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ALL about the church the greensward comes close up to the foundations and stretches away in broad level lawns. To the south lie the main portions of the Close, like a thickly wooded park, and the many fragments of the old conventual buildings.

Of the cloisters which formed a square contiguous to the nave only a piece or two remain. But we still have the Monk's and Prior's Doors, which gave access to the south aisle of the nave. Both are Norman, and the latter is extremely rich and lovely, with elaborate jambs the carving of which seems to show a lingering Celtic influence, and with a figure of Christ supported by angels in the tympanum that has an almost Byzantine air.

The Chapter House has wholly perished, but parts of the late-Norman Infirmary remain, ingeniously built in, like similar parts at Peterborough, to form the modern canons' houses.

The plan of an old conventual hospital was like the plan of a church. A nave formed the main hall; two aisles were subdivided into chambers for the sick, and a chapel was thrown out like a chancel at one end. The Infirmary nave at Ely now forms a roofless passage-way between the modern houses, spanned still by the chancel-arch; and the piers and arches which marked off the aisles form part and parcel of their walls on either hand. One house has been made with but little alteration from a separate hall that was designed by Walsingham for the use of convalescents.

The Deanery has been constructed out of the old thirteenth-century *Guesten Hall*. Near it was the Prior's house of which certain parts remain, together with a lovely little chapel. This bears Prior Crawdon's name, but in all likelihood was another work of Walsingham's. It is now the chapel of the grammar-school or college which was founded by Henry VIII. and which still flourishes under ecclesiastical control. The school itself and its masters are housed in a long range of buildings, forming the western boundary of the south Close, into which are built multitudinous fragments of the ancient convent. Off to the southward is "Ely Porta," once the main entrance to the

monastery. In its present form, a wide archway with a large room above, it dates from about 1400.

The bishop's palace, facing on the isolated lawn which lies west of the cathedral, dates chiefly from the time of Henry VII.—that is, from the time of Bishop Alcock. The turreted wings which still stand are his, but the huge hall and galleries he built have disappeared. I believe it was one of his galleries which bridged the street and united the palace with the church at the corner of the south-western transept.

It is a beautiful, quaint, and stately pile, this palace; and Prior Crawdon's chapel and all the adjacent school-buildings are infinitely picturesque,—not imposing like the palace, but low and vine-clad, gray and lovely, wholly and peculiarly English in their charm. Even a hurrying school-boy whom we met one sunny afternoon could see the pleasure in our eyes. It seemed only natural that he should exclaim, amid many pretty blushes, "You are quite welcome to sketch the houses if you want to—almost everybody does!"

One of the best views of the cathedral is from the railroad station whence we look north-westward and, seeing it in the near middle-distance, realize its enormous length and the stern majesty of the tall tower that rises like a great cliff in a land where man might well build cliffs since nature had built none. Another is from a mound called Cherry Hill in the south Close, whence we see it stretching over massy sweeps of foliage. Still another is from an elevation where the water-works of the town have been erected, some two miles towards the west.

But one need hardly seek for best points of view at Ely. There is no spot whence the great queen of the fen-lands may not be well seen, until we get so far away that it drops behind the horizon's rim. Wherever, however we see it, it is always imposing, always superb, always tremendous,—from far or near, from north, south, east, or west. Nowhere is there a more magnificent piece of human handiwork, and nowhere does nature seem more wholly to efface herself that human handiwork may profit.

M. G. van Rensselaer.

INTERPRETATION.

A SORROWER went his way along,
And I heard him sing and say:
The noon is bright, but soon the night
Will come, the grave of the day.

Then I smiled to hear his woful song
And sent this word for nay:
The noon is bright, but the blackest night
Cradles another day.

Richard E. Burton.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: A HISTORY.*

THE SECESSION MOVEMENT.

BY JOHN G. NICOLAY AND JOHN HAY, PRIVATE SECRETARIES TO THE PRESIDENT.

THE CABINET CABAL.

EXTRACTS FROM FLOYD'S DIARY.*



VERY soon after the effort to unite the cotton-State governors in the revolutionary plot, we find the local conspiracy at Charleston in communication with the central cabal at Washington. It is necessary to bear in mind that at the time of which we write, James Buchanan of Pennsylvania was still President of the United States, and that his Cabinet consisted of the following members: Lewis Cass of Michigan, Secretary of State; Howell Cobb of Georgia, Secretary of the Treasury; John B. Floyd of Virginia, Secretary of War; Isaac Toucey of Connecticut, Secretary of the Navy; Jacob Thompson of Mississippi, Secretary of the Interior; Joseph Holt of Kentucky, Postmaster-General; and Jeremiah S. Black of Pennsylvania, Attorney-General. It was in and about this Cabinet that the central secession cabal formed itself. Even if we could know in detail the successive steps that led to the establishment of this intercourse, which so quickly became "both semi-official and confidential," it could add nothing to the force of the principal fact that the conspiracy was in its earliest stages efficient in perverting the resources and instrumentalities of the Government of the United States to its destruction. That a United States Senator, a Secretary of War, an Assistant Secretary of State, and no doubt sundry minor functionaries were already then, from six to eight weeks before any pretense of secession, with "malice aforethought" organizing armed resistance to the Constitution and laws they had sworn to support, stands forth in the following correspondence too plainly to be misunderstood. As a fitting preface to this correspondence, a few short paragraphs may be quoted from the private diary of Secretary of War Floyd, from which longer and more important extracts appear in a subsequent chapter. Those at present quoted are designed more especially to show the names of the persons composing the primary group of this central cabal, and the time and place of their early consultations and activity.

"November 8th, 1860. . . . I had a long conversation to-day with General Lane, the candidate for Vice-President on the ticket with Mr. Breckinridge. He was grave and extremely earnest; said that resistance to the anti-slavery feeling of the North was hopeless, and that nothing was left to the South but 'resistance or dishonor'; that if the South failed to act with promptness and decision in vindication of her rights, she would have to make up her mind to give up first her honor and then her slaves. He thought disunion inevitable, and said when the hour came that his services could be useful, he would offer them unhesitatingly to the South. I called to see the President this evening, but found him at the State Department engaged upon his message and did not see him. Miss Lane returned last evening from Philadelphia, where she had been for some time on a visit. Mr. W. H. Trescott, Assistant Secretary of State, called to see me this evening, and conversed at length upon the condition of things in South Carolina, of which State he is a native. He expressed no sort of doubt whatever of his State separating from the Union. He brought me a letter from Mr. Drayton, the agent of the State, proposing to buy ten thousand muskets for the use of the State. . . .

"November 10th. . . . Beach, Thompson, and Cobb came over with me from Cabinet and staid, taking informally a family dinner. The party was free and communicative; Toucey would not stay for dinner. Mr. Pickens, late Minister to Russia, came in after dinner with Mr. Trescott, Assistant Secretary of State, and sat an hour, talking about the distracted state of public feeling at the South. He seemed to think the time had come for decisive measures to be taken by the South.

"November 11th. I spent an hour at the President's, where I met Thompson, Robert McGraw, and some others; we sat around the tea-table, and discussed the disunion movements of the South. This seems to be the absorbing topic everywhere.

"November 12th. Dispatched the ordinary business of the department; dined at 5 o'clock; Mr. Pickens, late Minister to Russia, Mr. Trescott, Mr. Secretary Thompson, Mr. McGraw, Mr. Browne, editor of the 'Constitution,' were of the party. The chief topic of discussion was, as usual, the excitement in the South. The belief seemed to be that disunion was inevitable; Pickens, usually very cool and conservative, was excited and warm. My own conservatism seems in these discussions to be unusual and almost misplaced."

TRESCOTT TO RHETT.

"WASHINGTON, Nov. 1st, 1860.

"DEAR RHETT: I received your letter this morning. As to my views or opinions of the Administration, I can, of course, say nothing. As to Mr. Cobb's views, he is willing that I should communicate them to you, in order that they may aid you in forming your own

* Printed on pages 791 to 794 in "The Life and Times of Robert E. Lee," etc. By a distinguished Southern journalist. (E. A. Pollard, author of "The Lost Cause.")

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