of Lotharius II and Louis the German (†876).

Over the rose-window, but still in the compartment of the second tier, is a gallery furnished with the figures of the Apostles, and above them is placed Jesus-Christ

holding in his hands a cross and banner. In the lateral towers, the same tier is taken up on each side by a high broad window in the shape of an ogee, before which rise very slender pillars. Exactly over these windows, on the third tier and also on each side, are three very high and narrow windows; the middle part, though wider, has but two, rather small ones, and surrounded by some statues. This very massive portion of the building betrays at first sight its later origin; when Erwin's plan was abandoned, this part was added to fill up the empty space between the two towers; these were already completed, and even have on the third tier their windows looking into the central porch, but which are at present hidden from the outside. That part of the middle porch is used as a belfry, four large bells are suspended in it, the largest of which, cast in 1427, weighs nine thousand kilogrammes, and serves to announce great festival days; it is also rung at the death of renowned personages, or in case of fire.

It was only in the year 1849 that the front was ornamented with statues representing the day of judgment. This group, consisting of fifteen gigantic figures, was made after the old drawings preserved in the archives of the *Œuvre-Notre-Dame*. Jesus-Christ, as judge, is in the middle, with Mary and John the Baptist on either side; they are surrounded by angels sounding the trumpet of [Dooms-day](#), or bearing the instruments of our Saviour's passion; beneath are seen the Evangelists, having men's bodies surmounted by the heads of the four symbols which generally accompany them.

Above the middle porch and the southward tower, is the^[21] platform, very spacious and surrounded by a handsome balustrade; on it is built a small house for the guardians charged to strike the hours and ring the alarm bell in case of fire. From the top of this platform one enjoys a magnificent view; the wonderful panorama that unfolds itself from there, has been drawn with as much taste as accuracy by Mr. Frederic Piton, a zealous *amateur* of our local history. Towards the North, in the direction of the Wacken, an island near Strasburg, is seen on the horizon the mountain of the *Pigeonnier* (*Scherhol* in German), at the foot of which lies Wissemburg; to its right rise the peaks crowned by the ruins of *Gutenberg* and *Trifels*, and the famous *Geisberg* taken by storm in the war of 1870. On the other side of the Rhine, whose majestic stream the eye can easily trace, the long range of the mountains of the *Black Forest* limits the horizon. The first peak that is seen is that of the *Eichelberg*, at the opening of the valley of the *Murg*; then comes the *Fremersberg*, the *Mount-Mercury*, the mountain with the ruins of *Yburg*; all these names are known to those who have visited Baden. Beyond these summits is the high level ground of the *Hornisgründe*, on the other side of which is seen, in the midst of a forest, the dark lake named *Mummelsee*. Farther on, eastward, beyond the arsenal of Strasburg and the village of Kehl, you observe the castle of *Schauenburg*, near Oberkirch, where the valley of the *Rench* begins. After gliding over the ruin of *Fürsteneck* and *Schauenburg*, the eye rests on the stately buildings of *Ortenberg*, rebuilt after the middle age architecture, at the entrance of the valley of the *Kinzig*. Directing your eye more towards

the South, you discover the mountains of *Triberg*, and close to them those of *Lahr*; then comes the loftiest peak of the *Black Forest*, the *Feldberg*, 1494 metres high. Farther on the eye may discover (if time) the *Ballon* and the *Blauen*, behind the hills of the *Kaiserstuhl*;^[22] thence this ridge of mountains is lost sight of. In the plain, between the Rhine and the Vosges, a double row of poplars points out the *Canal* (from the Rhone to the Rhine). The first peak seen in the range of the Vosges towards the South-East is the *Ballon of Sultz*, 993 metres high; the eye then discovers in a western direction the ruins of the three castles of *Egisheim*, *Haut-Hattstatt* and [Landsberg](#), the top of the *Ballon of Gebwiler*, 1426 metres high the *Hoheneck*, the ruins of the old castles of *Kientzheim*, *Rappoltstein*,

Hoh- (High) *Kœnigsburg*, *Ortenburg*, *Bernstein*, *Frankenburg* and the summits of the *Bressoir* and *Ungersberg*. Looking in the direction of Saint-Thomas' church, at one glance the eye overlooks the country of the old *Hohenburg*, so picturesque and so rich in monuments and historical associations: the castle of *Landsberg*, the rock of the *Mœnnelstein*, the convent of *Sainte-Odile*, behind which rises the level ground of the *Champ-du-Feu*; further on to the right, are the ruins of *Girbaden*, the peaks of the *Donon* and *Schneeberg*. Here the mountains are by degrees lost from sight in the distance; on the horizon one may however distinguish the towers of the castles of *Geroldseck* and *Hoh-* (High) *Barr*, in the vicinity of Zabern; then nothing more is seen but meadows, forests, fields, from the centre of which you see now and then the modest church-steeple of the numerous villages that cover the fine plain of Alsacia.

On the North side stands a tower of an octangular form, supporting the spire. This tower consists, as it were, but of strong buttresses adorned with small columns and statues, and having large apertures in which very high windows are set and take nearly the whole breadth on the four sides, where they are. Among the statues that face the platform, one must be noticed as being, according to tradition, that of Erwin of Steinbach. In the interior of this tower^[23] are the bells that strike the hours, that which is called the gates' bell (*Thorglocke*)¹ and also a clock made in 1786 by two clockmakers of Strasburg, Maybaum father and son. An inscription over the door leading to the [platform](#) recalls to mind the earthquake of 1728, so violent that the water was raised from the reservoirs and thrown to a distance of eighteen feet². In front of the four principal sides of the octagon tower are turrets with winding stairs, and consisting but of a series of windows that rise in a spiral form. These elegant turrets seem hardly to rest on any thing; besides the gallery that covers them, they communicate with the principal tower but by means of flat stones that serve as an entrance into a gallery of the interior of the arch-roof, and which lie at a height of almost thirty metres. According to the old drawings, these turrets should have been surmounted by pyramidal spires. They terminate in a gallery that surrounds the tower, from whence one enjoys a most admirable view. It is from that spot that rises the spire (*flèche*), which is an octangular pyramid of an extraordinary boldness, offering to the astonished gazer nothing of a massive construction. Six successive tiers of little turrets are thus pyramidically placed one above the other³. Eight

winding stair-cases, narrow and of rich open carvings, lead the visitor to a massive spot^[24] commonly called *the lantern*; higher up is *the crown*⁴, which is not reached without danger, by means of steps placed outside, and with no other protection than the wall to which they are fastened; above another widened place, called *the rose*, the spire is nothing but a column whence jut out horizontal branches to give it the aspect of a cross. The monument terminates in a *knob* being 0m .460 in diameter and to which ever since 1835 a lightning-conductor has been adapted; one may climb there but with the aid of iron bars to which you must cling with hands and feet. The total height of this stately building is 142m.

¹So called because it was rung morning and night before the opening and closing of the city gates.

²In the interior of this tower and on the balustrade are seen a great many names of foreigners who have visited the Cathedral. Among these names are some of celebrated persons, as Goethe, Herder, etc.

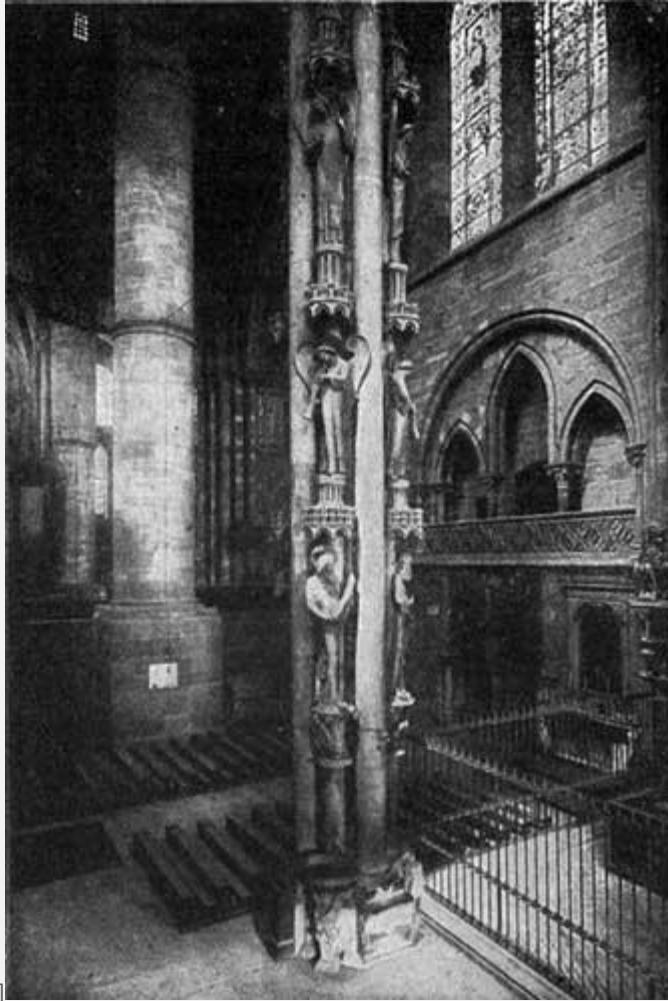
³Above the first tier of the turrets is seen around the spire (flèche) the following inscription:

*Christus nos revocat. Christus gratis donat.
Christus semper regnat. Christus imperat.
Christus rex superat. Christus triumphat.
Maria glorificat. Christus coronat.*

⁴Besides some other inscriptions on the spire, you read round the first gallery of the crown these words:

*Jesus Christus verbum caro factum est,
Jesus Christus, et habitavit in nobis,
Jesus Christus, et vidimus gloriam ejus,
Jesus Christus, gloriam quasi unigeniti a Patre.*

(S. John. 1. 14.)



[25]

The column of angels.

The nave, decked with a copper roof, abounds no less in decoration than the front. It has large ogive windows adorned with *rosaces*; at the place where the buttresses, equally carved with *rosaces*, join the counterforts or pillars, they have at their tops fine clochetoons; a great many statues and grotesque figures of heads complete the ornaments of this part of the church. Two galleries, one under the windows, the other below the clochetoons of the counterforts, lead from the towers to the cross-aisle. This, as we have already said, is still byzantine in several parts of it. The southern porch, formed by two semi-circular doors made evidently at one of the remotest periods of the Cathedral, is adorned with bas-reliefs and statues; according to tradition, it is reported that two of these statues are the work of Sabina of Steinbach. One is a woman in a triumphal posture holding in her hands a communion cup and a cross; she is the symbol of the church that vanquished the synagogue; the other, a symbol of the^[26] latter, is a woman looking down, blindfolded and leaning with pain on a broken spear, whilst the laws of the twelve tables drop from her left hand. On the parvis before this porch is erected, on the left, the statue of Sabina herself, and on the right, the statue of Erwin of Steinbach, both due to the chisel of Mr. Grass.

The wall of the upper tier has openings for several windows of an ogive form, above which a gallery runs all along; two round-windows take up the third tier. The northern portion of the cross-aisle has more generally preserved the byzantine manner than that we have just spoken of; however, this intermixture with the gothic style denounces latter renovations. The ancient porch, the remains of very old constructions, is masked by a fore-front that belongs to the last period of the gothic art, and which was built in 1494 by James of Landshut; this new porch (*porch of St. Laurence*), though handsome in its *ensemble*, is wanting in that noble simplicity and purity of taste that distinguishes the other parts of the Cathedral; it is overloaded with ornaments, and its statues have a stiffness that is found nowhere else.

The octangular dome over the chancel is also of the [byzantine](#) era; however, [it](#) has been renewed in several parts. In the place of the deformed cupola, destroyed by the fire of 1870, a handsome pyramid has been erected in the year 1878, after the plans of Mr. Klotz, architect of the Cathedral.

Up to 1772 the lower part of the lateral fronts of the church was disfigured by paltry decayed houses; the same year they were pulled down and in their places the present porticos were built, which are not wanting in elegance: the shops and stalls that formerly obstructed in so disgraceful a manner the access to the nave, have also disappeared; and the porches have been repaired with a great amount of good taste.

The view of the *interior* of the nave leaves a deep impression.^[27] It is mysteriously lighted by magnificent painted windows, and supported on each side by seven large pillars, composed of round agglomerated columns. The two first of these pillars, more gigantic than the rest, support also the towers; the total elevation of the upper arch is more than 31 metres. The interior front, over the principal porch, is adorned with a beautiful sculptured round-window; between this and the grand rose-window is a glass gallery. Above the arches that unite the pillars on both sides of the nave and all along is a fine gothic gallery, serving as a basis to large windows, similar to those of the lower sides of the church. The lower part of the wall of the latter is ornamented with a range of small columns, joined together by og-arches. The magnificent windows of this church represent subjects and personages of Scripture and Legend. Among the artists who have painted these windows, the oldest one known, is master John of Kirchheim; those made after his drawings were put up in 1348; there is no doubt that many of his works still adorn the Cathedral. The names of John Markgraf, James Vischer and the brothers Link were mentioned later. At the latter part of the eighteenth century John Daniel Danegger painted also some, which, however, owing to their mediocrity, have since been removed. For some years past they have undergone considerable repair under the direction of artists of talent and well acquainted with the science of antiquities. The painted windows of the upper galleries of the nave represent the seventy four ancestors of Jesus Christ; higher up are the images of saints and martyrs; in the right aisle, over the vestry, is seen the gigantic figure of saint Christopher: on the South side, of the six

windows that have each sixteen divisions, the four first contain some scenes from the history of the Bible; the two last, the day of Judgment and the celestial Jerusalem. On the North side, in an equal number^[28] of windows, you see the birth of Jesus Christ, the wise men, and the portraits of several German emperors; the last of these windows represents a series of the oldest events in Scripture. The effect produced by these beautiful windows is greatly increased since they had the happy idea to wash away the daubing with which, about thirty years ago, they had besmeared the inner walls of the Cathedral; by these means the bare part of the wall, a fine stone of a rosy tint, which served for the construction of the church, is rendered visible; it was a measure that bespoke much good taste and knowledge of the christian art.

On the left side of the nave is fixed the organ which extends up to the superior arch. It is a master-piece of work of Andrew Silbermann, who was one of the most able organ-builders of his time and who built it in 1704. Pierced by a shell during the bombardment of 1870, this organ of Silbermann has been restored by a distinguished organ builder of our city.

On the same side, at the fifth pillar, stands the pulpit, erected in 1486 by John Hammerer, by order of the magistrate, for the celebrated preacher Geiler of Kaysersberg. This work of sculpture, remarkably delicate, is adorned with nearly fifty little statues, the meaning of which is easy to understand. The canopy is of a modern style, and was made in 1824 to replace a more ancient one, perhaps the first erected in 1617, which has been handed down to us as a most simple piece of workmanship, and made of lime-wood. At the foot of the stairs are two figures, a man in the posture of rest and a woman praying; we may justly suppose that they are meant for the maker of the pulpit and his wife.



[29]

The chancel is joined to the nave by two pillars of very large dimensions and whose tops belong to one of the constructions anterior to the gothic order. The magnificent lobby built by Erwin of Steinbach was taken down to make room for the^[30] taste prevailing in the seventeenth century; it was demolished in 1682. Two high and circular columns support the cupola of the chancel and separate it from its two aisles; in the centre of each of the latter stand also columns to sustain the arch-roofs; that of the northern part is round, whilst the column of the southern aisle is composed of a collection of very slender pillars, probably of a later construction; this long, thin and gracious column bears in its corners some statues, the fineness and gracefulness of which recall to mind the work of Sabina of Steinbach. Beneath are the four Evangelists; above four angels holding trumpets, and uppermost the Saviour and three angels with the implements of the Saviour's passion in their hands; it is called the angel's column or Erwin's column. On the large pillar which unites the nave to the chancel, are two inscriptions in commemoration of the famous preacher Geiler of Kaysersberg who, for many years, displayed his eloquence from the pulpit of the Cathedral. In this same aisle

is erected the statue of bishop Wernher, meditating the design of the church laid before him. Opposite this statue, the work of Mr. Friderich, is the celebrated.

Astronomical Clock.

As early as 1352 an astronomical clock was begun under bishop Berthold of Bucheck, and finished two years after by an unknown artist, in the time of John of Lichtenberg. It was fixed to the wall facing the present one. The frame-work of that first clock was all of wood; the stones that formed its basis are to this day seen projecting from the wall. It was divided into three parts; the lower part contained a universal calendar; in the middle was an astrolabe, and in the superior division were seen the three wise men and the Virgin Mary carved in wood; the wise men bent every hour before^[31] the Virgin, by means of a peculiar mechanism, which at the same time put in motion a chime of harmonious sounds and a cock crowing and flapping his wings.

The exact time at which this clock, which in the fourteenth century must have been a wonderful piece of workmanship, and was called the clock of the three sages, ceased going, is not known: it had been stopped for a long time, when in 1547 the magistrate of the town decided on having another made and putting it opposite the old one, in the very place the clock now occupies. Three distinguished mathematicians furnished the plan and superintended the execution of it: they were Dr Michel Herr, Christian Herlin, professor of mathematics at the school of Strasburg, and Nicholas Prugner, who, after preaching the reformation at Mulhouse and at Benfeld, occupied himself at Strasburg with mechanics and astrology. These three learned men began this work, but did not terminate it; it was resumed in the year 1570 by a pupil of Herlin, named Conrad Dasypodius of Strasburg, where he was a professor of mathematics. Dasypodius drew the design of the clock, but its execution was confided to two skilful mechanics of Schaffhouse, the brothers Isaac and Josiah Habrecht; Tobias Stimmer, also of Schaffhouse, had the charge of the paintings. This master-piece of the mechanical art of the sixteenth century was completed in 1574; it ceased going in 1789. As the exterior distribution of the present clock is nearly the same as that of the old clock, we shall abstain from describing the latter. In 1836 the corporation of the town of Strasburg adopted the resolution of causing this curious monument to be repaired. To Mr. Schwilgué, a distinguished mechanic of Strasburg, his native place, this remarkable work was entrusted; he began it the 24th of June 1838 and finished it at the end of 1842.

It is one of the most beautiful pieces of workmanship of^[32] our age; its mechanism is entirely new and in accordance with the present state of the science of astronomy, which as is well known, has attained a very high degree of certainty and exactness. Mr. Schwilgué has not made use of any of the pieces of the old clock, which are deposited in the chapel of the *Œuvre-Notre-Dame*; by comparing them with the pieces composing the new clock, one may judge of the progress of science and of the talents of the modern artist. M. Schwilgué preserved of the former clock only its fine case, the paintings and

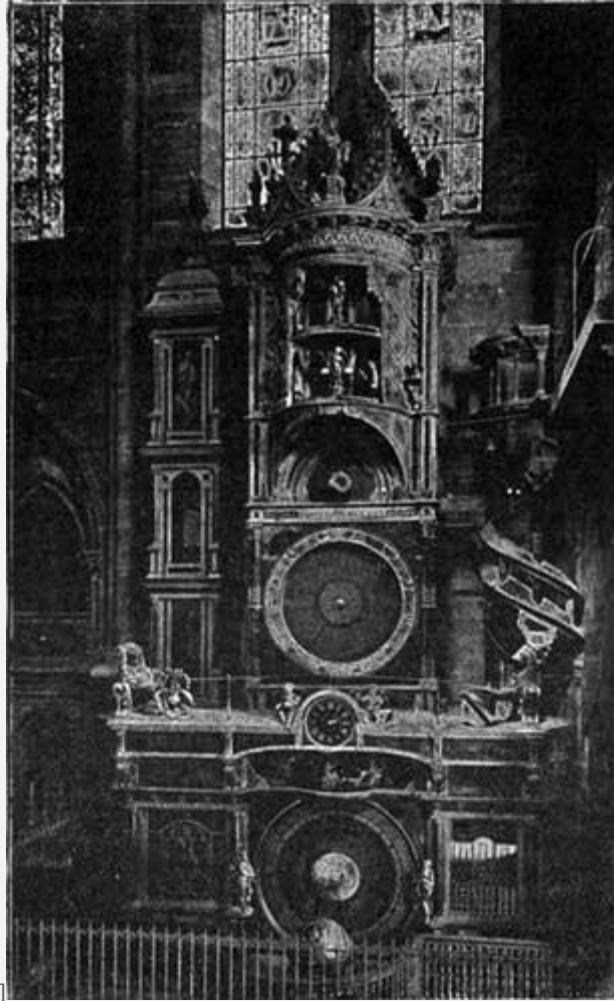
ornaments of which were carefully repaired. In this he had many difficulties to overcome, as well for the proper arrangement of this mechanism and lodging it in a space that was often very limited, as for making the old signs or indications accord with the movements of the [clockwork](#). Of these many were marked only in painting, and must have been renewed after a certain time, as for instance those for the eclipses, which now by a most ingenious mechanical combination will henceforth last for ever. The little statues which hitherto had no articulation, are now moveable; the twelve Apostles have been added to the former number of them. The figure of Death, formerly on the same level with that of Jesus-Christ, is now placed in the centre of figures representing the four ages of life and striking the quarters of hours; the idea of assigning this place to the image of death is assuredly a more rational and finer one than that which prevailed in the old distribution of the figures. Childhood strikes the first quarter; Youth the second; Manhood the third, and Old Age the last; the first stroke of each quarter is struck by one of the two genii seated above the perpetual calendar; the four ages strike the second. Whilst death strikes the hours, the second of these genii turns over the hourglass that he holds in his hand. The image of the Saviour stands now on a higher ground; at the hour of noon the twelve^[33] Apostles pass bowing before him; he lifts up his hand to bless them, and during that time, a cock, whose motions and voice imitate nature, flaps his wings and crows three times.

Mr. Schwilgué has altered the old calendar into a perpetual one with the addition of the feasts that vary, according to their connexion with Easter or Advent Sundays. The dial, nine metres in circumference, is subject to a revolution of 365 or 366 days, according as the case may be. Mr. Schwilgué has even indicated the suppression of the secular bissextile days. He has moreover enriched his work by adding to it an ecclesiastic compute with all its indications; an orrery after the Copernican system, representing the mean tropical revolutions of each of the planets visible to the naked eye, the phases of the moon, the eclipses of the sun and moon, calculated for ever; the true time and the sidereal time; a new celestial globe with the procession of the equinoxes, solar and lunar equations for the reduction of the mean geocentric ascension and declension of the sun and moon at true times and places. A dial placed without the church and showing the hours and days, is put in motion by the same mechanism of the clockwork.

The cambered roof of the back part of the chancel was formerly covered with paintings executed in 1686 representing Dooms-day. A few paintings only adorned till now the interior of the Cathedral, among which the most remarkable oil-paintings, executed by artists of Strasburg, are: the *Shepherd's Adoration*, by Guerin, the *Laying in the tomb*, by Klein; the *Ascension*, by Heim, and some others. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the chancel was several times and in different ways enlarged and disfigured by ornaments little correspondent with the elegance and grandeur of the gothic order. Tribunes, stairs and wainscots that formed a strange contrast with the rest of the edifice were added. The altar, adorned in 1501, with fine figures carved^[34] in wood by Master

Nicholas of Haguenau, was changed in 1685 by order of bishop William Egon of Fürstenberg; that new altar, covered with a baldachin, was destroyed by fire, and in 1765 the present one, which has nothing in its form worthy of notice, was erected. Great repairs were begun some years ago under the direction of the city corporation, struck, as every body was, by the great disproportion between the chancel and nave. It was resolved to restore the chancel to its primitive form and arrangement, and thus to reestablish the due proportions between that part and the rest of this magnificent church. This great labour is now finished. Their natural complement, as required by the style of this part of the pile and its extensive fronts and arch-roofs, is the execution of a certain number of monumental paintings, intrusted to two distinguished artists, Prof. Steinle, Director of Städel's Institute in Frankfort a/M. and the historical painter Steinheil in Paris, a native Alsatian. The former is charged with the execution of the fresco-paintings in the chancel and lateral naves, whilst the latter undertook the reestablishment of the paintings that represent the [Dooms-day](#) on the upper wall of the chancel, in front of the great nave. Both works, begun in 1876, came in sight for the visitors of the Cathedral, at the end of 1878.

In restoring to this part of the edifice its former appearance, it has highly augmented the effect produced on the inward aspect of the Cathedral; now also may be decided the question, hitherto doubtful, of the exact time at which the chancel was built; with certainty, it may already be said, that it was not erected, as was often affirmed, in the time of the emperor Charlemain.



[35]

Astronomical clock.

In removing the superfetations that had taken place during these two last centuries, and in reestablishing the architectural forms that the wretched style then prevailing had concealed,[36] a succession of large ogive arches of an admirable and powerful proportion which form the inferior part of the Apsis, and support a gallery serving as a basis to the upper story, have come to light. On this story, which is separated from the *cul-de-four* (spherical vault) by a single moulding, are three large ogive windows, the middle one of which is of colossal dimensions, and between the columns below are in a symmetrical manner placed, on each side, the doors of the treasury and chapter-room, and in the centre lies the bishop's throne, the niched vault of which is still more richly decorated; between the intermedial arches are the staircase doors leading to the gallery.

The *Apsis* is not very deep and terminates by a segment, cut out of a masonry work outwardly square; entirely devoted to the sanctuary, it only contains the high-altar, the twenty four stalls of the chapter and a necessary room to perform divine worship. In 1878 an accompanying organ has been erected on the left side. This beautiful instrument, made by Mr. Merklin, the skilful organ-builder of Lyons, is a masterpiece

of art and taste that enhances indeed the chancel of the Cathedral. In front and a few steps lower down lies the chancel, destined to the inferior clergy and choristers. This chancel surmounted by a large octagonal cupola, the external part of which was struck by lightning in 1759, is placed at the intersection of the transepts and nave; open and lighted on all sides, one can admire the boldness and majesty of the columns and basis that support the arched roofs. The crypta or subterranean place, extending under the whole length of the chancel, is worthy of notice; it has also been recently restored. It is of an older order than the constructions of Erwin of Steinbach; it is perhaps the remainder of the edifice erected by bishop Werner, at the beginning of the eleventh century; the shape of the pillars, their cubical tops or chapters,^[37] the arches exclusively semi-circular, bring us back to those times. This crypta, that remained unimpaired during all the changes which the Cathedral must have undergone in the course of so many centuries, forms a nave with two arch-vaults and a round chancel. All along the walls of the nave are stone benches. Four of the inner pillars have still hinges affixed to them which prove that this portion of the crypta could be closed by a double door. At its entrance is what is called the holy tomb, a very ancient group of figures representing Jesus Christ and his disciples on the mount of Olives, at the moment when the soldiers are going to seize the Lord: this group comes from the chapel of the Augustines, erected in 1378; it was placed in the crypta in 1683.

The most ancient of the present chapels of the Cathedral is that of Saint-Andrew, in the South aisle of the chancel; it is remarkable for the details of its columns and for its ornaments of a very old style; it contains the tombs of several bishops, the oldest of which is that of Henry of Hasenburg, who died in 1190. Behind the North aisle of the chancel, is Saint-John the Baptist's chapel, also very old, and being now lower than the pavement of the Cathedral. Besides several epitaphs, one here sees the fine gothic sepulchre of bishop Conrad of Lichtenberg, who died in 1299. The colossal statue of that prelate lies on a stone and has still some marks of the colours with which it had formerly been painted; in one hand he holds a book, in the other was his crosier of which only the lower part is now left; his head covered with the mitre rests on a cushion and his feet lie against a lion¹. Near the entrance of this chapel, surrounded by an elegant railing, is the baptismal-font^[38] of sculptured stone, the master-piece of Josse Dotzinger of Worms, who died in 1449.

¹The epitaph of Conrad is as follows:

«Anno domini MCCLXXXIX kal. Augusti obiit Conradus secundus de Lichtenberg natus, Argentinensis episcopus, hic sepultus. Qui omnibus bonis condicionibus, quæ in homine mundiali debent concurrere, eminebat; nec sibi visus similis est in illis. Sedit autem annis XXV et mensibus sex. Orate pro eo.»

The first chapel built in the Cathedral was Saint-Lawrence's, next to the North portal of the transept. It was the oldest parish in the town and diocese of Strasburg; the vicar of Saint-Lawrence was the first archpriest of the diocese and at the same time grand-

penitentiary of the Cathedral. This chapel, decayed with time, was rebuilt after the plans of master James of Landshut, who died in 1495, and was completed in 1505; when in the course of time it became too small for the parish, it was transferred in 1698 into the neighbouring chapel of Saint-Martin, which had been built in 1420 and then assumed the name of Saint-Lawrence's chapel that it retained ever since. Among the sepulchral monuments it contains, is seen that of Mr. de la Bâtie, in his live time commander of Strasburg. In this chapel is the entrance to the vaults, where to this day the bishops' mortal remains are deposited.

The chapel opposite the latter, on the right side of the church, is dedicated to saint Catharine; it was erected in the year 1331 by bishop Berthold of Bucheck who is interred in it. It was newly arched in 1542 and formerly contained the holy tomb. The entrances both into this and the chapel of Saint-Lawrence are decorated with several old statues; in Saint-Catharine's chapel is the tomb of Conrad Bock, a nobleman of Strasburg, who died in 1480; this work is remarkable for the manner in which the numerous figures that surround the bed of the dying man, are grouped together.

The sepulchral stones that served as flag-stones or pavement in the interior of this large building, have long ago been removed. Besides the sepulchral monuments and inscriptions already mentioned we shall note the epitaphs of Erwin of Steinbach, of Husa his wife, and of his son John, at the lower part of the buttress in the little yard behind Saint John's^[39] chapel¹; also the inscription to the memory of Conrad Gürtler, who bequeathed to the chapter of the Cathedral his house, a large building in the rue du Dôme; this inscription is opposite that of Geiler of Kaysersberg; finally, in one of the vestries is the epitaph, in german verses, of the celebrated printer John Mentelin of Schlestadt.

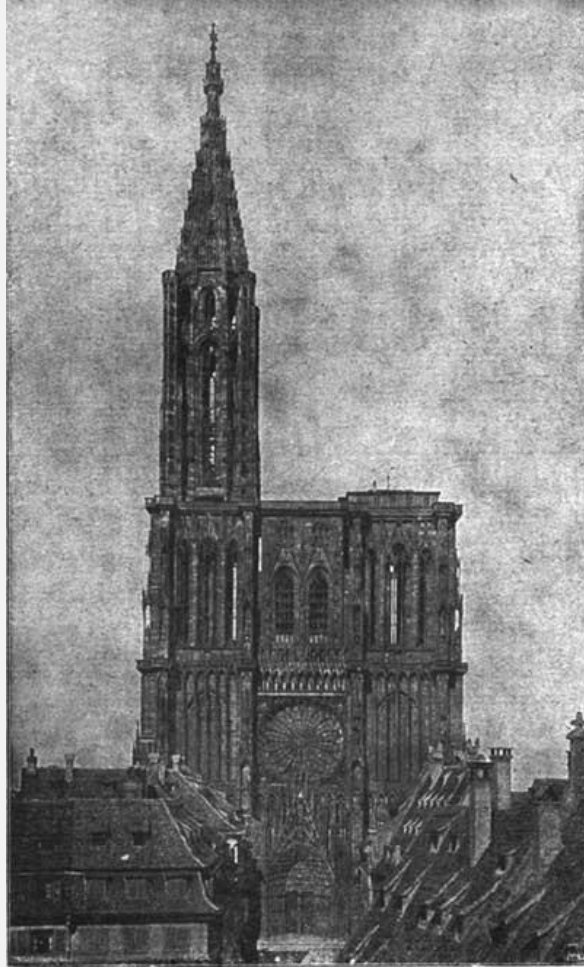
¹*Anno domini MCCCXVI. XII Kal. Augustii obiit Domina Husa uxor magistri Erwini. Anno domini MCCCXVIII. XVI Kal. Februarii obiit magister Erwinus gubernator fabrice ecclessie Argentinensis. Anno domini MCCCXXXVIII. XV Kal. Aprilis obiit magister Johanni (sic) filius Erwini magistri operi huius ecclesie.*—There was formerly on that spot a burial ground; it is very likely that Erwin and his family were buried there. When some years ago, they were digging a waste-well for the lightning conductor, they discovered an old coffin of stone, broken and filled with earth and bones. All these remains with the exception of some fragments taken away by some curious amateurs, were deposited in a vault.

We shall add one word more on the *foundations* of the Cathedral. Every one knows the old story, according to which this edifice rests on piles, between each of which it were possible to go in boats on canals extending even under the place Gutenberg. As far back as the seventeenth century, they dug to a considerable depth, and have since several times renewed the experiments, to ascertain the nature of the foundations, that have been found to lie very deep and to be very solid, formed of masonry reposing on clay mixed with gravel; under a portion of the nave this bottom is reinforced by oaken piles.

Through a door on the right of saint Catharine's chapel you enter the area of the workhouse of the stone-cutters of the Cathedral (*Steinhütte*). These workmen, even to

this day form a particular corporation that seems to have originated in the days of Erwin of Steinbach; at all events it is a certain fact that the masons of the Cathedral were from the beginning a body, distinct from the ordinary masons; that they have not admitted among them every one who presented^[40] himself, and that they had secret signs to know one another. This (*loge*) society of the masons of the Cathedral has become the cause of many others in Germany; Dotzinger, the successor of John Hültz as architect of this church, united them all in one body; a general meeting of the masters or chiefs of the different *loges*, held at Ratisbon in 1459, adopted certain rules and regulations, and chose as their grand-masters the architects of the Cathedral of Strasburg, where the principal loge or lodge (*Hauptstätte*) was established. Maximilian I confirmed the establishment and the rules of this corporation on the 3d October 1498. At the beginning of the [eighteenth](#) century it was transferred to Mayence.

It has already been stated that at a very remote period the Cathedral had received rich and important donations composing the *Œuvre-Notre-Dame*, the revenues of which were originally under the direction of the bishops; but as they squandered them away «leaving the building to decay,» the chapter assumed their administration in 1263, after the war between the town and Walter of Geroldseck; however, the canons did no better and in 1290 the magistrate of the city was obliged to take back from them the management of the revenues. The estate and income of the *Œuvre*, employed only for keeping in good order and for repairing the Cathedral church, are still managed like other property that belongs to the city; the collector of the revenues is appointed by the city corporation, who also names the architect and sculptor of the *Œuvre*. The receiver's office is in a handsome house (*Frauenhaus*), built in 1581, after the taste of those times, situated opposite the South side of the Cathedral. In that house, where the old plans of the church and the pieces of the old clockwork, above mentioned, are carefully preserved, we have also to admire the light and elegant construction of the staircase.



TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

The following changes have been made as needed to facilitate reading: standardized punctuation and accents, moved illustrations, and renumbered and moved footnotes.

Additional changes are listed below:

[Page 7](#): Changed "enthousiasm" to "enthusiasm" for consistency.

[Page 16](#): Changed "pittoresqu s" to "pittoresques" and "counter-forts" to "counterforts."

[Pages 20](#) and [34](#): Changed "doomsday" and "dooms-day" to "Dooms-day" for consistency.

[Page 21](#): The phrase "if tine" matches the original text.

[Page 22](#): Changed "Landsburg" to "Landsberg."

[Page 23](#): Changed "plat-form" to "platform."

[Page 24](#): The measurement "0m .460" matches the original text.

[Page 26](#): Changed typo "is" to "it" and changed "bizantine" to "byzantine" for consistency.

[Page 32](#): Changed "clock-work" to "clockwork."

[Page 40](#): Changed typo "eighteenth" to "eighteenth."

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE CATHEDRAL OF STRASBURG

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