

## Correspondence of the Journal.

Newport, Aug. 9, 1851.

On a hot day within a week, with a real live flesh and blood friend, and our dear Wordsworth,—a single thick tome, clear type, clean paper, and calf-skin,—we set off to spend a short serenely-soothing season on the Southern side of this "isle of peace," close by the shore of the sunny sea.

Newport, which has hibernated for almost three quarters of a century, is now under the genial sun-light of the noontide of fashion, warming into gay and vigorous life. However, the people resume in part their ancient torpor as soon as the fiery career of the dog-star is finished. From the time of Berkley until this day, often has the praise of Newport been sung. But man has done but little here, nature almost all. Man has done more to despoil than to renew. This island, which the good Bishop of Cloyne called the "Eden of America" a century ago, in some of its features, has materially changed during the long interval. Most of the fine trees with which it was once covered have fallen under the vandal stroke of the early settlers; and not a few grand old apple orchards went to make the pot boil when those "infernal Britishers" bore ruthless sway. Nothing does this island need so much throughout its whole extent as trees; and we feel that we give well-timed and valuable advice, when we say that it is the duty of every inhabitant to set about at once planting them.

Perhaps there is not in the wide circuit of the country so many sites admirably adapted for most charming landscape gardens as may be found on this island. A few have already been laid out, and they present in lawn and tiny grove, and miniature deer-park, the sweetest little bits of artificial scenery that the eye may desire to rest upon.

Since we last took upon ourselves to be a chronicler at this place, not many note-worthy changes have been made. We deem the principal architectural improvement of the town to be the new Romish church. This edifice has been in progress about two years, and will probably be completed during the present season. It occupies one of the pleasantest and most accessible locations in the southern part of the town, and presents towards the water a bold and noble aspect. The material of which it is constructed is red sandstone, laid in rustic courses, the surface presenting innumerable rude unchiseled prominences, producing shadows of great force, and when partly mantled with ivy, or some other parasitic plant, the whole will have a fine picturesque effect. The architecture of the building is after a design by that rigidly Catholic architect, Pugin, and when it is completed, we think it will be acknowledged the most thoroughly religious edifice in the State. We of course speak technically, for we deem the severe Gothic the strongest type for structures devoted to

religious uses. This church in particular satisfies us, because we discover in the carrying out of the details, less sham and miserable shift of hollow columns and stucco arches, than is generally exhibited in our crude American attempts. Here are real arches and a clere story of solid stone, resting upon stone columns cut in single shafts. We congratulate our enterprising friend, Father Fitton—who knows well enough that we have little sympathy, but all charity, for the dogmas of his church—upon having so nearly and successfully accomplished a work which has long been a favorite scheme of his heart. We regret that he did not feel justified in incurring the additional expense of stone mullions and window tracery, thereby rendering the design nearly perfect. The tower, which is to be of stone to the summit, will not be carried up at present, but is roofed in on a level with the apex of the nave. For beauty of architecture, and fitness for its purpose,—and by beauty here, we do not mean profuse display of finical ornament, stucco or fresco, streaky and tawdry, and tasteless, as in some hands the latter often is,—compared with this there is no church in Newport worthy of a moment's notice; and not many in the State that will surpass or equal it.

It is pleasant to see the cool silent porch, the deep-set doorway, the shadowy windows, the dim, and solemn, and mysterious roof, taking the place of the glaring, open portico, the innumerable diminutive pine sashed window openings, and the blinding, white-washed exteriors and interiors, of American conventicle erections.

In building churches and chapels, in city or country, the responsible trust of the choice of materials, design and finish, should be confided to persons of feeling and taste, and not left to any, qualified or not, who are willing to undertake it. Conceited ignorant persons may say what they please, but there is no safer way than to look into books and consult authorities. How many attractive little structures, dedicated to worship, built of substantial materials, after pure models, might we not have in our suburban and rural districts, if proper attention was paid to this matter. To be sure there have recently sprung up, under the influence of a better tendency, some commendable examples, which form exceptions; but in a ride through the country, we shall find that the general rule for a village church still is, a glaring white wooden shell, surmounted by a triangular or pyramidal roof, standing upon an open plane; the sacred enclosure, if enclosure there is, unprofaned by either shrub or shade tree. Some of these pastboard structures have been built not only in defiance of all rules of art, but with such a sedulous lack of taste as almost to shock common propriety. The same emotions should be felt and expressed in rearing the walls of a place of wor-

ship, as should ever afterwards animate those who enter within those walls for acts of devotion. The walls themselves, as Madame de Staël says of Gothic Architecture, should be a petrified religion.

In the eloquent words of Dr. Dewey,—“Architecture is a language, as truly as sculpture and painting—nay, as truly as literature, as poetry. The front of a majestic and beautiful edifice is known and read of all men. The stranger, the gazer, the passer by, though he read nothing else, reads that. And there are religious edifices in the world, whose effect in elevating the mind, cannot be transcended by any painting or statue, by any poem or eloquent discourse. And suppose that such poem or discourse could be so depicted as to be set up in an enduring form, and to make an instant and inevitable impression, by the way-side, where multitudes and generations are walking. Would it not be a goodly work to place it there? Would not the very idea, the bare possibility, of it awaken the utmost enthusiasm? But a magnificent piece of architecture is such a poem—is such a discourse. Inasmuch that I will venture to say, and I say it advisedly, and deliberately, that I would value as much, in any city or town, the effect of the York Minister in England, as if that great work of England’s sublimest bard—the ‘Paradise Lost.’ He who gazes upon such a structure, is melted, enraptured, overwhelmed with delight and veneration; he feels as he does when he gazes upon the sublime objects of nature. And to place a majestic cathedral in one of our cities—would that it might be done here!—would be as if you could place the loftiest mountain of the Alps in its neighborhood, to bear up the thoughts of its inhabitants to sublimity, to beauty, to heaven! Man is ever struggling upward to something above and beyond himself. He knows that the waves of his earthly fortunes and experiences roll in wild and fearful commotion around him, and he builds a Pharos, a light-house, to guide him upon the dark and stormy sea; trusting that as long as the lofty tower stands, it may bear the blessed light of guidance and hope to him and his children.”

We have given so much space to thoughts upon our favorite theme, awakened by viewing the fine specimen of ecclesiastical architecture reared by the Catholics, that we have quite overlooked the usual attractions of the place; and have even passed by that gay and goodly company, who feast and frolic, and regularly at 11 o’clock, renew their quotidian happiness at the beach, and afterwards roll or recline in meditative quiescence. Indeed, here is the place for serene and refined poetical abandonment by day, and gay and graceful

romancing by night—to those who like it. Hand in hand with gentle sister, or sweet cousin, or gentlest and sweetest of all, a lovely loved one, what can afford more exhilarating delight than a frolicsome bath at the beach. And to the spectator, what more picturesque than these aquatic masquerade morning balls, of mermaids, and mermen, and naiads, as from the long row of diminutive cells facing oceanward, emerge a numerous company, in many-hued, strangely diversified apparel.

To-day it is frowsy and muggishly warm for Newport. Last night it rained. How refreshingly pattered the drops upon the vine leaves by our window.

• J.