

TORONTO, December 17, 1849.

TO THE VESTRY-MEN OF THE PARISH OF ST. JAMES :

GENTLEMEN,—The Report of your Committee appointed to take steps for the re-building of your Parish Church, having, together with certain other documents, been printed and circulated for your consideration, I am induced to offer a few remarks upon such points referred to therein, with regard to which it is most desirable you should possess clear and accurate information.

The Report sets out by stating that "the Committee having advertised for plans and estimates of such a Church, as they thought, would be satisfactory to the congregation," certain plans were received from different Architects, of which those of Mr. Cumberland, Mr. Ostler, and Mr. Kivas Tully, "appeared to the Committee, upon the best judgment they could form," entitled to the first, second, and third prizes respectively.

The next paragraph announces that besides these designs, there was another sent in by Mr. Smith of Montreal, who, not intending to compete for any premium, did not confine himself to the description of building required by the advertisement, and as such "satisfactory to the congregation." "This plan," nevertheless, "recommended itself more strongly to the Committee than any of the others,"—that is to say, the Committee confesses to an error; they discover that their advertisement was for a description of building they did not desire to erect, and they now wish to adopt a design quite different in character from that for which they called! In fact, the Architects who complied with their advertisement for "a Church satisfactory to the congregation," are sent adrift to make way for one, who, unauthorised in such a course, proposes a Cathedral which "recommends itself to the Committee."

This design, it appears from Mr. Smith's estimate, will cost £15,350; or, with "certain curtailments and alterations," (a most indefinite and unsatisfactory description,) the reduced sum of £12,000. Now, Mr. Cumberland's plan, it is said, will cost £9,400 to prepare the edifice for the performance of Divine Service, and £14,200 inclusive of the full completion of the tower-spire, and other contemplated decorations; whilst the estimate of Mr. Smith (£15,350) does not include the cost of the spire and I can discover no estimate whatever of the total cost of his structure. "It will be seen," says the Report a little further on, "that a Church built according to Mr. Smith's design will be the more expensive of the two—though the difference will not be great." How has the Committee arrived at this conclusion? If a full estimate has been rendered by Mr. Smith, (which, as men of business, it is natural to suppose they have required,) why not let us have it? And if no such estimate has been made, how can the Committee suggest, or how are we to know, what the difference will be? But take the next paragraph, wherein the Committee recommends the adoption of Mr. Smith's design, "leaving it to the judgment and consideration of the Building Committee, in conjunction with the Architect, to modify details as may seem expedient, especially with reference to the materials to be employed, and the internal arrangement." In plain words, we are asked to adopt this design, and to give Mr. Smith and the Building Committee *carte blanche* in respect to the whole affair. But if a satisfactory internal arrangement is not now exhibited in this design, what induces the Committee to recommend it?—upon what have they formed their judgment? and what guarantee shall we have that a Church will be erected "satisfactory to the congregation?" On the other hand, if the internal arrangement really does "recommend itself to the Committee," why ask for such unlimited and indefinite powers, with a view to "certain alterations?" And again, if "the materials to be used" have not been determined upon, how in the world has the estimate been framed, and what confidence can we have in its accuracy? I confess I am not satisfied with this portion of the Report, displaying, as it clearly does, much inconsistency, and implying great doubt as to the propriety of the design which it recommends.

But let us enquire what the probability really is, as to the comparative cost of these two designs; let us see upon what grounds the Committee assert that the "difference will not be great;" and to this end let us compare their leading dimensions, as the most reasonable method (in the absence of professional advice,) of arriving at a fair conclusion; for if we admit that which apparently is not the case, namely, that Mr. Smith's design is no more expensive in decoration than Mr. Cumberland's, then the areas of the building will give us a pretty accurate idea of the comparative expense. The comparison may thus be made:—