R. J. King, *Handbook to the cathedrals of England – Southern division – part II* (London, 1861).

People who bought this book, if they looked at it closely, might have wondered whether the publisher, John Murray, had given them their moneysworth. Much of it is second-hand. As far as Rochester is concerned, some of the illustrations came from Murray's 'Handbook of architecture' (Fergusson 1855), and much of the text came from Murray's 'Handbook for travellers in Kent and Sussex' (King 1858). But disgruntled customers would have had to admit that most of the illustrations were new, and that the text had undergone some fairly extensive revision.

This following transcript covers 'Part I' of King's account. Only the passages printed black are new. 'Part II' is an annotated list of the bishops, with nothing original about it. I have not thought it worth reproducing.

A revised version of this description, much more detailed and more than twice as long, was published in 1876.

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL.

PART I.

History and Details.

I. The Saxon cathedral of Rochester (see Part II.) – the first outpost advanced by Augustine beyond Canterbury – suffered much from Danish ravages; and, like Canterbury, was in a completely ruined condition at the time of the Norman Conquest. So it continued until Gundulf, the friend of Archbishop Lanfranc, was consecrated Bishop of Rochester in 1077. He proceeded to rebuild his cathedral and the priory connected with it. In this he established, as Lanfranc had done at Canterbury, a colony of Benedictine monks in place of the secular clergy. Ernulf, Prior of Canterbury, succeeded Gundulf in the see of Rochester, and built the dormitory, chapter-house, and refectory: but it was not until five years after his death, and during the episcopate of John of Canterbury, that the new cathedral was dedicated (1130) in presence of the king and a great company of bishops. In this Norman church were displayed the shrines of St. Paulinus, third bishop, and of his successor, St. Ithamar (644–655), of Kentish birth, and remarkable as the first native bishop of the Saxon Church.

II. The cathedral was greatly injured by fire (combusta est, says the Chronicle,) in 1138, and again in 1177. Richard de Ross, who became prior in 1199, and his successor Helias, constructed new roofs and covered them with lead. The chroniclers of Rochester have not recorded the building of the great transept, which is, however, Early English, and cannot be much later than 1200.

In 1201 St. William of Perth was killed near Rochester, and buried in the cathedral, (see § X.) Numerous miracles were said to be wrought at his tomb, which became at once an important place of pilgrimage; and William de Hoo, the Sacrist, built the choir with its aisles (the whole church east of the great transept) with the offerings at St. William's tomb. The choir was first used in 1227. In 1239, William de Hoo, its builder, became prior; and in the following year (1240) the cathedral was solemnly consecrated by Richard de Wendover, Bishop of Rochester, and Richard, Bishop of Bangor /a. Bishop Haymo de Hythe (1319–1352) gave large sums for repairing the church, and raised the "campanile," or bell-tower, in which he placed four bells, named Dunstan, Paulinus, Ithamar, and Lanfranc. From these dates it will be seen that the cathedral consists almost entirely of Norman (nave and crypt) and Early English (choir and transepts) portions.

/a A decree of the Council of London, convened in 1237 by Cardinal Otho, legate of Pope Gregory IX., had ordered that all churches and cathedrals "not having been consecrated with holy oil, though built of old," should be dedicated within two years.

There are, however, some very good examples of Decorated in the choir windows, which are later insertions; and the doorway of the chapter-house, also of this period, is especially remarkable.

III. The cathedral suffered much in 1264, when the castle of Rochester was besieged by Simon de Montfort, whose troops, like the Northmen before them, and the Puritan soldiers afterwards, turned the nave into a stable. (See Pt. II., Bishop Lawrence de St. Martin.) The stained glass seems to have disappeared at the Dissolution, since Archbishop Laud, in 1633, complains that the building had received great injury from the want of glass in the windows. After the retreat of

the Commonwealth troops the nave was long used as a carpenter's shop, and "several saw-pits were dug in it." At this time all the brasses were destroyed, in which, as their traces still prove, the church was very rich.

IV. An excellent bird's-eye view of the cathedral may be obtained from the upper story of Rochester Castle, which stands on much higher ground. The cathedral is so completely enclosed that no good general point of view can be found below.

The west front [Frontispiece], with the exception of the great Perpendicular window, belongs to the Norman period from Gundulf to Bishop John (1077–1130). It consists of a centre flanked by turrets; and of two wings, terminating the nave-aisles, and of somewhat later date than the centre. These wings – the lofty arches in which may be compared with the Norman

portions of the west front of Lincoln – were formerly capped by turrets, which have disappeared. The turret on the south side of the central gable is original; that on the north is Perpendicular, of the same date as the window and the gable above it. The entire front resembles, in general character, the Norman fragments of Malling Abbey, near Maidstone, – also attributed to Gundulf. Its only very striking portion, however, is the central doorway [Title-page], a very fine specimen of elaborate Norman. "It must be considered rather as a Continental than as an English design. Had it been executed by native artists, we should not entirely miss the billet-moulding, which was so favourite a mode of decoration with all the nations of the North /b." The billet-moulding does occur, however, on the inside of the door, both in the principal arch and in the arcades; but the general design of the exterior is, beyond a doubt, very un-English. The doorway is formed of five receding arches, with banded shafts at the angles, two of which are carved into figures which probably represent Henry I. and the "good queen Molde." These statues were much and deservedly praised by Flaxman. The tall slender figures, and the long plaited hair of the Queen, recall the early French statues of the first and second dynasties. In the tympanum is the Saviour within an elongated aureole, supported by two angels, and with the emblems of the four evangelists at the sides. Below are small figures of the apostles, few of which are entire. The capitals of the shafts and the

/b Fergusson's Handbook of Architecture, p. 852.

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bands of ornament above them are all rich and curious, and well deserve notice. On the front of the northern tower is a small statue, said – but without the least certainty – to represent Gundulf.

V. The nave [Plate I.], 150 feet long to the cross of the lantern, is Norman as far as the last two bays eastward. If, as is most probable, it is part of Gundulf's work, it was no doubt a copy of the Norman nave of Canterbury; and we are thus enabled to judge fairly what the appearance of the metropolitan cathedral was in this part of it. Its architecture is plainer than that of the contemporary examples in France, though, owing to its having been always destined for a wooden roof, the piers and the design generally are lighter than where preparation was made for a stone vault /c. The triforium is richly ornamented; and the arches open to the space above the side-aisles as well as to the nave, a peculiarity which both Rochester and Canterbury may have received from the church of St. Stephen's at Caen, where the same arrangement may still be seen. Lanfranc, the builder of the Norman church at Canterbury, had been Abbot of St. Stephen's. The clerestory windows above, like those of the aisles, are Perpendicular; and the roof seems to have been raised at the time of their insertion. This is of timber, and quite plain.

VI. The font is Norman, square, and enriched. In the south aisle are monuments for Lord and Lady Henniker (1792–1803), in which Honour and Benevo-

/c Fergusson, p. 851.

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lence, Time and Eternity, play conspicuous parts. East of these monuments is the late Perpendicular chapel of St. Mary, recently well restored, but of no great interest. It is said to have been used as the chapel of the infirmary attached to the adjoining priory.

VII. In passing beyond the Norman portion of the nave to the Early English, of which nearly all the rest of the cathedral consists, the strong influence of Canterbury is at once apparent. The double transepts, the numberless shafts of Petworth marble, and perhaps

the flights of stairs ascending from either side of the crypt, recall immediately the works of the two Williams in the metropolitical church, which always maintained the closest connection with Rochester, her earliest daughter.

The western, or nave transepts, are both Early English, differing, however, in detail, the north transept being much richer than the south, which is possibly a few years later, and underwent some alteration during the building of the Perpendicular chapel of St. Mary. The corbels of the north transept, nearly all monastic heads, are of unusual excellence; and the whole arrangement here is very rich and varied. In the lower range of lancets a memorial window for Archdeacon Walker King – thirty-two years Archdeacon of Rochester – has lately (1860) been fixed by Messrs. Clayton and Bell. The central lancet displays the figure of our Saviour. Beneath, is the trial of St. Stephen at the moment of his vision. In the side lancets are St. Stephen and St. Philip the deacon; and in the predellas beneath

them the ordination of St. Philip and the stoning of St. Stephen. In the south transept remark the monument of Richard Watts of Satis, – whose hospital, founded in 1579 for the entertainment of six poor travellers for one night, "provided they are not rogues nor proctors," still remains in the High-street. The coloured bust of the monument, "starting out of it, like a ship's figure-head," is said to have been taken from the life.

VIII. Remark the banded shafts of marble that cluster about the tower-piers. The wooden roof below the tower, with its grotesque ornaments, dates from 1840, but can hardly be commended. No defence whatever can be made for the miserable festoons of drapery still permitted to degrade the great choir-arch above the organ. The want of stained glass, which is felt throughout the cathedral, is most evident at this central point, from which the east and west windows are both visible.

IX. The choir itself, which underwent a complete remodelling between the years 1825–1830, under the direction of Mr. Cottingham, is entered by a flight of steps, rendered necessary, as at Canterbury, by the height of the crypt below. It was completed sufficiently for use in 1227, in which year (that of the accession of Bishop Henry de Sandford) Edmund de

Hadenham, one of the Rochester Benedictines, commemorates the “ /d Introitus in novum Chorum Roffen-

/d Ang. Sac., i. 347.

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sem.” It is thoroughly developed Early English, although much has evidently been borrowed, even in detail, from the Canterbury transition work (1174–1184). It is narrow, and somewhat heavy; defects not lightened by the wood-work of the stalls, which is indifferent, or by the use of colour; a single line of which, however, is carried along the ribs of the vaulting with very good effect.

The brackets of Early English foliage from which the blind wall-arches spring, should be noticed. Two large ones especially, at the angles of the eastern transept, are excellent specimens of this period, before the naturalism of the Decorated had begun to develope itself. A fragment of mural painting, apparently of the same date as the choir itself remains on the wall, close above the pulpit. The painting, when entire, is said to have represented a subject not uncommon in early churches, – the wheel of Fortune, with various figures – king, priest, husbandman, and others – climbing it.

X. Passing into the north choir-transept, still Early English, and a part of William de Hoo’s work, the first point of interest is St. William’s tomb, at the north-east corner. It is of Purbeck marble, with a floriated cross; and there are considerable remains of ornamental painting in the recess of the arch above. The date of the tomb is not clear; but is certainly later than the beginning of the thirteenth century, to which time the legend of St. William belongs. He is said to have been a Scottish baker, from Perth, who was in the habit of giving every tenth loaf to the poor, and who

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had undertaken a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, intending to visit the Canterbury shrine on his way. On the Watling Street, however, a short distance beyond Chatham, he fell in with thieves, always on the look-out for wealthy pilgrims; and his murdered body was brought back and solemnly interred in Rochester Cathedral. Numerous miracles were wrought at his tomb; and the shrine of St. William, borrowing a reflected glory from that of Becket, to which the pilgrim was

bound, speedily eclipsed in reputation, and in the number of votaries it attracted, that of St. Paulinus, which had hitherto been the great pride of Rochester. Toward the centre of the transept is a flat stone marked with six crosses, upon which St. William's shrine is said to have rested. The steps which descend into the north aisle of the choir, are, as at Canterbury, deeply worn by the constant ascent of pilgrims, with whose oblations Prior William de Hoo (1239) built the church east of the transepts. St. William was duly canonized in 1256. His death occurred in 1201.

XI. West of St. William's tomb is that of Bishop Walter de Merton (1274–1277; see Pt. II.) This tomb, which is very beautiful early Decorated, was well and carefully restored at the expense of Merton College, in the year 1852. The slab, with its cross, is entirely modern, the original brass, of Limoges work (which cost, according to Warton, £67 14s. 6d.) having been defaced in the reign of Edward VI. This was replaced in 1598 by the alabaster effigy which now occupies the adjoining recess. The stained glass in the windows

was inserted at the expense of Merton College, when the tomb was restored in 1852.

Against the opposite wall is the plain altar-tomb of Bishop Lowe (1444–1467).

XII. The space between the north-east and north-west transepts is partly occupied by Gundulf's tower, best seen, however, from the exterior. It is Norman, and was perhaps built as the record tower and treasury of Gundulf's cathedral. (Compare St. Andrew's tower, Canterbury, the date and position of which are nearly the same.) The walls are six feet thick, and the tower seems to have contained two chambers, each about twenty-four feet square. It has been suggested that the original entrance was from the top. In the south-west angle of the north-east transept is a newel stair, from the top of which an arch is thrown to the summit of the tower, across an open space of ten feet. This arrangement, evidently intended for the security and defence of the record tower, is curious and unusual. There are at present two narrow entrances into the church from the south side of the tower, of later date, however, if the above suggestion be correct.

XIII. In the eastern aisle of the north-east transept are the tombs of Bishop Warner (1638–1666), and of Archdeacon Warner (1679). Under an arch divi-

ding this chapel from the choir, is the very interesting monument of Bishop John de Sheppey (1353–1360), probably the most perfect specimen of ancient colouring now existing in England. It had been bricked up within the arch where it still remains, and was dis-

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covered during the repairs in 1825. The colours and ornaments deserve the most careful attention, as well for their own beauty as for their great value as authorities. In the maniple, hung over the left arm, some of the crystals with which it was studded still remain. Remark the couchant dogs at the feet. About their necks are scarlet collars, hung with bells. An inscription, with the Bishop's name, surrounds the effigy. An iron railing of the same date, with his initials, J. S., has been brought from another part of the cathedral, and placed in front of the monument. The large branching finials are good.

XIV. The short sacrarium, or chancel, east of the transepts, probably formed part of William de Hoo's work, although it has undergone considerable alterations; the last "restoration" having taken place between 1825 and 1830, under the direction of Mr. Cottingham, when the windows at the east end, which had hitherto been concealed by an altar-screen, were uncovered and renewed. They are Decorated, and exhibit an arrangement of great beauty and interest. The other windows, also Decorated, were renewed at the same time. The chancel walls are, however, Early English, and perhaps the original work of Prior de Hoo. The stone vaulting, both of chancel and choir, is of Early English date, and although considerably later, should be compared with that of Canterbury. During Mr. Cottingham's restoration the walls were scraped and pointed, an operation which has by no means rendered their appearance more venerable. The

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shrine of St. Paulinus, which here seems to have taken the place usually assigned to the altar of the Virgin, is thought to have occupied a central position, immediately between the east walls of the transepts.

XV. The monuments in the sacrarium are (beginning at the north-west corner) – Bishop Gilbert de Glanville (1185–1214) [Plate II.], shrine-shaped, with medallions containing mitred heads on the sloping

cover, which has apparently been broken to pieces, and restored in a very rough manner. The medallions toward the west end seem to have been filled with some kind of mortar or cement. The side of the tomb should be especially noticed. The foliage in the arches is an evident imitation of a classic form, while that in the spandrels more resembles Early English. The arches themselves are of transition character. It is perhaps questionable whether this remarkable monument is not of earlier date than the Bishop to whom it has been assigned; nor is it quite certain that the side and the sloping cover originally formed parts of the same tomb. East is the monument of Bishop Lawrence de St. Martin (1251–1274). The richly wrought canopy above the effigy is an excellent specimen of early Decorated. It was this bishop who procured the canonization of St. William. In the north wall beyond, an unusual position, is an early Decorated piscina.

On the south side of the sacrarium, next the altar, is a tomb of plain marble, which has been called that of Bishop Gundulf (1077–1108), the builder of the Norman portion of the cathedral. It is without mark

or inscription. Beyond, is the monument, with effigy, of Bishop Inglethorpe (1283–1291). In the wall below are three sedilia of Decorated character, restored in 1825.

XVI. In the east wall of the south choir-transept is one of the great glories of the cathedral – the chapter-house doorway [Plate III.], of which a cast, very questionably coloured, may be seen in the Palace at Sydenham. It is late Decorated work, and is said to have been erected during the episcopate of Bishop Haymo de Hythe (1319–1352). It was restored by Mr. Cottingham in 1830. The principal figures on either side represent the Jewish Church, leaning on a broken reed, blindfolded, and holding in her right hand the upturned tables of the Law; and the Christian Church, a grave bishop, standing erect, with cathedral and crozier. The other figures have been variously explained. The four lower ones, seated, probably represent the four doctors of the Church – Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, and Gregory the Great. Above, on either side, appear angels, rising from what seem to be purgatorial flames, and praying for the “pure soul” represented by the small naked figure at the point of the arch. If the meaning is obscure, the work is of great excellence, and deserves

careful notice. The oaken door within the arch is modern.

The chapter-house, into which this door opens, is a modern addition, and serves as the library of the cathedral. Here is preserved the MS. of the Textus Roffensis, a collection of records, gifts, and ancient

privileges of the Church of Rochester, compiled under the direction of Bishop Ernulf (1115–1124). This venerable manuscript has undergone considerable perils, having at one time been stolen, and only restored to the Chapter by the aid of a decree in Chancery; and on another occasion having fallen into the Thames, from whence it was rescued with no small difficulty. The Custumale Roffense, a MS. of not less importance, is also preserved here.

Under the transept window adjoining the chapter-house is an unknown tomb, marked with a cross. The destruction of the original chapter-house has here thrown the shafts much out of the perpendicular. Remark the horizontal oaken roof, temp. Edward I., studded with corbel-heads and bosses. [Plate IV.] The foliage of the latter should be noticed, especially the use of the graceful leaves of the water-lily, at that time no doubt frequent in the Medway. The roof is perhaps unique, and certainly the most valuable instance of the kind in England.

XVII. A steep flight of stairs, strongly recalling Canterbury, leads from this transept to the chapel called St. Edmund's, south of the choir. The defaced effigy in the north wall is supposed to be that of Bishop John de Bradfield (1278–1283).

XVIII. From St. Edmund's Chapel a flight of steps descends into the crypt [Plate V.], which extends under the whole of the choir, and is one of the best specimens of its class to be found in England. The west and east parts are evidently of a much earlier date

than the central, which is Early English, and of the same period as the choir above. In building this, the ancient crypt was probably broken through, and in part reconstructed. The earlier portions are distinguished by very massive piers and circular arches. Between the piers are small pillars, with plain broad capitals. It is not impossible that this part of the

crypt may date from before the Conquest. At all events, it is the earliest portion of the existing cathedral, and cannot be later than the work of Bishop Gundulf.

Traces of former altars, and of extensive mural painting, remain in different parts of the crypt. There are no monuments.

XIX. The greater part of the central tower of the cathedral dates from 1825, when it was raised under the direction of Mr. Cottingham. It is altogether unsatisfactory. A small portion, immediately above the roof is the work of Bishop John de Sheppey (1352).

XX. Of the priory of St. Andrew, established in connection with the cathedral by Gundulf, almost the only remains are in the garden of the deanery, where is a small fragment of the cloister wall, supporting some window-arches of the old chapter-house. [Plate VI.] This is all Norman, and the recorded work of Ernulf, Gundulf's successor. The diaper on the wall is also found at Canterbury (where Ernulf was prior before his removal to Rochester, and where he built much), on the wall of the passage leading to the crypt from the Martyrdom transept. The lower arches, now closed, opened into an area below the chapter-house, used as

a place of interment more than usually honourable. The signs of the zodiac enrich the central arch. On a smaller one adjoining are the words "Aries per cornua," the only part of the inscription still legible.

Within the deanery, at the foot of the staircase, is an arcade, very closely resembling that on the exterior of St. Anselm's tower, Canterbury, also the work of Ernulf. The deanery occupies the site of the east end of the chapter-house.

XXI. The ancient episcopal palace stood at the south-east corner of the precincts. Since the Reformation the bishops have resided altogether at Bromley, where, however, their palace, called by Horace Walpole a "paltry parsonage," has ceased to belong to them since the enlargement of the see, and the consequent purchase of Danbury in Essex.

History of the See, with Short Lives of the principal Bishops.

IN the year 604, ...