

CORRESPONDENCE.

CLOYNE NEW CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL.

SIR,—An announcement has been very generally made through the press, that the designing of the new Catholic Cathedral for the diocese of Oloyno, about to be erected at a large cost, and on a proportionally large scale, in the city of Queenstown, Ireland, has been entrusted to Messrs. Pugin and Ashlin, of Dublin. As many members of the profession are aware that it was originally intended there should be a competition for this important work, we think it necessary to inform them and those interested in the question of architectural competitions, how it has occurred that Messrs. Pugin and Ashlin have now acquired the work without the test of a competition. Early in this year we received a circular from the Reverend Dr. Rice, the secretary of the Building Committee, inviting a competition for the proposed new cathedral between Messrs. Pugin and Ashlin, Mr. J. J. McCarthy, and Mr. George Goldie. This circular contained the terms of the competition, and also requested the intending competitors to visit Queenstown for the purpose of receiving further instructions. We accordingly visited Queenstown in a few days, and saw the Right Rev. Dr. Kane, the bishop of the diocese, and the Very Rev. Dr. Rice. We expressed our satisfaction with the general fairness of the conditions for the competition proposed by the committee, but as one of these conditions was that the successful competitor should give security that his design could be executed for the stipulated sum of £25,000, we thought that on the other hand the other competing architects should have some guarantee that the committee would not, as has too frequently occurred, select a design, the execution of which would ultimately far exceed the proposed outlay. Furthermore, being aware that Messrs. Pugin and Ashlin had powerful family connections and other influences over the general committee, we considered that a perfectly impartial subcommittee of selection should be formed in the way to which we shall hereafter refer. We mentioned all this in conversation to the Bishop and Dr. Rice, and they highly approved of our proposals. His lordship said, moreover, that what we advised would ensure not only fair play for the competing architects, but would secure the committee from beginning involved in a scheme which would far exceed their resources, and he mentioned a case of the kind which occurred some time ago in the city of Cork. Finally, the Bishop and Dr. Rice suggested that we should put our terms in writing, and invite Messrs. Pugin and Ashlin to join us in requesting their adoption on the part of the committee. The Bishop said further that if Messrs. Pugin and Ashlin refused to join us in asking such reasonable conditions, it would produce a very bad impression on his lordship, and also on the committee, in their regard; but in such case he might say for certain that the request of two out of the three proposed competitors would be quite sufficient to secure the adoption by the committee of the conditions we proposed. We accordingly drew up the conditions of competition, a copy of which we enclose, and having signed them ourselves, forwarded them to Messrs. Pugin and Ashlin, requesting their signature. This, however, they declined to append, and as the bishops and Dr. Rice advised, we forwarded the conditions to the committee, requesting their adoption. The committee declined to adopt them, but drew up a new set of conditions, substantially the same as the first, except that it was provided that each of the unsuccessful competitors should be paid £200 instead of £75 as originally provided. After mature consideration, we decided, under the circumstances mentioned above, that our safest course was to adhere to our original conditions, and to ask Messrs. Pugin and Ashlin again to join us in requesting their adoption by the committee. Messrs. Pugin and Ashlin again declined, adding that they had addressed their reasons for so acting

several months previously to the committee. We then once more requested the committee to adopt our conditions, urging that we saw no other course by which fair play in judging of the merits of the designs could be ensured. The only assurance we could get on that point was that the committee had passed a resolution that fair play should be shown. The fact, however, of their refusing to accede to conditions which the Bishop and Dr. Rice (and, we think, all impartial people) consider fair and reasonable, joined with the persistent refusal of Messrs. Pugin and Ashlin to associate themselves with us in our endeavours on behalf of fair play, left us far from satisfied that a simple resolution on the part of the committee was a sufficient guarantee that justice would be done in the matter. In reply to our second application, the committee, through their honorary secretary, invited us either to accept their conditions or to decline the competition. In reply, we expressed our unwillingness to decline so important a competition, and repeated our hope that the committee would, after all, adopt our terms. With this the correspondence ended, for the newspapers very shortly announced that Messrs. Pugin and Ashlin were appointed the architect of the new cathedral. From this simple statement of facts, we think our professional brethren and those who take an interest in such subjects, will be enabled to appreciate the exact value of the chances of fair play that existed in the Cloyne Cathedral Competition as proposed by the committee. We are, &c.,

J. J. MCOARTHY, R.H.A., M.R.I.A.I.
GEORGE GOLDIE, M.R.I.B.A.

The following are the conditions of competition referred to:

We, two of the architects competing for the new Catholic Cathedral of Cloyne, to be erected in Queenstown, request that the following conditions be added to those stated in the Rev. Dr. Rice's circular of January 21, 1867:

1. That a committee of seven for examining the plans and deciding on their merits be constituted and appointed in the following manner:—The bishop and administrator of Queenstown parish to be ex-officio members; three members to be appointed by the competing architects one by each, and two architects of eminence not connected with the competition to be appointed by the general committee.

2. That the committee so constituted shall examine the plans and specifications and arrange them in their order of merit as to their beauty, commodiousness, and cheapness.

3. That all the plans and specifications shall remain in the hands of the bishop and administrator of Queenstown parish till the expiration of twelve calendar months after the actual commencement of the building, and that they are not to be returned to the architects on any pretext whatever until the expiration of the time named.

4. That the architects' securities required by the resolution No. 1 be obtained in the following manner:—The architect whose competition, plans, and specification are deemed by the committee of selection first in order of merit, shall furnish all supplemental drawings and specifications that may be necessary to enable builders to prepare tenders. Such supplemental drawings and specifications not to induce any alterations or deviations from the original plans, but are to be merely illustrative of them.

5. That a sub-committee of selection be appointed, to consist of the Bishop of Cloyne, the Administrator of Queenstown parish, three gentlemen not belonging to the architectural profession (one to be named by each competitor), and two architects of eminence, to be selected by the five foregoing members. That the successful competitor shall be the gentleman whose plans shall, in the opinion of the foregoing sub-committee of selection, guarantee the most beautiful, commodious, and cheapest building.

6. That the plans and specifications so prepared be advertised for tenders from competent builders; and if no respectable builders (with two solvent and approved securities for the amount of £5,000) will undertake to build the cathedral according to said plans and specifications for the sum of £25,000, the said plans and specifications are to be entirely rejected and the architect of them to be dismissed from all further share in the competition, or in the erection of the cathedral, and is to receive no compensation whatever, and is to have no share of the sum of £150 mentioned in the fifth resolution of the committee meeting of the 20th January, 1867.

7. That in the event of the plans considered first

in order of merit being rejected as above described, the architect of the second plan in order of merit shall be directed to proceed as mentioned in condition 4. And in the event of such second plan being rejected for the same cause as the first, then the plan considered third in order of merit shall be advertised for tenders in the same way as the two others, and if it be found impossible to have the cathedral built according to it for £25,000, said plan and its architect shall be rejected without compensation, as in the two preceding cases.

8. That each of the competing architects shall furnish with his plans a map and section of the site to the same scale as the plans, sections, and elevations, showing the position of the cathedral by a block plan.

9. That the part of the resolution 5, of the committee meeting of January 20th, 1867, beginning with the word "less" and ending with the word "candidates" be omitted, and the following substituted for it, "less the sum of £200, which £200, with £200 more, will be divided as follow"—£50 to the unsuccessful competitors, £50 each to the two architects of the sub-committee of selection," who shall be required to report to the general committee and to the sub-committee of selection whether the supplemental drawing, and specifications required by clause 4 are in strict accordance, with, and are merely illustrative of, the original designs.

10. That the architect who shall be deemed by the sub-committee of selection the successful competitor shall prepare working plans and specifications upon which estimates can be made. That these plans and specifications shall be advertised for tenders, and that if no competent builder (who will give solvent security to the amount of £10,000) can be found to undertake the work for £25,000, then the plans of the so-called successful competitor are to be rejected, and their author is to receive no compensation whatever; and the bishop and building committee do further guarantee that they will not engage under any circumstances whatever aforesaid architect in the designing or erecting of Cloyne Cathedral.

11. That the competition plans and specification be lodged in the hands of the Rev. Dr. Rice before the 1st day of January, 1868, and that the award of the committee of selection be communicated to the competitors before the expiration of six weeks from that date.

12. That the committee will furnish the three competing architects with a map and levels of the site of the proposed cathedral at as early a date as possible.

13. That the architect's plans, sections, and elevations be drawn to an uniform scale of 8ft. to 1in., and that Indian ink only shall be used for the drawings of plans, elevations, and sections. The perspectives only may be coloured.

14. That the specification referred to by the first resolution of January 20th, 1867, be only general, stating the qualities of the several materials to be used in the different parts of the work, and descriptive of the arrangement of the plan and the general method of construction to be adopted in carrying it into effect.

SIR,—A brief recapitulation of facts, without any comment on our part, will be a sufficient answer to the lengthy communication from Messrs., McCarthy and Goldie on the above subject, which appeared in your journal of the 11th inst.

Three gentlemen are invited to enter a competition on certain stated conditions. Two of the gentlemen thus invited, without consulting the third, coalesce for the purpose of effecting a total alteration of the terms of the said competition. They endeavour to impose upon the committee a set of amended conditions, drawn up and signed by themselves, and then send them to the third competitor for signature, having, however, previously done their utmost to secure two things:

1st. That their amended conditions 'be binding on the third competitor, whether he signed them or not.

2nd. That his refusal to sign would make a bad impression on the committee.

The third competitor, first, not recognizing the right of the other two gentlemen to interfere in the manner they had done, and, second, seeing no reason for departing from the original conditions, which he had already unreservedly accepted, refuses to sign. At last, after repeated but ineffectual efforts on the part of the coalition to force their "amended conditions" upon the committee, and obtain the signature of the third competitor thereto, the committee finally desires the two dissatisfied competitors either to accept or decline the competition on the original terms, with a minor alteration. The two still attempt to enforce their amendments, and thereupon the third competitor is absolutely chosen.

It is the old story of the "biter bit," or "too clever by half."

Pugin and Ashlin
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