

ARCHITECTURAL COGITATIONS IN
CORK.

A WRITER, under the *nom de plume* of "Vigilans," in the *Limerick Chronicle*, furnishes some amusing social and architectural musings respecting his "Trips to Cork." His description of St. Finbar's Cathedral is certainly unique. We will not spoil it by criticism:—

"The exterior appearance of the cathedral is very imposing, the effect being greatly heightened by its three towers and spires, its numerous buttresses, and the semicircular apse at the end of the chancel, but there appeared to me an oppressive air of heaviness and tremendous solidity, and a painful want of architectural lightness and grace. My principal stricture, however, in this respect, is concerned with the interior of the edifice. There, even omitting the same enormous heaviness, the extreme narrowness and vast height, I observed two objects which I do not hesitate to call about the ugliest I have ever beheld in a place of worship—the organ-case and the pulpit. The organ, a very large instrument, stands in a gallery just large enough to contain it and nothing to spare, over the great front entrance door between the two smaller towers. Its front consists of a large number of metal pipes, painted in some undecided and sad colour, retained in their places by many square, uncompromising perpendicular beams of wood, which are crossed in their turn by other equally heavy beams at right angles, thus presenting a facade of square apertures not remotely suggestive of a colossal apothecary's shop with the drawers taken out. Whatever could have possessed any organ-builder to design such a case, or any architect to approve of it, is a question the elucidation of which I leave to far wiser heads than mine. The pulpit, situated at an angle in one of the transepts, is of stone or marble, very low, but making up for its want of height in its vast redundancy of diameter. It seemed singularly surrounded by a broad, dark-coloured band, apparently of metal. On the whole, its resemblance to some large vat was, to my mind, very great. Practically, I did not altogether admire the building, and that for two reasons. In the first place, the choir was placed at what I would call an absurdly great distance from the organ; and secondly, its capacity for accommodating a congregation seemed commensurate neither with its great cost nor with its requirements. At a rough calculation, I concluded that not more than 400 people at the outside could sit (or stand) within view of the pulpit, whereas the ordinary parish church could, if I do not greatly err, accommodate nearly double the number. Nevertheless, despite these honest jottings of my individual opinion, I repeat my previously expressed admiration of the splendid structure—being, as it is, a vast and durable monument of the energy, piety, and liberality of the Protestants of Cork,—led by the example and cheered by the unflagging zeal of their venerable and venerated bishop [the late Dr. Gregg].

St. Finbar's Cathedral is not yet finished, but "Vigilans" says he is reluctantly compelled to deprecate the style of its construction on two grounds—the one, æsthetic, the other, practical. On the whole, the architecture is open to criticism, and so is the critic.

[Taken from *Irish Builder*, Vol. XX, 1878, p.163]