

DISTRICT OF GASPE.

Gaspé Basin	Rev. F. de Lamare.
Percé	" R. Short.
Baie des Chaleurs	" G. Milne, M. A.
Malbaie	" F. A. Smith.

BISHOP'S COLLEGE, LENNOXVILLE.

Principal and Professor of Divinity :

Rev. J. H. Nicolls, M. A., (Chaplain to the Lord Bishop.)

" I. Hellmuth, Professor of Hebrew and Rabbinical Literature.

" J. Butler, Head Master of the Grammar School.

CIRCULAR TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF
QUEBEC, No 1.

Quebec, 4th Jan. 1851.

Rev. and dear Sir,

Application having been frequently made to me, to furnish hints or directions respecting the construction of Churches, and the task, having been, in consequence, repeatedly imposed upon me of writing out the best suggestions which it occurred to me to offer, I am prompted to put in print, once for all, (without thinking it necessary to guard against any imputation of giving importance to the material to the prejudice of the spiritual edifice,) a statement of some few standing rules and general principles upon this subject, to which reference can, at any time, be made, and to give it circulation by the channel here adopted.

The Church Society of the Diocese has it in charge, through the medium of a Committee appointed for the purpose, to prepare Plans and Instructions in a more complete and detailed form, for the erection of Churches, and matters are in train for the execution of this object, with the expectation of some aid from an accomplished English architect, at present in New York*. Some highly useful recommendations upon this subject, have also been already made by a Committee of the Church Society in the Diocese of Toronto, and may be seen in Nos. 37 and 38 of Vol. XIII, of "the Church" published in 1830.

It is something in a form rather more condensed and of the simplest possible kind, that I now offer to your attention and that of the parties who may be connected with you in the erection of Churches; and it is calculated specially for those cases, forming the great majority in the Diocese of Quebec, in which the limited nature of the means at command renders it necessary to build upon a humble scale and to adopt an unpretending plan. I shall avoid all technical terms whatever, and shall endeavor to make myself plainly and immediately intelligible to persons without any architectural attainments.

I will premise that, however lowly may be the edifice, it ought to be stamped to the eye, within and without, with its appropriate character, making it, at once, as the *Use of God*. This object is not to be attained by an ambition of false and fantastic ornament, or an introduction of some peculiar features of what is commonly called Gothic architecture, which conflict glaringly with the style of the building in other respects. If we affect Gothic at all (which is incomparably the preferable style for Church-architecture) we ought to know a little what we are doing, and to be consistent throughout. There are some features of this style which are so unlike what men have been accustomed to see in Canada, that it requires time even to reconcile their minds to that which, with longer experience, they find to be essential to correct taste and to architectural propriety, and there are some rather showy gothic places of worship in our cities, which are replete with faults, because accommodated in certain points, to such prepossessions as are here noticed: prepossessions which will be gradually overcome by the persevering adoption of good models;—and the approbation of these will ultimately be the habit of the public mind,—so that the time will arrive when it will be made a matter of general reproach to us if we should go on building Churches such as have heretofore been common in these Colonies. There is a small and cheap work on Gothic

architecture, by Bloxam*, which may be consulted with advantage by persons engaged in such undertakings, and those to whom it may be convenient to procure the *Glossary of terms used in Architecture*, in 3 vols. 8vo. will find there a rich and interesting repository of information. Brandon's Parish Churches is also a valuable work. Each of these works is illustrated by engravings. But of all these and of everything published in England upon the subject, it is to be observed that even the simplest and most economical specimens which they exhibit, are too costly for the Missions in the woods of L. Canada, and that we must, from stern necessity, forego what is required to make the structure perfectly correct and complete. Let us, however, always so calculate our means beforehand, as to have the building, such as it may be, *finished and out of debt*, when it is opened for use, and so ready for Consecration,—although it should be necessary, in order to gain these objects, to make some sacrifice of architectural effect.

In making the best approximation in our power to the erection of good and Church-like buildings, I venture although with but slender pretensions to any science in the matter, to recommend the observance of the following rules.

1. **POSITION.** The Church should stand east and west—the place for the holy table being at the east end.

2. **MATERIAL.** It will sometimes be found impossible in this country, to build any other than a wooden Church—but every effort should be used to build of stone†. Next to stone, it is desirable to build of brick. Whatever measure of assistance it may be in my power to afford, through the bounty of Societies in England or otherwise, it will always be made much larger in the case of a Church of substantial materials, than in that of a wooden one.

3. **PROPORTIONS AND ROOF.** Nothing can be more vicious in Church Architecture than a building too wide in proportion to its length. The *breadth* ought not, properly, to be more or not much more than *one third of the length*. And the *height* to the eaves, may be in about the same proportion to the length, with a high roof of steep pitch, which, if it can be accomplished, should be left open internally to the top, with the rafters finished off in a seemly, if not in an ornamental manner‡. A flat ceiling must, at any rate, be avoided.

4. **ENTRANCE.** The entrance may be at the west end—but a porch on the south side, is of pleasing effect and well adapted to this climate. The porch should have a pointed arch, and the door which opens from it into the Church should have the same. Its roof should bear the same proportion to its sides and be placed at the same angle as in the case of the walls and roof of the building.

5. **STEEPLE.** In such Churches as are here chiefly in view, a tower, with or without a spire, will be found too expensive, and will only be built at a sacrifice of other objects of more importance. Where things can be done upon a scale admitting of tower and spire, means must exist to procure proper architectural plans. If they are not after a good model, they have a very unfortunate effect. In small Churches for country Missions, a *bell-gable* will be far preferable, surmounted by a cross. Specimens of bell-gables are seen in St. Matthew's Chapel, Quebec, and in the Church at Point Levi. A specimen of another kind, the only one so far as I have seen in Canada,§ is in the little Church built by Mrs. Christie for the Church of England French Mission at Sabrevois, near St. John in the Diocese of Montreal. It would be improved by the addition of a small cross.

There is another simple and appropriate kind of steeple, or rather bell-cot, placed on the middle of the building, the design of which may be taken from the view of the Mission Church of

* Published by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.

† One of our Bishops in Australia has made it a rule to decline consecrating wooden Churches, regarding them as mere temporary structures, which must be superseded by Churches of a better description, when occasion shall serve.

‡ The Church of Pointe Levi affords, in this point, the only specimen in L. Canada which can be safely followed.

§ Persons who keep the files of the London Illustrated news, may see a very pleasing specimen of a *double bell-gable* or bell-cot, in the view given of the Church at Leverstock Green, near St. Albans, in a No. published in Nov. 1849.

* Mr. Willis, who has published in that city a work on Ancient Ecclesiastical Architecture.