



# AUNT DAISY

*brings you the*

## WEEKLY CHEER BUDGET

### SHE IS DEEPLY IMPRESSED BY YORK MINSTER

I HAVE torn up no fewer than eight beginnings to this chapter, because York Minster is so wonderful that anything I can say about it seems futile and utterly unworthy of that noble, serene, and most beautiful cathedral. Century after century has passed—"the former things have passed away," and men and women have so changed in their ways of life that those who designed and built the Minster would be bewildered and alarmed if they could mingle with us now; but through all the contradictory and painful changes and stresses of the years, this beautiful monument which our forefathers raised as an expression of their Christian ideals, still stands there, strong and unchanged, like the God to whose power and glory it is a witness.

It was almost four o'clock when we reached the Minster, just in time for Evensong. As it was the August holidays, the choir boys were away, so service was not in the Choir, but in the Lady Chapel behind it. There was quite a large congregation. Two clergymen officiated, one young and one elderly—both with beautiful, resonant voices. As I joined in the simple, familiar service—"We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done"—I did realise dimly how unchanged human nature really is by the centuries which roll past so steadily, with all their discoveries and wars and worries and excitements.

In the stillness of that old, spacious church one could feel how all people, of all time, past, present and to come, are really just mortals together, and all on the same level. Every day, during all those many years, that same service has been said in that place; and the tombs and effigies all around seemed quite friendly and familiar, and as if we all belonged to each other.

The life-sized recumbent figures on the tombs looked so peaceful and happy, and very real, too, with frillings and pleatings in their stone robes, and even tassels of stone to their pillows! I liked the figures which ornament the sides of the tombs, too—they look so natural and quite comfortable, kneeling one behind the other on stone cushions!

THE famous East Window of the Minster is in this Lady Chapel, and is one of the most remarkable windows in the world. It is as large as a tennis court! Each of the panels in the lights is a yard square; yet it consists entirely of very small pieces of glass most skilfully leaded together. The verger who showed us round explained that it took John Thornton, of Coventry, three years—from 1405 to 1408—to do this work, and that he was paid about six shillings and eight pence a week, which was considered very good indeed. His assistants, of course, received less. The window very wonderfully pictures scenes from Revelations, as well as from the Old Testament. The Altar of the Chapel is simple, and the stone reredos re-

presents the Manger Scene at Bethlehem, and the Shepherds and the Wise Men, beautifully coloured.

After service, the verger took us over the cathedral—just a tiny glimpse, of course, was all we could get in so short a time, but I eagerly drank in all I could, scribbling in my notebook as I went along. Thus I learned that there have been no fewer than five churches built on this site, the first being a small wooden one, for the baptism of Edwin, King of Northumbria, on Easter Day, April 12, 627!

Edwin began building the second church, of stone, around the first wooden one. A vigorous church life was thus begun in York, and it has gone on ever since. By the eighth century a school flourished in connection with the church, which also owned the most famous library in Europe. Fires and wars caused rebuilding, as time went on; a Norman Cathedral was built on the site in 1100; and the

years before the restoration was finished. Two of the original choir stalls were saved, and are now kept in the Lady Chapel; the others are still considered "new" though over 100 years old. The High Altar is really new, and was erected as a memorial to the late Viscount Halifax, together with a beautiful pavement in front of it. The celebrated choir screen and other surrounding stonework have been washed and cleaned to harmonise better with this new work. The verger told me it was washed each day for a year!

The screen is 15th century, and, though very massive, does not appear too heavy because the whole Minster is so lofty and large. The central tower is 130 feet high!

In the screen are large figures in stone of the Kings of England from William I to Henry VI, each surmounted by a beautifully carved stone canopy. Above these are smaller figures under smaller canopies. There is such an enormous amount of interest-

glass, inserted when each part was built, in the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries.

Much interest has always centred round the Five Sisters Window in the North Transept. In passing, I may say that the ceiling of this transept is now under process of being replaced, as it was found to be riddled with the "death watch beetle." The verger said that the work was costing about £12,000.

The famous window consists of five pointed lights of equal height—50 feet—each five feet broad. Above these, and separated from them by stonework, are five smaller pointed windows of graduated heights, the highest in the middle. The Five Sisters is different from any window I have ever seen—being greenish grey in colour, and not at all like the "stained glass" we are accustomed to see in churches. It is called "grisaille" glass, and is Early English. The groundwork is of a grey

THE Nave of the Minster seems enormous, but it is in correct proportion to the great transept, and only the same length (on the west side of the central or lantern tower) as the Choir and Lady Chapel are on the eastern; for York Minster is built in the form of a cross. The west wall is very interesting, because of its great West Window, made in 1338, and also for the curious carved groups above the porch, as well as for the doorway, which dates only from a disastrous fire in the cathedral in 1840, only 11 years after that one which had destroyed the choir.

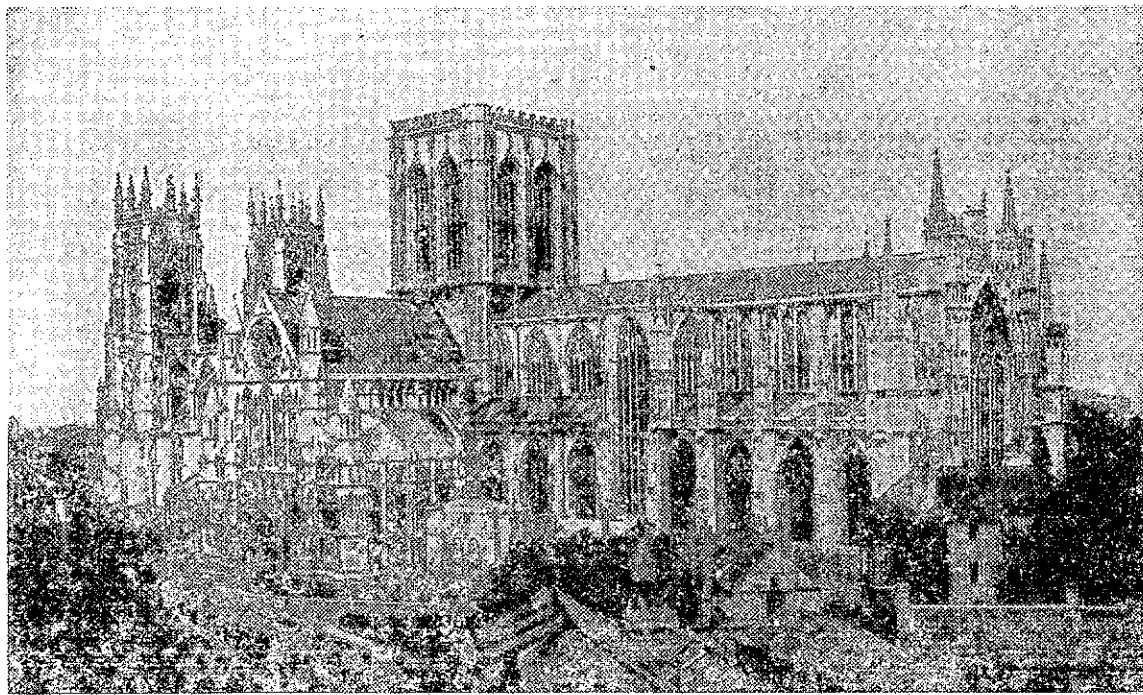
A workman had been repairing a clock in the south-west tower, and forgot to extinguish the candle he had been using. The dry timber in the tower caught fire, and in a few hours the whole of the nave was in flames. The wooden roof fell in at midnight, and the molten lead poured on to the floor. The large bell in the south-west tower crashed down, and the heavy beams which supported the roof gave way.

Fortunately, the central tower did not catch fire. It took £20,000 to restore the nave.

The doorway is divided into two by a stone pillar, on which is a niche containing a statue of St. Peter, holding a key. Three more niches are to be seen, above this, two of which hold figures of kneeling angels, while the central one, now empty, formerly held the figure of Our Saviour. On each side of the top of the porch are very curious carved groups. One depicts Samson opening the jaws of the lion he is about to kill, while Delilah is cutting off his hair!

Another group shows Delilah ascertaining the secret of Samson's strength; while in the next she is waking up the shorn giant from sleep. Still another consists of Samson tying together the tails of the foxes, and evidently enjoying his task!

All through the Minster you will find quaint carvings and groups, but perhaps the most fascinating study of all is to be found in the Chapter House and in the Crypt. I must tell you something of these next week.



YORK MINSTER FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.—Aunt Daisy describes a visit to this "noble, serene and most beautiful Cathedral" on this page today.

present beautiful Gothic Minster was finished and re-dedicated in 1472. Every year on the third of July, a special festival service commemorates this.

FIRST, we were taken into the Choir—itsself larger than many of our churches. It was here that a very disastrous fire took place, in 1829. A poor madman named Jonathan Martin, having attended Evensong, hid himself behind a tomb until the Minster was closed for the night. Then at midnight, he set fire to a number of music books which he had placed under the organ. The choir was gutted, the beautiful wooden ceiling fell in, and the wonderful old glass in the window was broken. It was three

ing detail in every inch of the whole cathedral that it would take months of study to discover it all.

ANOTHER glory of York Minster is its stained and painted glass of the Middle Ages. Much of this glass, both in England and on the Continent, was destroyed at various times; and, indeed, the secret of making it was lost; so that tremendous interest attaches to what still remains. York Minster contains not only far more medieval glass than any other English church, but even about half the total amount that has survived. With the exception of the South Transept, every part of the Minster retains nearly all its original

colour, on which is painted an outline leaf pattern in brown enamel. Into this groundwork are inserted geometrical patterns of coloured glass.

The verger did not tell us the legend about the Five Sisters, but he did say there is no historical foundation for it. This great window has been restored as the Empire's War Memorial to Women—900 nurses, doctors, W.A.A.C.s—who were killed in the Great War. It had to be re-leaded and attended to in various ways, at a cost of £3500. This money was raised in nine weeks; Princess Mary began the fund, the Duchess of York (now Queen Elizabeth) following her.

If to-day a plebiscite were taken of all the artists in Great Britain you would get a 90 per cent. majority for the abolition of the Royal Academy of Arts.—Mr. Wyndham Lewis.

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