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ST. PATRICK'S RENOVATED

Elaborate and Artistic Changes to be Made.

A Short Account of the Plans and Designs of the Improvements Already Commenced—The Decorations—The Woodwork—The New Galleries and Organ—The Monumental Windows and the Exterior Renovations.

AS WE ANNOUNCED some time ago a complete renovation of St. Patrick's Church was in contemplation, it will be of deep interest to all our Montreal readers and to many former Montrealers, who still keep alive their communion with the city and their former fellow-citizens by means of THE TRUE WITNESS, to know that the intentions of a grand restoration—or rather rejuvenation—of the good old parish church are about to be carried into execution, and that the dreams of many a lover of the historic temple are soon to be realized. Having seen the plans, and examined all the details of the work, we do not think we exaggerate in saying that when the work actually commenced is completed, that St. Patrick's Church of Montreal will be one of the grandest, if not the grandest, Catholic temple of worship in Canada. Of course it would be impossible for us to picture in words that which we can only as yet imagine from the information we have received and from the plans and styles of decoration that we have seen; but beyond all question such a transformation will take place that not even the most sanguine would believe until they have actually beheld the improvements.

In the first place nothing has been left undone to secure a complete success. Time has been taken, churches over the continent have been examined, plans have been asked for and received, these have been carefully studied and compared with the utmost possible impartiality; and having in view but one object—the best work obtainable—the promoters of the undertaking have decided upon designs and details calculated to even create a greater surprise than any person could anticipate.

Before commencing our account of the plans, the designs, the decorations, the internal improvements and external renovations, we desire to mention the fact that the very best workmanship and the very best materials, as well as the highest order of talent in each line, have been called into requisition. As we proceed we will specially call attention to the persons or firms in charge of the different sections of the work.

The contract for the internal decoration has been awarded to Messrs. Arnold and Locke, Church decorators, of Brooklyn, New York. We may safely state that these gentlemen have long since earned a world-wide reputation for themselves in this particular line. Their

methods as well as their style are unique and particular to themselves. All the churches that have been touched by these artists bear a resemblance to each other, but are distinct in coloring and design from every other one in the world. Mr. Locke, who by the way is a nephew of the late Mgr. Conroy, Apostolic Delegate to Canada, is a master in the art of color blending and harmonizing of details to correspond with all the surroundings. The result is infallibly the same in all the churches that his master brush has touched. So delicate, so light, so harmonious, so soothing, so refining are the effects, that a stranger on entering draws irresistibly back, as if struck by some glorious apparition, and the sense of peace, combined with an elevation of thought, that steals over the observer, seems to mysteriously force the dazzled mind to pause—and to adore. We cannot speak too highly of the sample of the blending of colors and effects in light that we have examined from the pencil of the artist. What then shall it be when the whole of that immense church is under the spell of such a transformation! Truly might we apply to such a picture the description of Holy Cross, by Simmons:—

"With a splendor such as round a bright sunset glows,
In beauty and grandeur that temple arose."

The decoration, however, will, for the present, be limited to the nave, or body of the church. The sanctuary will not be touched until later on. The coloring will be a light salmon shade, that is at once gay and most pleasing to the eye. It is a new departure and one so suited to the requirements of St. Patrick's that the result can scarcely be conceived—nor will it be thoroughly appreciated until seen more than once.

In harmony with the present pews, the walls from floor to windows will be wainscotted in red Indiana oak and paneled in harmony with the present new fittings of the church. The fourteen Stations of the Cross will be keyed into this panneling. There will be on each side two lateral chapels, to serve as oratories, which will harmonize exactly with the wood work of the walls, presenting a most beautiful picture of splendid workmanship and design upon each side of the church. This wood-work is to be done by Messrs. Paquet & Godbout, of Montreal and St. Hyacinthe. Of course the entrance, or front end of the church, will be finished in the same ma-

terial and even in a more elaborately artistic manner.

The old gallery, upon which the organ rested, and most of the space of which was occupied by that instrument, will be completely and entirely changed. A second gallery above it will serve as an organ loft, and there the present instrument, which is to be remodeled and practically made over, will be so divided that no obstruction to the vast flood of light, coming through the great, round tower window, will exist. The organist will have the singers in front of him and the space will be so increased that one hundred singers or persons may find room at the organ. As it was there could not be more than sixty accommodated comfortably. Messrs. Casavant Brothers, of St. Hyacinthe, one of the best known firms of organ builders in Canada, intend transforming the old instrument into a magnificent new one, supplied with electric appliances and built to harmonize with the plans, designs and decorations of the church.

The lower, or old gallery, will be fitted up in amphitheatre form, with graded pews, and perhaps the best view of the whole church will be had from that section of the edifice. It is surprising, but nevertheless it is a fact, that very many good sized country churches do not afford more room than will that gallery when the work is completed. It is fifty feet deep and one hundred feet long. Just imagine a space of fifty by a hundred feet being added thus to St. Patrick's Church. And yet this change will not necessitate any encroachment upon the space heretofore enjoyed.

Seen from the body of the Church, this gallery will present a wonderfully grand appearance. The two magnificent, elegantly curved staircases that are to lead up to the gallery will form a contrast with the present difficult and corkscrew mode of ascent. In a word it would be impossible to give an idea of the changes that will take place. Harmony of coloring, fresh floods of light from the unobstructed central window, new space even equivalent to that of a whole Church, easy access to the gallery, a magnificent new organ provided with all the modern improvements known to the builders of those instruments, and finally a perfection of design, that will stand as an immortalizing monument to the genius of the architect.

Before touching upon the many other changes and renovations to be made we have a word to say about Mr. William E. Doran, of Montreal, the architect whose plan has been unanimously accepted and which has been the wonder and delight of all who are connoisseurs in architectural drawing. It is no exaggeration to say that Mr. Doran can safely stake his reputation upon this work. Truly must it have been "a labor of love," one inspired by deep veneration for the grand and historical Church that it is intended to decorate. There is a delicacy of tracing, an imposing beauty of ensemble, a softness, an appropriateness and a completeness about the whole plan

that all appeal to the artistic eye, to the higher sense of architectural appreciation, and that indicate careful study combined with a natural talent of no ordinary merit. We are under the sincere impression that any words of praise we can bestow upon that achievement will fall far short of the architect's deserts and will appear cold compared with the expressions of astonishment and pleasure that must necessarily arise on all sides when the designs are carried into execution and the picture thus sketched is realized.

Besides these improvements, changes and additions we must not omit to make mention of the windows. They will be of the highest order, and also are being prepared to correspond with the woodwork, the plans, the decorations, the colorings, and especially the light required in the church to complete the whole work. Two in particular are deserving of immediate attention. They are the monumental windows that shall occupy the first places, on either side, without the sanctuary. The one on the Gospel side will be a St. Patrick and on the Epistle side a St. Bridget. These two windows will cost \$1050 each, and are being made by the Austrian Innsbruck Glass Staining Company. The one on the Gospel side will represent St. Patrick, life size, in the act of chasing the reptiles from Ireland, and the lower section will represent a scene in the life of the great Apostle of Ireland, probably the preaching to the King on Tara. Beneath this representation will be a life-like bust of the late lamented pastor of St. Patrick's, Rev. Father Dowd. In fact, it will be a most appropriate monumental window, and a tribute to one whose life was almost entirely spent in labor for the good of the great central Irish parish of Montreal. Being the first window outside the sanctuary and on the side of honor, it is appropriate that it should commemorate the virtues and deeds of the venerable and devoted father of the parish. Besides, at the altar of the Blessed Virgin, upon which the window looks down, Father Dowd said the greatest number of his masses. The colossal window on the Epistle side will contain a life size representation of St. Bridget, and the lower section will represent that glorious patroness of Irishwomen in the act of distributing alms to the poor.

We might also add that the different paintings that have for years hung upon the walls of St. Patrick's, and which were old and dim with the passage of half a century over their faces, have been entirely renovated, and to-day they appear as fresh and as perfect as when the last stroke of the artist's brush touched them into completion.

There is, however, something that is required even more than the proposed decorations and without which such decorations would be in danger of early deterioration. We refer to the exterior, especially the roof of the church. For over fifty years the present tin roof has withstood all the storms of summer and winter, and it has done admirably well

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