

Québec, Montréal, Ottawa, ont prouvé une fois de plus que leurs habitants n'ont pas dégénéré des vertus de leurs ancêtres. Comme eux ils aiment et chérissent leur clergé, leurs pasteurs ; comme eux ils ont une foi robuste et une piété sincère ; comme eux, gouvernants et gouvernés, hommes de hautes classes et des positions les plus humbles, ils s'inclinent sous l'autorité salubre de la sainte Eglise, se fiant à Elle pour les faire arriver à leurs destinées ; comme eux enfin ils se proclament avec fierté les fils soumis du vicaire de Jésus-Christ, le glorieux, l'immortel Léon XIII.

SOMETHING ABOUT CATHEDRALS

It may be pardoned for dwelling a little upon the subject of Cathedrals in general, at a time when this most Catholic City of Montreal, is struggling to give to the world, one of those monuments of faith, which make our 19th century, the rival of the remoter Middle ages, the New World a counterpart of the Old. "When one feels its true significance," says a modern French writer, "a Cathedral presents the most admirable spectacle which is vouchsafed to the eye of man here below. In it he finds the image of a more august temple, the vestibule, as it were, of the Heavenly Jerusalem."

The history of Cathedrals, from a purely human standpoint, is profoundly interesting. In it the poetry of Christianity, so to say, exhausts itself. And poet and romancer have, indeed found there limitless sources of inspiration. The thoughtful Wordsworth speaks to us of spires, like fingers pointing heavenward.

And Milton himself dreams of

"The high embowed roof,
With antic pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim, religious light,
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness through mine ear
Dissolve me, into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before my eyes."

Mrs Hemans paints for us in rich and mellow coloring,
"A dim and mighty minster of old times,
A temple shadowy with remembrances of a heroic past."

While again in her Joan of Arc at Rheims her imagination seems to delight in that old historic pile, wherein the Kings of France received "their birthright's crown." And who will not recall Adelaide Proctor's exquisite lines :

Dim with dark shadows of the ages past
St. Bavon stands."

The picture is before us, the gloom of that ancient Flemish temple, ancient as Ghent, itself, and recalling as many memories.

While Byron's burst of enthusiastic admiration at the aspect of St. Peter's, surpasses anything yet written upon it by traveller or poet :

"Majesty,
Power, Glory, Strength, Beauty are all aisled
In this eternal ark of glory undefiled."

So Schiller cries out in ecstasy.

Eternal, only Rome !

Where like a second heaven within the heaven,
St. Peters rears his wide and wondrous dome.

I have purposely chosen, as they occur to me, a few of the more familiar allusions to my subject with which the poets abound. But if Cathedrals stand to poetry in the relation of an inspiration, as it were a mighty and ever present theme, they are to painting, sculpture and music a very home, to architecture, its Soul. Read the annals of art. Those immortal ones who adorn the pages found in the Cathedrals their nurseries. Of architecture they are the living illustrations in its every phase, from the massive grandeur of the Roman-Byzantine to the beauty and sublimity of the gothic. That style of which Cardinal Newman says : "It is endowed with a profound and commanding beauty, such as no other style possesses, with which we are acquainted, and which probably the Church will not see surpassed, till it attain to the Celestial City." I would gladly linger here a moment, in a branch of the subject, at once so varied and delightful, but space forbids. Nor can I follow the archaeologist when he finds in the shadow of these basilicas, the link between the old and new, the solution of old mysteries, the key to half effaced inscriptions, in a word, the thread of that labyrinth we call the past.

There is one aspect of Cathedrals which appeals the most forcibly to the casual observer. Be it observed, that I do not speak here of their relation to faith, they the proud triumph of Christianity over the ages. I am merely dealing with the subject from a purely natural point of view. This aspect is the historical, or if the reader like it better, the sentimental. The tales that they tell of the past, the associations that they call up, the pageants they have witnessed, and the events upon which they have set their seal, all rise before our minds at the name of York or Salisbury, of Durham or Canterbury, of Westminster or Granada, of Rheims or Notre-Dame, of Toledo or of Chartres, of Strasburg or Cologne, and even of that mighty temple built by the sainted Olaf, in the dim, mysterious north. These Cathedrals have about them an atmosphere of splendor and of power unsurpassed. Here Charlemagne received upon his brow the diadem of the West : there Cœur de Lion took the ensign of the Holy Wars ; there Louis raised the sacred oriflamme : here Henry grasped the conquering sword of Agincourt. To that stately pile some royal victor fished with triumph, came ; to this, defeat has brought its burning heart ; here a coronation, there a royal wedding, even the very pomp of kingly funerals : all have left their wondrous imprint upon those ancient piles. Richer far than painted windows, or storied marble, or jewelled censer. Memories cling around the Cathedrals of the Old World, thick as the ivy that robes a ruin.

As the years go on, our Cathedrals in the New, shall have each its own chronicle. The history of our own Cathedral, under its present aspect, begins with this Bazaar. A Bazaar wherein the young and old, the grave and gay commingling, form a dazzling pageant. French and English, Scotch and Irish, unite for one great end, to finish this Cathedral.