

Trinity Church in Boston, for example—are not Gothic at all. But the adherence to established types has left the architect free to bestow upon the proportions and detail of his design an amount of study quite out of the question where one has to invent a new type with each design.

Reasoning *a fortiori*, one would expect to find the noblest and worthiest examples of our church architecture among those erected by the Roman Catholics. It was the Church of Rome which, in the middle ages, evolved the unrivaled splendors of Gothic ecclesiastical architecture. As compared with the Protestant denominations, the Catholics of the United States have in general the signal advantage of much larger parishes, requiring churches of correspondingly increased dimensions. In small towns as well as great the Catholic churches are almost without exception the largest in the place. It is a regrettable fact that their architectural quality should so seldom correspond with their dimensions. They are frequently pretentious and showy buildings, but deplorably deficient in architectural character. They are badly and ignorantly designed, and in their internal treatment tawdriness and sham, both of construction and decoration, are often offensively conspicuous. They have neither the sobriety and dignity of the Episcopal churches, nor the straightforward utilitarianism and picturesque originality of the non-liturgical churches. Apparently the evil influence of the depraved taste of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which, under the lead of the Italian Jesuits, perpetrated such atrocities in plaster and sham marble throughout Europe, is not yet exhausted among us. Here in New York the only Catholic church of really conspicuous architectural merit is St. Patrick's Cathedral. This cathedral, undeniably the finest Catholic church in the United States, was the work of a Protestant architect, the late James Renwick.¹ All Saints', at 129th street and Madison Avenue, one of the most artistic of the more recently erected Catholic churches, was designed by his successors, the firm of Renwick, Aspinwall & Russell. Among the other Catholic churches in this city there is not one which one would care to visit a second time for the sake of its architectural beauty. The Paulist church at 59th street and Columbus Avenue is impressive by its size and the unusual severity and simplicity of its design, but this is a wholly negative merit, though a very unusual one.

It is not easy to determine how far this general inferiority of modern American Catholic churches is due to an actual dearth of architectural talent among the Romanists of the United States, how far to favoritism in the selection of architects, and how far to a general artistic insensibility. Whether the fault lies with the clergy or the people, I am not prepared to say. There is evidently somewhere a woful lack of artistic training. Yet the Catholic authorities seldom go outside of the ranks of their church for their architects, and men of very inferior training are intrusted with the designing of the most important and costly churches, which by their very size and costliness become the more objectionable as lasting monuments of wasted opportunity and artistic ignorance.

¹ It is a somewhat significant fact that very few among our leading architects are Catholics.

A reform in the architectural practice of the ancient Church would be a welcome consummation, and should be desired and promoted alike by those within and without «the pale.» A «campaign of education» in art, and especially in architecture, among the clergy and the more influential laity might in time rescue their church architecture from the *banalité* and unworthiness of its present condition. There are signs here and there of an artistic awakening in that Church. Will not its adherents rise to their opportunities and responsibilities toward the community in the matter?

COLUMBIA COLLEGE.

A. D. F. Hamlin.

A Shock to General Sheridan.

SECRETARY STANTON always held a taut official rein over the military commanders in the field during the war. Any manifestation of mere militarism, so repugnant to the spirit of a pure democracy like ours, was peculiarly distasteful to him, and at times he appears to have taken a savage pleasure in curbing the self-assertion of his generals. Intoxicated with the power of command and the popularity of success, some of the generals at times put themselves very much in evidence, and easily fell into a domineering manner bordering on insolence toward their inferiors in rank, and specially toward civilians having to do with military affairs. Occasionally one so far forgot himself as to treat the lion of the War Office with a flippant levity akin to contempt, but he never repeated the indiscretion. Anything like this instantly occasioned a reproof which was not soon forgotten. Military success always won Mr. Stanton's unalloyed good-will and cordial official support; but woe to the officer, high or low, who presumed upon this to overstep certain lines of respect and subordination which the Secretary thought due in their official relations. There was no hesitation on his part in «calling down» the greatest of them when the dignity of his office was to be maintained. There is no doubt that his influence was a wholesome one in this regard, though it is probable that he too sometimes abused the arbitrary power of his great office.

An illustration of this fierce characteristic of the War Secretary is found in a short and pithy correspondence, which the public has never seen, between General Sheridan and him in the winter of 1864. Sheridan, by his series of brilliant victories over the Confederate General Early in the Shenandoah Valley at Winchester, Fisher's Hill, and Cedar Creek, had immediately become a great military figure, a necessity and a tower of strength to the Union cause. He was exceedingly popular throughout the country, and enjoyed the entire confidence as well as the personal admiration of both Lincoln and Stanton. That he somewhat presumed upon this state of affairs is probable; for though he did not lose his head in this sudden rise to greatness, there is certainly observable for a time in his correspondence an «I-own-the-earth» air not found in it previously, nor, indeed, subsequent to the collision with Mr. Stanton of which I am about to give an account. But General Sheridan was young, and acutely appreciated the harvest of personal popularity and consequence that inevitably followed his well-earned military success. If, for the moment, as I suspect, he somewhat exaggerated his importance, he may well be forgiven under the circumstances.

From the time he entered upon the command in the valley, like his long line of predecessors, General Sheridan had been greatly annoyed and his plans sometimes disconcerted by senseless alarms of Confederate invasions in West Virginia, coupled with frantic appeals for instant aid. The official archives are fairly sandwiched with these alarmist telegrams addressed to the War Department from both the civil and the military authorities of that region. They came with such perennial regularity, and were so generally unfounded, that very little attention was paid to them by the Government, especially in the last year of the war, unless there was corroborative intelligence from other quarters.

On December 22, 1864, Governor A. I. Boreman telegraphed from Wheeling to Mr. Stanton that the Confederate General Rosser, with some 3000 cavalry, was supposed to be advancing upon Grafton and the western part of the State. This information was without the shadow of a foundation: in view of the military situation and the season, the supposititious movement of Rosser would have been absurd. But however inconsequential such a despatch appeared to be, Mr. Stanton followed his wise and invariable rule of promptly forwarding it to the commander of the department in the field, without suggestion or comment. In regular course Governor Boreman's telegram reached General Sheridan at Winchester.

This last West Virginia canard, closely following a number of preceding annoyances of a similar nature, exhausted the hot-headed Sheridan's small stock of Irish patience, and on its receipt in the dead hours of the night the general telegraphed to Mr. Stanton the following impromptu comments on the information:

WINCHESTER, VA., December 22, 1864. 11:30 P. M.
HON. E. M. STANTON, *Secretary of War*:

Governor Boreman's telegram received. If I were to make disposition of the troops of my command in accordance with the information received from the commanders in the Department of Western Virginia, whom I have found, as a general thing, always alarming in their reports and stupid in their duties and actions, I certainly would have my hands full. I believe many of them to be more interested in coal-oil than in the public service. It was only yesterday that Rosser was at Crab Bottom, according to their reports; on which, at the suggestion of General Crook, I sent a regiment to Beverly. It was only two or three days previous that Rosser was at Romney, etc. They have annoyed me until, with your sanction, I would take great pleasure in bringing some of them to grief.

P. H. SHERIDAN, *Major-General*.

Under whatever circumstances and to whomsoever addressed, such a despatch as the foregoing was unwarranted. In both substance and spirit it was not only in bad taste from a man of Sheridan's intelligence and altitude, but very indiscreet. Addressed to such another as Edwin M. Stanton, it was positively grotesque. Prior to Cedar Creek, Sheridan, bold and independent as he undoubtedly was, would have meekly borne a far greater infliction than Governor Boreman's telegram before being dragged into penning such a despatch to the redoubtable head of the War Department.

The next morning, when this flippant epistle was placed in the Secretary's hand, he appears to have been deeply incensed, and immediately sent to General Sheridan the following stinging rejoinder:

WAR DEPARTMENT, December 23, 1864.

MAJOR-GENERAL SHERIDAN, Winchester:

No one, that I am aware of, has asked you to make disposition of your troops in accordance with the information received from the commanders in the Department of Western Virginia. Governor Boreman's despatch was received in the night, and sent by the operator in accordance with general instructions to give military commanders every report that comes here in respect to the movements of the enemy in their commands. They are expected to form their own judgment of its value. It has been supposed that such information might be useful, and desired by you, as it is by other commanders who are your seniors in the service, without provoking improper insinuations against the State authorities or disrespectful reply. With your subordinate commanders you will take such action as you please, but such reports as come to this department in relation to the movements of the enemy will be forwarded as heretofore, and will be expected to be received with the respect due the department of which you are a subordinate.

EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War*.

I am told by one of the staff-officers that on the morning of December 23, 1864, the cold mountain air about military headquarters at Winchester was made blue by the sulphurous ebullitions of the major-general commanding. The annoyance caused by Governor Boreman's ridiculous news that Rosser was making a winter raid with cavalry into the mountains of West Virginia was slight compared to the bewildering shock experienced at that headquarters upon the receipt of Secretary Stanton's telegram. No doubt the successful little general raged and fumed for proper effect upon his admiring camp-followers at Winchester, but no evidence of his wrath was forthcoming at Washington. No reply to Stanton's telegram can be found in the War Department archives. General Sheridan at the moment was probably too full for utterance, and a little calm reflection afterward likely had the effect of cooling whatever resentment he felt.

I will venture the opinion that this decided check, delivered so coldly and suddenly, and coming so unexpectedly from a quarter in which he imagined himself safely entrenched, was of actual benefit to General Sheridan in toning down an element of devil-may-care recklessness in his character which made itself apparent only after his brilliant successes in the field. At all events, an immediate and significant change in the general tone of his official utterances is easily detected after this incident, particularly in his correspondence with the Washington authorities. But I do not perceive that it caused any change in the friendly relations of Stanton and Sheridan. It certainly cannot be gathered from the records that Sheridan bore any ill-will toward Mr. Stanton.

WAR RECORDS OFFICE, WASHINGTON. *Leslie J. Perry.*

Mr. Jett and the Capture of Booth.

In the article published in the April CENTURY giving a detailed account of the assassination of President Lincoln, the writer states that «Jett, for his connection with the affair, was jilted by his sweetheart, ostracized by his friends, and outlawed by his family.» Being a near relative of Mr. Jett, and our homes being only a mile apart at the time of these deplorable occurrences, I am able to say that while Mr. Jett did not marry the young lady designated by the writer as his «sweet-