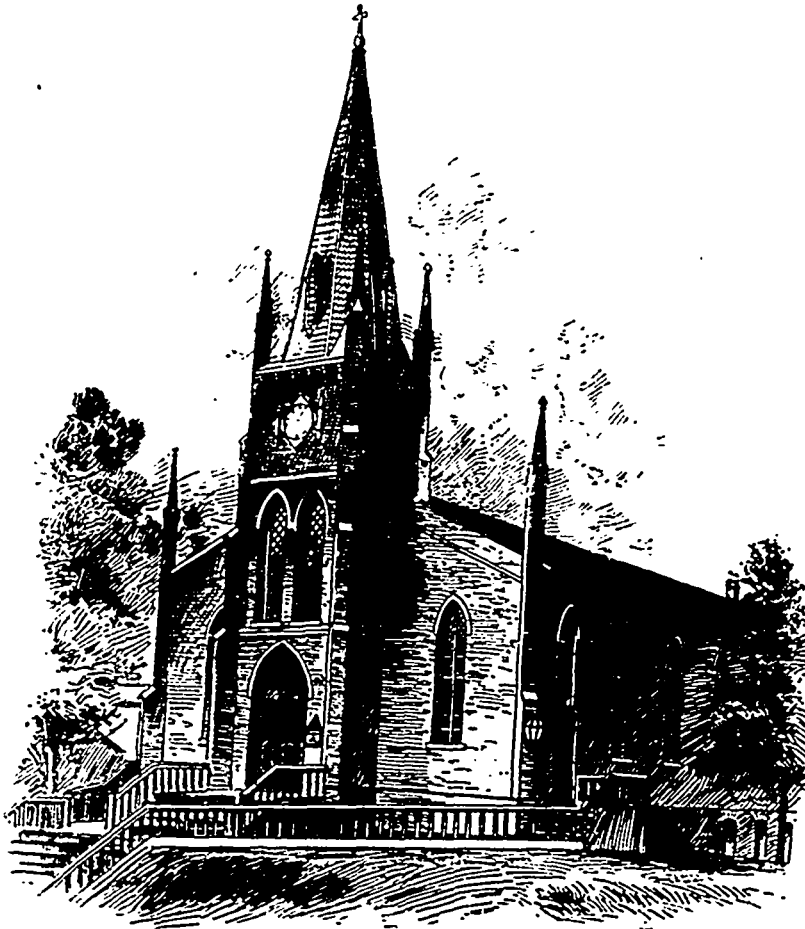




ST. PETER'S CHURCH, SHERBROOKE, QUE.

worthy favorites, also made him Chancellor, and thus first man in the kingdom.

But soon the nation began to miss the firm and wise rule of the first Edward. Disaster, such as it had not been accustomed to, overtook it in the battle of Bannockburn, in which the flower of the English army was destroyed. Then Reynolds, who fortunately had sense enough to see his own incapacity as a ruler, resigned the chancellorship. But he was still archbishop, and as such secured for himself a better name than he had been able to do as a politician. He got several laws passed which lessened the power of the pope in England, for he saw the absurdity of the custom (which had become established) of referring everything to Rome, distinctly and in every way a foreign country. He was also true to the Church as against the king. Though he owed everything to Edward, yet he was not slavishly subservient to him. The king had summoned a bishop to be tried for unorthodoxy by a civil court. This was contrary to all custom, and the archbishop resented the action as an unwonted interference with the privileges of the

Church, which up to this point had been able to settle its own difficulties. In this all the bishops of England were with him.

It was by the advice of Archbishop Walter also that the number of dioceses in Ireland was reduced so that an Irish bishopric might be made an eligible post by income and otherwise for more worthy men.

As time went on the unhappy Edward was hunted from his country and home by his own wife, who demanded that her son Edward should be made king. Whatever had arisen between the wretched king and his great favorite, (and history is not very clear about it), Reynolds was found amongst the leaders against him and readily officiated at the coronation of his son; but this brought upon him such disdain and trouble as he in his old age was unable to bear. He died on November 16th, 1327, and was buried at Canterbury.

Queen Isabella and her son were now all-powerful in England, and they at once nominated Simon Mepeham, Canon of Chichester, to the vacant archbishopric. The monks of Canterbury, through their committee, elected him; but Pope John XXII., living at Avignon, hesitated to give his consent, owing to the unsettled state of affairs in England, and it was not till the following June (1328) that he, hastened by a handsome gift of money (the open sesame to nearly all things earthly), yielded. After his consecration the new archbishop showed no hurry to return to England, which which he did not reach till September. He was enthroned on January 22, 1329.

Simon Mepeham was a man out of harmony with the age in which he lived. He was no politician, and never once, during the five years that he was archbishop, did he attempt to be one. He regarded himself as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ and a leading bishop in his Church. It was to further the interests of his Lord and Master that he felt he had been consecrated to the high office of archbishop, and to this work, and this only, he addressed himself. He in-

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