

REVIEW.

From the London Saturday Review.

From the city of Laon an easy journey takes the traveller to another city whose name is in most people's ears far more familiar—the renowned metropolis of Rheims. It would not be hard to draw out a series of points of contrast between the two. First of all, no two towns could be more unlike in position. Instead of the hill of Laon, Rheims, if not, like some English cities, absolutely in a hole, stands in a plain, with no obvious reason at first sight why it should have been pitched on that particular spot rather than on any other. Secondly, while Laon is emphatically a city of the past, Rheims has a firm hold on the present as a flourishing seat of modern business and modern wealth. The history, too, of the two cities is full of points of contrast. Though the history of Laon really does spread itself over the whole range of the last thirteen hundred years, yet it is only for one short and remote period that it becomes of paramount importance. Rheims, as never having been a seat of royalty, never becomes quite prominent as Laon was in the tenth century; but the interest of its history is spread in a more equable way over the whole of the ages from the Frankish conquest of Gaul down to our own day. As the metropolitan seat of France, the seat of the first ecclesiastical Peer, as the scene of the conversion of the first Frankish King, as the burial-place of so many early sovereigns and the crowning-place of an all but unbroken line of sovereigns of later date, Rheims, in its two great churches, unites many of the different sources of the interest which is awakened in an Englishman by Canterbury, Winchester, and by Westminster. As contrasted with Laon, Rheims, as the burial-place of Saint Remigius, may claim a joint interest in them. And as regards the succession of its prelates, Laon supplies no names which at once flash across the mind like those of Remigius, Hincmar, and Gerbert. And if Laon was the great centre of the history of the tenth century, it is to Rheims that we owe the preservation of that history. By a sort of special propriety, the two great ecclesiastical foundations of Rheims supplied the two historians who recorded the memorable struggle between Laon and Paris, between the Frank and the Frenchman. The metropolitan church under the discreet, if somewhat meagre, Flooard among its canons, while the livelier tale of Richer was penned under the shadow of the great monastic cathedral of Saint Remigius.

tinguish the two. No two churches can be more different in their aspect. The metropolitan church of Our Lady, the seat of the long line of Primates of Belgic Gaul and Premier Peers of France, is well known as one of the noblest churches of Gaul and of Christendom. The church with which it seems most natural to compare it is the nearly contemporary cathedral of Amiens. Each has the advantage, as much to be prized in an artistic as to be regretted in an historical point of view, of being a perfect and almost untouched specimen of a single style, and that the beautiful French style of the thirteenth century. Both these noble buildings are intensely French; neither shows any sign of that approach to English or Norman work of which we can see some clear traces at Laon. All the distinctive characteristics of the great French churches come out strongly in both of them; the apse and its surrounding chapels, the vast portals of the western front, the great rose windows of the transepts. In point of height Amiens surpasses Rheims; but we are not sure that this excess of height is wholly an advantage on the side of Amiens. The vast height of Amiens not only cuts off all hope of a central tower, but deprives the church of any adequate towers at all. The western towers of Amiens, feeble and with imperfect success, to rear themselves above the ridge of that mighty roof. At Rheims two noble and well-proportioned towers, still expecting their unfinished spires, form the proper finish of the building. In short, while Amiens outside is simply shapeless, Rheims forms as well-designed a whole as any church can which lacks that crown of the central tower which English and Norman eyes will always crave as indispensable to a perfect outline. The vast height of Amiens, again, makes the transept fronts look almost like towers, while at Rheims real fronts with side towers, like those of Bourdeaux and Ronen, have been designed and partly carried up. In the internal effect Amiens must claim the first place; the majesty of its vast scale and faultless proportion puts it above competition. Yet Rheims treads close upon its heels, and in some of its arrangements it is perhaps more satisfactory. The proportions of the arcade, triforium, and clerestory at Rheims are admirably managed, and the pillars are better and more truly Gothic than those at Amiens. The huge floriated capitals, however, are certainly disproportioned, and they arrest the eye more strongly than the capitals of clustered pillars ought to do. In point of furniture Rheims has nothing to set against the unrivalled stalls and sculptures of Amiens. But Rheims, like Saint Ouen's, seems to us to gain greatly, both inside and out, from the absence of those chapels between the buttresses of the nave which in some churches were designed from the beginning, and which at Amiens are a later addition. At Amiens this means the bold simplicity of the ranges of buttresses at Rheims and Saint Ouen's has been exchanged for a flat wall.

A great deal of the internal effect of Rheims cathedral is due to its great store of rich and early stained glass and to the admirable color of its stone. It is a church through which one may walk day after day and find new beauties at every visit. And it is pleasant too to sit and study the exquisite work of the west front, its harmonious proportions, its noble doorway and rose windows, its ranges of sculpture adapted to the architecture and not thrusting themselves forward to its prejudice. And we need not say that there is no lack of historic interest in a church which has witnessed the crowning of so many kings, and where the interest of the two latest coronations is certainly not the least. Here Louis the Sixteenth and Charles the Tenth received the crown which each was in different ways to lose. Here Louis the Eighteenth forbore to seek the outward ensigns of a kingship which he, alone of the three brothers, contrived to keep to the end of his days. And it is with a strange feeling that we tread the forsaken chambers of the palace, standing, through so many changes of the last forty years, swept and garnished, ready for the next ruler who may deem the consecrating oil of Rheims to be a needful part of his investiture. Yet, with all this, a higher interest still attaches to the other great church of Rheims, the famous Abbey of Saint Remigius, "the mickle minster at Remys" as it stands recorded in the language of our ancient chronicles. To an ordinary observer there is no comparison between the two churches. Without, instead of the noble towers of the metropolitan church, Saint Remigius presents an outline which is absolutely shapeless; a long awkward length of roof is broken only by a difference of height in the roof itself, and by way of towers there is nothing beyond two insignificant turrets flanking the west front. Within, instead of the uniform style and soaring height of the cathedral, we have a building whose main feature is in its enormous breadth, and whose architecture, simple and massive, is a mere patchwork of various dates. The tomb and shrine of the saint himself, which by unusual good luck have weathered all storms, are fine in themselves, but of late date and workmanship, the tomb being surrounded by figures representing those twelve Peers of France, temporal and ecclesiastical, who were venerated, as it would seem, to suit the convenience of Philip Augustus. Yet, as the eye ranges over the vast expanse of the "mickle minster," it soon learns to feel that excess of breadth, coupled with the vast length of Saint Remigius, has in it an element of majesty of a different kind, no less than excess of height. The eye also soon picks out much detail of no small beauty, and it rests with greater satisfaction still on parts of the building which, though they have small claims to artistic beauty, have an interest not easily surpassed alike in the history of art and in the general history of Europe. The mere antiquity of the building would alone make it worth a pilgrimage. The nave and transepts of Saint Remigius are among the few buildings on so great a scale which belong to the first half of the eleventh century. By their side the metropolitan church seems comparatively modern. The two hundred years which separate them saw no small revolutions in the building art. Saint Remigius indeed cannot go back, any more than the cathedral, to the old days of Meriwings and Karlings. No stone remains in either church to witness to the one day when Rheims beheld the consecration of an Emperor. It is not quite clear which of the two ministers was the scene of the great rite of 816, when Pope Stephen drew near to the city, when Louis, already King and Cæsar by every temporal title, went forth to meet the Pontiff, bowed himself thrice before him, led him to the church and received the Imperial Crown and the Imperial scepter at his hands. But in neither case does the existing church contain any portion which the eyes of that Pope and that Cæsar could have looked upon. Far different is it with

the next time when a Pope and a Cæsar met in the metropolis of Belgic Gaul. In 1049 "the mickle minster at Remys," begun in 1005, had been brought to perfection by its Abbot Heremar. A goodly assemblage, indeed, was gathered for its hallowing. A Pope, and that Pope Leo the Ninth, came to perform the ceremony, an Emperor, and that Emperor Henry the Third, formed one of a congregation gathered from all parts of Western Christendom. Few assemblies could be more illustrious than the Synod gathered at the bidding of such a Pontiff and such a Cæsar. One thing that specially strikes us is that in the list of prelates and ambassadors no mention occurs of the King of Paris, and only a very secondary mention of the Primate of Rheims. The Metropolitan of Trier was there; so were the Metropolitan of Lyons and of Besancon—these two last still cities of the Empire not yet swallowed up by the Parisian Meestrom. But the prelate of Rheims itself is placed lowest on the primatial list, and Pope and Emperor seem to have held their Synod by their own authority without any reference to the Capetian King. What, they might well ask, was he in the presence of the Lord of the World and the worthy Pontiff of his choosing? When Sun and Moon shone side by side in all their brightness, such lesser lights might well withdraw their shining. For once in the world's history, the successor of Augustus and the successor of Peter sat side by side to judge the nations and their rulers. For once the two swords clashed not with one another, but were drawn to smite with a common blow a host of ecclesiastical and moral offenders. Most of them were the princes or prelates within the Parisian kingdom, and among them the sentence went forth which forbade William the Norman to aspire to the marriage of his Flemish kinswoman. And among the crowd which filled the minster stood three ambassadors of England, one of whom, Dudo, the Saxon Bishop of Somersethire, first raised to dignity by the Danish Cunt, and now sent by the English Edward to the Frankish Henry and the Lotharing Bruno, might seem in a special way to represent on Gaulish soil the union of all the branches of the Teutonic race. And the stones on which they gazed we can gaze on still; the massive arches and rude capitals of the church which Leo hallowed are still there, partly disguised by additions of the next age, but still essentially unaltered, forming one of the most living witnesses of an age of which so few great architectural works remain. And among other thoughts occur to the mind those massive arches with the history of our country. Twelve years later Gyrrh and Tostig and Ealdred stopped there on their return from their Roman pilgrimage, and there Burchard, the son of Edigar, the grandson of Leofric, was buried in the churchyard of the minster. To the heart of an Englishman the thought of Pepes and Cæsars hardly speaks with so much force as the thought that the stones on which he is gazing were gazed at in all the freshness of their first days by the stainless hero of his own land.

And yet Rheims contains one piece of antiquity besides which even the minster of Saint Remigius may seem modern. The Porta Martia, the old Roman gate, still survives, speaking of days when Popes were as yet unknown, when Cæsars still bowed, not at the shrine of a Christian saint, but at the altar of the father of Rome's founder. The genuine fragment is a noble one, but will be believed that the demon of restoration has seized even on this venerable relic, and that modern work, modern pillars, modern capitals, are brought into close neighborhood with the grand, if shattered, remains of the time which has so utterly passed away. Other objects of interest, both ecclesiastical and domestic, may be found in Rheims, but these are the chief. A city which can show one church of such artistic perfection as the Metropolitan Church, and another of such surpassing historic interest as the "mickle minster," claims a high place, indeed, among the historic cities of Christendom.

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The envelopes and wrappers must be furnished and delivered with all reasonable despatch, complete in all respects, ready for use, and in such quantities as may be required to fill the daily orders of postmasters; the deliveries to be made either at the Post Office Department, Washington, D. C., or at the office of an agent authorized to inspect and receive the same; the place of delivery to be at the option of the Postmaster-General, and the cost of delivering as well as all expense of packing, addressing, labeling, and water-proofing, to be paid by the contractor. Bidders are notified that the Department will require, as a condition of the contract, that the envelopes and wrappers shall be manufactured and stored in such manner as to ensure security against loss by fire or theft. The manufacturer must at all times be subject to the inspection of an agent of the Department, who will require the stipulations of the contract to be faithfully observed. The dies for embossing the postage stamps on the envelopes and wrappers are to be executed to the satisfaction of the Postmaster-General, in the best style, and they are to be provided, renewed, and replaced in order at the expense of the contractor; the department reserves the right of requiring new dies for any stamps, or denominations of stamps not now used, and any changes of dies or colors shall be made without extra charge. Specimens of the stamped envelopes and wrappers now in use may be seen at any of the principal post offices, but these specimens shall not be regarded as a standard for the new contracted; bidders are therefore invited to submit samples of other and different qualities and styles, including the paper proposed as well as the manufactured envelopes, wrappers, and boxes, and make their bids accordingly.

The contract will be awarded to the bidder whose proposal, although it be not the lowest, is considered most advantageous to the Department, taking into account the price, quality of the samples, workmanship, and the sufficiency and ability of the bidder to manufacture and deliver the envelopes and wrappers in accordance with the terms of this advertisement; and no proposal will be considered unless accompanied by a sufficient and satisfactory guarantee. The Postmaster-General also reserves the right to reject any proposal if in his judgment the interests of the Government require it. Before closing a contract the successful bidder may be required to prepare new dies, and submit impressions thereof. THE USE OF THE PRESENT DIES MAY OR MAY NOT BE CONTINUED. Bidders with approved and sufficient credits, in the sum of \$200,000, will be required for the faithful performance of the contract, as required by the seventeenth section of the act of Congress, approved the 29th of August, 1854, and the contract under this advertisement will be made quarterly, after proper adjustment of accounts. The Postmaster-General reserves to himself the right to annul the contract whenever the same, or any part thereof, is offered for sale for the purpose of speculation; and under no circumstances will a transfer of the contract be made, or the contract be assigned to any party who shall be, in the opinion of the Postmaster-General, less able to fulfill the conditions thereof than the contractor. The contract will also be reserved to annul the contract for a failure to perform faithfully any of its stipulations. The number of envelopes of different sizes, and of wrappers of different qualities and styles, during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1869, was as follows, viz:— No. 1. Note size—1,114,000. No. 2. Ordinary letter size; (not heretofore used)—4,150,000. No. 3. Full letter size—57,867,500. No. 4. Full letter size—2,304,500. No. 5. Extra letter size, (ungummed, for circulars)—343,500. No. 6. Extra letter size—4,204,500. No. 7. Official size—694,500. No. 8. Extra official size—1700. Wrappers—3,505,250.

To ALL WANTING FARMS IN A LOCALITY Exempt from Fevers and Lung Complaints.—To Farmers, Horticulturists, Mechanics, Capitalists, Gentlemen of Leisure, Invalids, and all wanting a homestead in a climate of unsurpassed salubrity, exempt from the rigors of a Northern winter, and in close connection with the commercial centres of the South. Few if any sections offer such a combination of inducements as the town of Aiken, S. C., and its vicinity for a desirable and permanent home. A pamphlet of 84 pages now ready, containing a description of the climate, soils, and the nature of the products in the vicinity of Aiken, especially fruit, cereals, cotton, corn, vegetables, etc., including extracts from letters of distinguished visitors, contractors, action of town council inviting emigrants, etc., to which is added a "descriptive list of property for sale, including improved farms, orchards, vineyards, water power," "saline deposits, unimproved lands, and town residences. For sale by E. J. C. WOOD, Real Estate Agent, Aiken, S. C. The book will be sent by mail on receipt of price, 50 cents. Address J. C. HERRY, Publisher, P. O. Box No. 1423, New York, and list of February, after that date at Aiken, S. C. 11 1/2 am