

SERMON

Preached before the St. George's Society, Quebec,
April 23rd, 1894,

QUEBEC CATHEDRAL—EVENING,

By THE VERY REV. R. W. NORMAN, D.D., D.C.L.,

DEAN OF QUEBEC.

Gen, 4th c., part of 9th v. "Am I my brother's keeper"? These words were spoken by the first recorded murderer. They are one of the numberless exemplifications of the law that no sin stands alone, but that it must bring others in its dismal train. Stung by envy and jealousy at the acceptance by God of Abel's sacrifice, shewn probably by fire from heaven, while his own was rejected, Cain took the opportunity, which Satan always affords to those who meditate a crime, and slew Abel in the field. Whether he there left his brother's corpse, or in some way concealed it from human eyes, we do not know. Suffice it to say that he knew right well where lay the mortal part of his pious brother. But, like many wrong doers, he put on an appearance of injured innocence, and asked: "Am I my brother's keeper"? Now, whether we are to assume that God in some mysterious way directly questioned Cain, or through some one else, or whether it was conscience that was at work, conscience that put the troublesome query, to which his hardened stubbornness gave the reply in the text, we cannot precisely affirm, and it really matters not to the moral of the story. In the history of great criminals, there is generally some moment, when the monitor within appeals to a blunted nature, and as it were speaks with a voice of accusation, which arouses the evil-doer from the pleasant dream of indifference, to guilt, and to responsibilities. "What hast thou done," it seems to ask. "Dost thou imagine that thy sin is unknown? that God has not marked it, and that man will not sooner or later become aware of it"? His sin will find out the sinner, and if he sins, he will certainly pay the penalty. When Cain murdered Abel, he