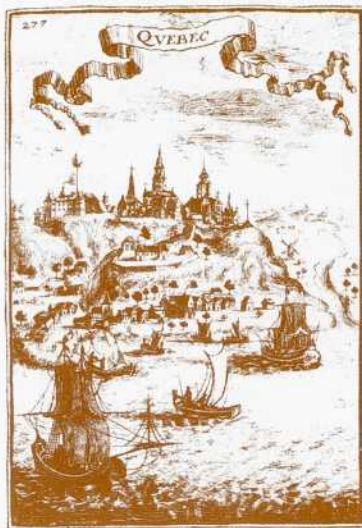


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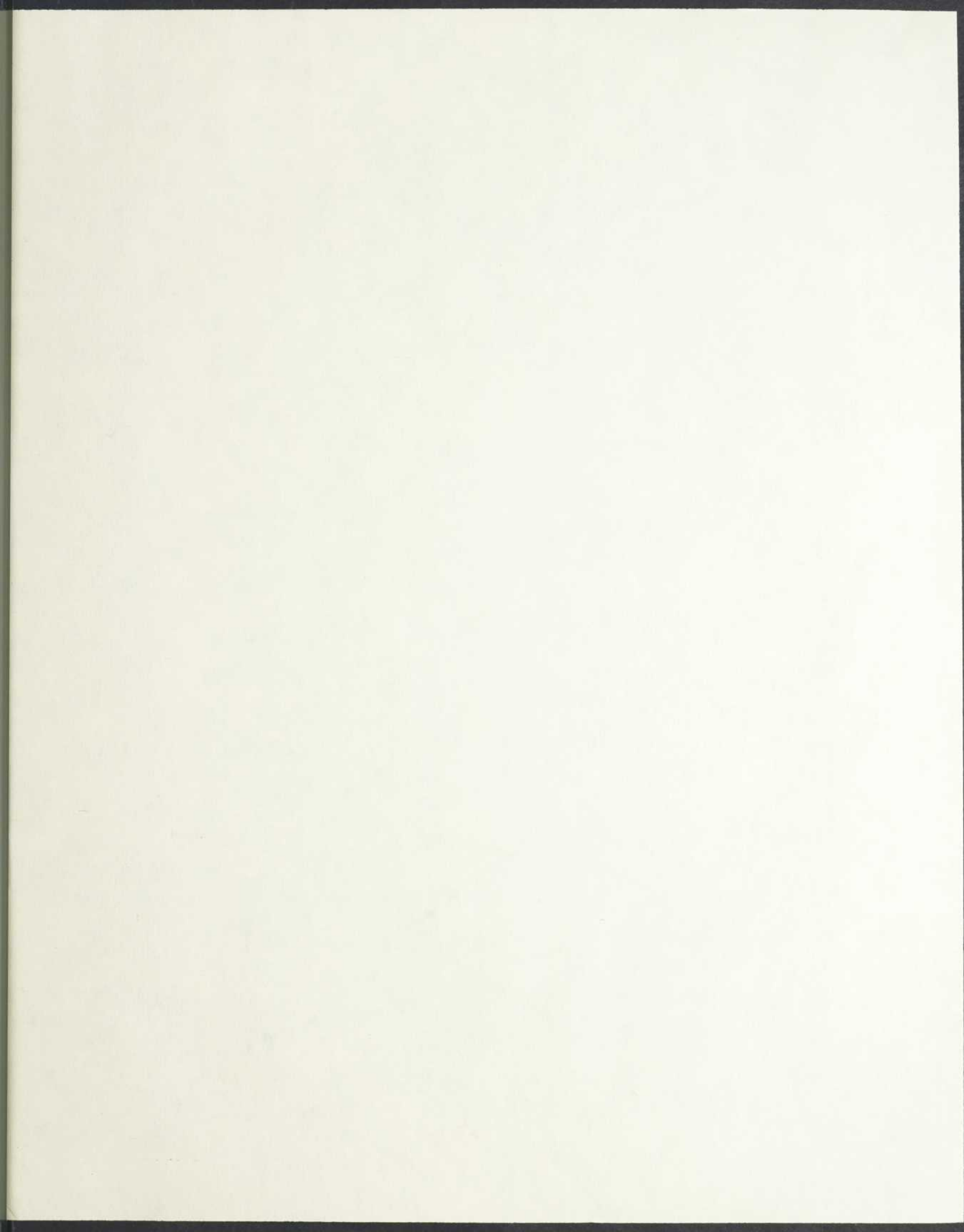
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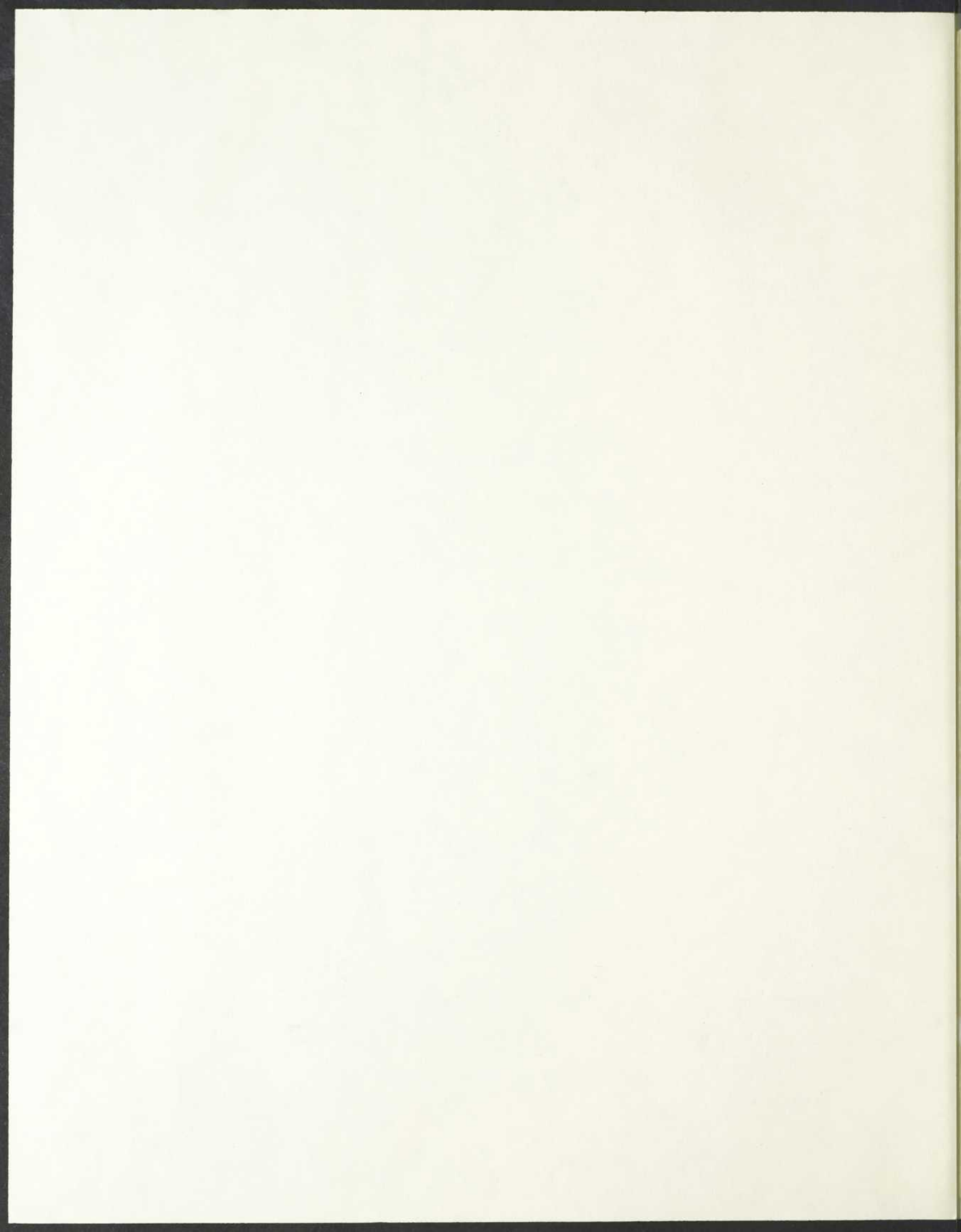
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Old Churches and Church Carving in the
Province of Quebec

by

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TERREBONNE CHURCH
Mid-nineteenth century, now demolished

Old Churches and Church Carving in the Province of Quebec

BY PROFESSOR RAMSAY TRAQUAIR, M.A. (HON.) MCGILL UNIVERSITY [F.]

THE researches of the Abbé Gosselin have shown us that the founders of New France on the banks of the St. Lawrence gave great attention to the education of the colonists. A seminary was founded in Quebec to provide a classical and literary training for those destined for the Church or the professions and within it schools were formed to teach agriculture and the "arts et métiers." In these the children of the colonists were instructed in those trades which were necessary for the young colony, in carpentry, masonwork, leatherwork, smithing, tailoring and the fine arts as well as in reading, writing and simple arithmetic.*

The exact date at which Mgr. de Laval founded his "ecole des arts et métiers" is not known. The Abbé Gosselin places it at 1668, and it was certainly in exist-

* L'Abbé Amédée Gosselin. *L'Instruction au Canada*, 1635-1760. Quebec 1911.

ence shortly after that date, for some forty names have been preserved in the archives of the seminary at Quebec of men who passed through it between 1671 and 1685. La Tour, in his *Memoires de la vie de Mgr. de Laval* writes of it: "Ils réussissent beaucoup mieux dans les ouvrages des mains. Les arts y sont portées a une grande perfection et on y trouve en tous genres de fort bons ouvriers." The schools had two branches, one connected with the seminary at Quebec the other, which was particularly devoted to agriculture, at St. Joachim, a village some thirty miles below Quebec on the St. Lawrence. In both of these schools instruction was given in architecture, painting, sculpture and gilding.

A document in the archives of the seminary, dated 1685, and entitled "Instructions pour les manufactures," says of the school at St. Joachim: "L'on y enseigne actuellement la menuiserie, la sculpture, la

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peinture, la dorure pour l'ornement des églises la maçonnerie et la charpente." La Potherie, writing of the chapel of the seminary, which was built in 1693 and burned in 1701, says: "La sculpture, que l'on estime 10,000 écus, en est très belle; elle a été faite par les séminaristes, qui n'ont rien épargné pour mettre l'ouvrage dans sa perfection. Le maître autel est un ouvrage d'architecture à la corinthienne, les murailles sont revêtues de lambris et des sculptures dans lesquels sont plusieurs grands tableaux. Les ornements qui les accompagnent se vont terminer sous la corniche de la voûte qui est à pans, sous lesquels sont des compartiments en losange accompagnés d'ornements en sculpture peints et dorés."*

From the records of the seminary at Quebec M. Gosselin has been able to obtain the names of some of the early masters of sculpture in these schools. In 1675 Michel Fauchois and Samuel Genner were engaged as sculptors at a yearly salary of 300 livres; from 1690 we have the names of Mallet and Jacques le Blond de Latour. The latter was an architect, sculptor and painter from Bordeaux, evidently a well-trained and able man, for of him Mgr. de Laval wrote that if it was desired some day to rebuild the cathedral, he would be of assistance.

Le Blond was in charge of the artistic teaching both at Quebec and at St. Joachim from 1690 to 1696. He then entered the Church, but evidently continued to give artistic instruction as an ecclesiastic until 1706 when he was ordained priest. M. Bédard in 1786 wrote of Le Blond: "Il fut un excellent sculpteur qui forma des élèves qui partagèrent avec lui l'honneur du sacerdoce ainsi que l'art de manier le ciseau. Les rétables de Ste. Anne, du Château Richer de l'Ange Gardien déposent en leur faveur." This was written some eighty years after the work was done, but there still remain old carvings and woodwork at Ste. Anne de Beaupré and Ange Gardien which may be the work of Le Blond and his pupils.

These citations show that at the end of the seventeenth century there was in Canada a well-trained body of craftsman, sculptors and painters. They were trained under the wing of the Church and seem to have regarded themselves as devoted to her service. Indeed we read in the ancient regulations of the Petit Séminaire: "Ils auront tous quelques mestiers pour s'occuper hors le temps de leurs exercices et tascheront que leurs travaux soient utiles au Séminaire et aux églises. Pour ce sujet ils les feront avec obéissance et ne pourront s'engager à aucun travail pour ceux du dehors sans en avoir eu la permission auparavant. . . ." Certain it is that whilst the old churches are full of elaborate wood-carvings, the old houses or public buildings show no such richness of decoration.

* *Histoire de l'Amérique Septentrionale*, I., p. 235, quoted by Gosselin.

Civil buildings were, of course, more exposed to damage and destruction and the people were not very rich; still it does seem probable that the sculptors and decorators of Quebec thought of themselves as having a peculiar connection with the Church.

This "school of St. Joachim" was interrupted by the English invasion of 1690, but was afterwards resumed. It appears to have become a school of agriculture after 1715, though it seems possible that artistic teaching was continued as late as 1740. But though it vanished early in the eighteenth century, yet it left behind it a school of Canadian artists with a definite tradition of sculpture, woodcarving, and decoration. The stream of immigration from France died out by the first quarter of the eighteenth century, never to be resumed. We know that from time to time skilled craftsmen came from France and founded families in French Quebec, but the work with which we have to deal was designed and executed by French Canadians trained in the province. These men kept in touch with the artistic progress of their motherland, as is proved by the character of their work; they were acquainted with the works of Vignola and with the "grand" and the "petit Blondel," and they built upon a foundation of French seventeenth-century craftsmanship. But their work is not quite that of France; it shows just those variations and developments which we should expect to find in a colonial school far separated from the motherland; much more separated indeed in its later days than was the English colonial school of America. The training must have been thorough, for the work shows a high degree of technical excellence.

The development of this Canadian art and the succession of its craftsmen can be traced, though not yet in full detail, from the last years of the seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth. Not till then did the stream of tradition fail, so that we find during the first half of the nineteenth century work being executed in the Province of Quebec whose traditions are those of the century earlier, still untouched by the revival schools which were dominant in both Europe and America.

The school is one of wood carving applied to the decoration of churches, and some account must be given of the general character of the buildings and the methods of building. The technical terms for various parts of the church used in the old records from which we draw much of our information are not quite those in use in France. They will be used here with the meaning which they have in the French Canadian records.

Jubé means a gallery, usually at the west end, but it may be in any other part of the church. All but the smallest churches had a western gallery, or were intended to have one.

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Rétable is the term used for the wall decoration of the choir or sanctuary, including the wall behind the side altars.

Tabernacle includes the entire superstructure of the altar, the tabernacle, grades and reredos. It stands free of the wall and the *rétable* passes behind it.

Tombeau or *cadre d'autel* is the altar table.

Autel usually means the altar table, but is a little ambiguous and may include *tombeau* and *tabernacle*.

The *banc d'œuvre* is the pew reserved for the churchwardens, often an important architectural feature in the church.

The first churches were of wood; until about 1730 stone churches must have been quite uncommon. All these old wooden churches have long ago been replaced in stone, and those which we see to-day are usually the second or third churches built on the site. In these rebuildings little respect was shown for the old edifice; usually it and its decoration disappear entirely, though an old altar might be preserved or given to some other church.

The walls are of rubble of field stones with cut stone used only for door or window dressings. The mason work is very simple—indeed a stone moulding of any kind is usually a sign of nineteenth-century building. The rubble is well built, heavily pointed and usually of a very pleasant texture.

The church in plan is a broad hall, without aisles, sometimes with short transepts and terminating in a semicircular or rectangular choir. The semicircular apse is the more usual, but the rectangular form occurs at all periods. There are three altars: in the choir the high altar, in the transepts or on the return ends of the nave walls the side altars which constitute the chapels. Western galleries are usual and now hold the organ. They are sometimes double, but this is an addition to the original scheme.

The west front is gabled with a central door and in large churches two lateral doors. The main door was often enclosed in a wooden porch which might be of some elaboration; in latter times a simple, rather crude, stone treatment was often substituted for the wooden porch. Above the door is a circular window and very frequently two or more niches to take wooden statues. The gable is surmounted by a wooden belfry in one or two storeys, terminating in a slender *flèche* and an iron cross. These *flèches* were constantly falling into bad repair and being rebuilt. It seems probable that the very slender, needle-like *flèche* which to-day is so characteristic a feature of the Quebec landscape was not used until the end of the eighteenth century, and that previous to that date the belfries were covered by domical, shingled roofs of the type well known in French architecture.

The nave is lighted by two or three large arched windows, the choir usually by one on each side. Opening

from the back of the choir by one or two doors is the sacristy, in which are kept the church ornaments and vestments. This is often fitted with an altar and seats and serves as a chapel. According to the size of the church there will be additional rooms grouped about the sacristy, often of quite temporary construction.

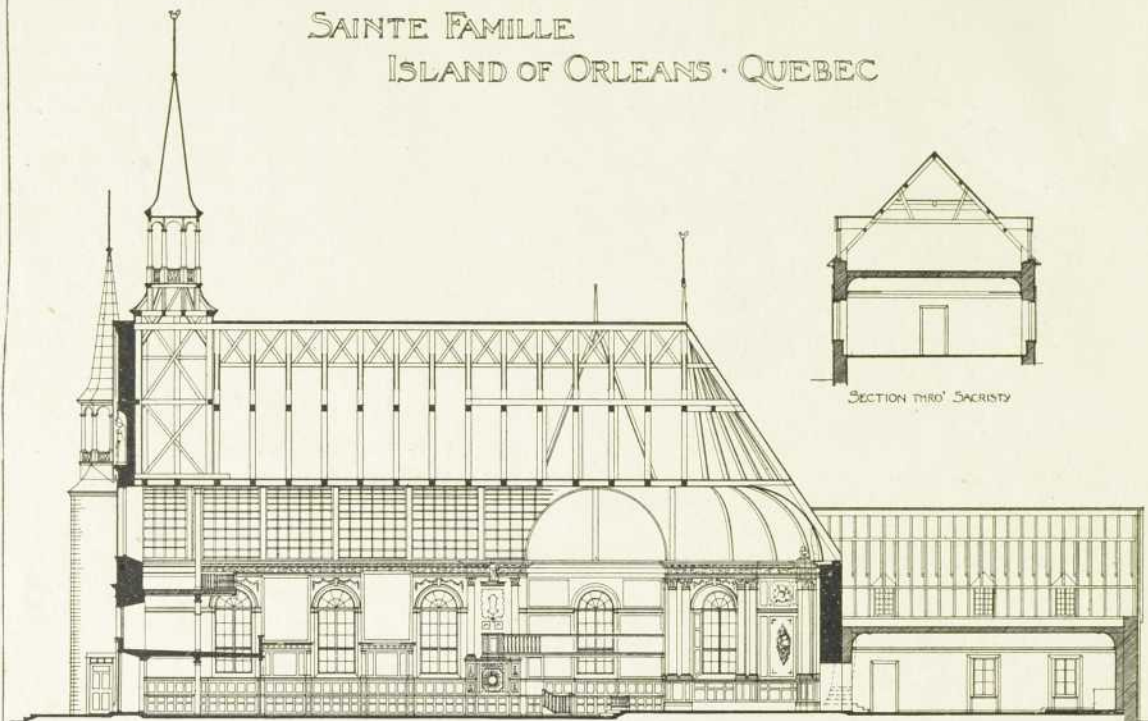
The roofs are of wood, steeply pitched and are covered with wooden shingles or with tiles of tin plate laid diagonally. It is difficult to say at what time the "tin tiles" were introduced, but they were certainly in use as a fire protection in Quebec city in the middle of the eighteenth century. They make a very good roof for a snowy climate and have by no means a bad appearance, though lacking the texture of the wood shingles.

The framing is of large square axe-hewn timbers halved or tenoned together and pinned with wooden pins in the manner of the seventeenth century in France. This construction was used in Quebec as late as 1850 and makes it practically impossible to distinguish a roof of early from one of later date excepting by the appearance of the wood. The usual form for a large roof, say of 45 or 50 feet span, is a double collar with struts and windbracing, the couples set at about 5 or 6 feet centres. The roofs of the nave and choir are ceiled with elliptical boarded vaults which are decorated with ribs, coffers, and arabesques of carved wood pinned on to the boarding. Plaster is used only as a wall covering, never in decoration; plaster ornament is always quite recent.

The nave walls are sometimes completely panelled, sometimes simply plastered, the decoration being reserved to the sanctuary. This is treated with pilasters or columns of the Corinthian order set on a dado and enclosing panels which are usually treated with trophies of ecclesiastical objects, swags, vases of flowers, husk trails, rosettes and similar forms. This is the *rétable*. This part of the church was constantly being redecorated, and so far we have been unable to verify any *rétable* earlier than the end of the eighteenth century, whilst most of the examples are from the early nineteenth century. The general scheme of decoration for the *rétable* seems to have been quite firmly established and variations are mainly in the detail.

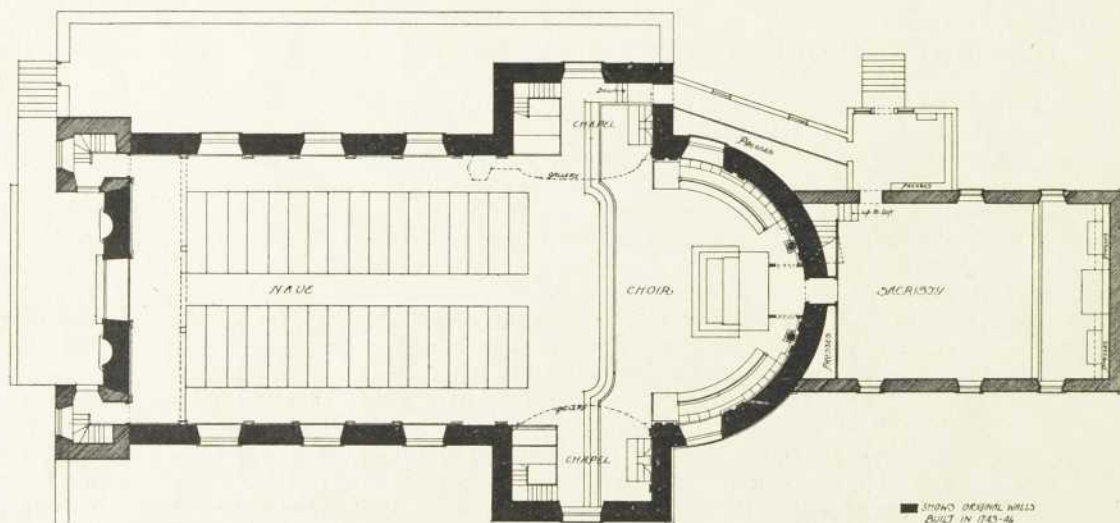
The altars, tabernacles and tombeaux were naturally the objects of particular attention. The table or tombeau is usually of the console form with carved angle trusses connected by a decoration of scrolls, *rocaille* work and swags. This type seems to have come in about the end of the eighteenth century; before that time the altars were probably square. The tabernacles are very elaborate. They vary very much in design and it will probably be possible to work out the manner in which they developed. In the centre is the small tabernacle, with on either side

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SECTION THRO' SACRISTY

LONGITUDINAL SECTION



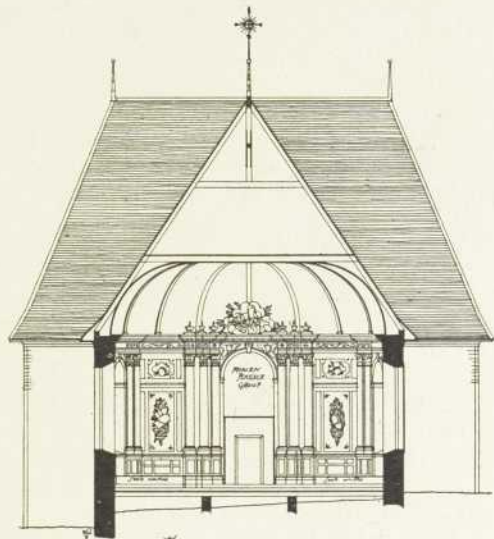
PLAN



■ SHOWS ORIGINAL WALLS
BUILT IN 1743-46
▨ SHOWS ADDITIONS
WEST WALLS NOT
CENTRAL APRIL 1845
SACRISTY 1852

SAINTE FAMILLE, ISLAND OF ORLEANS
Measured drawing of plan and section

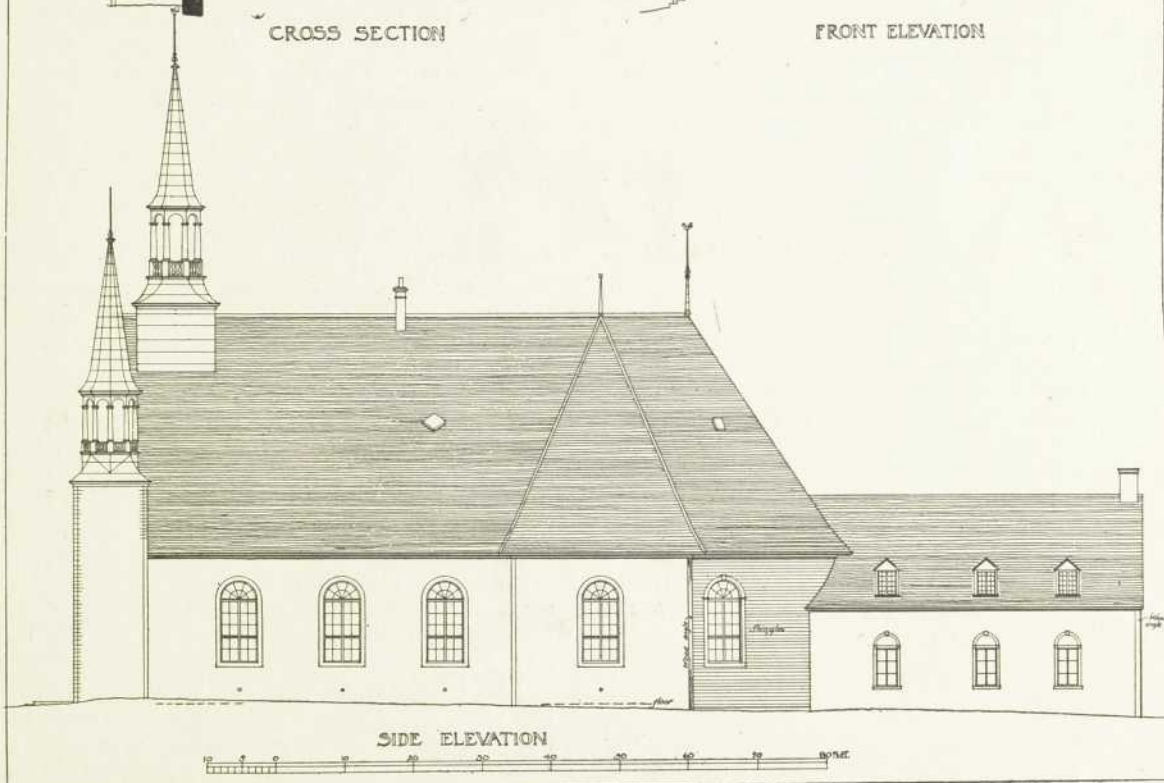
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CROSS SECTION



FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION

SAINTE FAMILLE, ISLAND OF ORLEANS
Elevations and section

two grades for candlesticks. Above this is a Corinthian order which in the centre forms a semicircular niche surmounted by a canopy of four or five carved trusses. All is profusely covered with carving and gilt. This gilding was a very expensive operation and was a speciality of the nuns. We have frequent mention of payments for gilding to the "Dames de la Congregation" or to "Les Religieuses."

The carving is all "attached" and this requires a word of explanation. In the *rétable*, or where a considerable space of wall was to be decorated, the wall was first covered with boarding into which were framed the pilasters, entablature, dado panelling and similar features. The carving was then pinned on to the boarded spaces, forming the panels and centre-pieces. At times the boarded backing would become decayed and then it was always possible to take off the carving, renew the boarding and replace the ornament, possibly not quite according to the old pattern. So we may have old carving in quite a new design. In altars, tabernacles and pulpits a similar *appliqué* method was very much used. The design is in consequence often of a plaster type, though carried out in carved wood.

Figure sculpture is important. It varies from statues over 6 feet high for the exterior to little figures for the altar. These are cut in solid wood, usually pine. Low relief figure-carving was much used in the altar-pieces and pulpits. The quality naturally varies; some of the figures are crude, but the best reach a very high level both of execution and of beauty.

Church ornaments such as candlesticks are usually of carved wood. The great Easter candlesticks, some 5 feet high, are often well designed and by well-known craftsmen; unfortunately these have too often been replaced by poor metal substitutes.

The school is essentially one of wood-carving; the carvers, who were also the designers, were known as "sculpteur" or "maître sculpteur," and seem to have kept fairly large establishments for the supply of church decorations and ornaments. The only other craftsman who produced any work of artistic merit was the smith. Wrought iron crosses were required for the spires and in the churchyards, and these are often of graceful and thoroughly iron design.

We occasionally hear of an "architecte" in the old records; he seems rather to have been a structural expert whom one consulted occasionally than a designer of buildings. Possibly the architect was considered necessary for public buildings or for fortifications. Certainly he never appears as building or designing a church until the end of the eighteenth century. Then we find the title "architecte" gradually displacing "sculpteur."

The church affairs are managed by the *curé* and a board of *marguilliers*, or churchwardens, who form the

fabrique. These *marguilliers* are elected annually by the parishioners and sit in a special pew, the *banc d'œuvre*, which is often elaborately decorated. The *fabrique* authorises all expenditures and makes all contracts, and its records are kept in the *Actes de la Fabrique* and the *Comptes de la Fabrique*. These records are the main source of our information; they are usually very fully kept, giving the names of the craftsmen, the amounts paid, the description of the work, and an inventory from time to time.

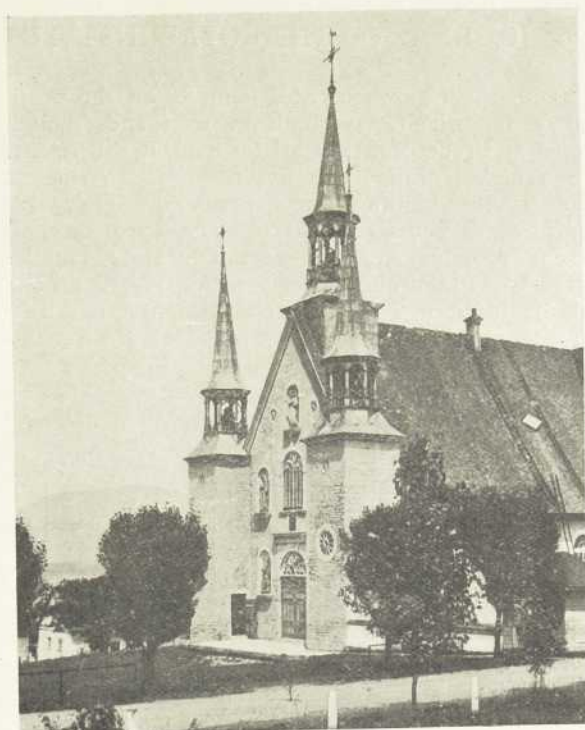
There is much interesting work still preserved in the Quebec churches of which only a small part has been critically examined. The Department of the Archives at Quebec has published a useful book, *Les vieilles Eglises de la Province de Québec*, giving good photographs and a short account of twenty-eight of the older churches. But there still remains a very large amount of work to be done before we can write the full history of the old French Canadian architecture. Our record is still very imperfect, and we are not really acquainted with the richness of the material. We have, to begin with, some woodwork which considerations of style inclines us to place in the end of the seventeenth or beginning of the eighteenth century. The tabernacle of the High Altar at Ange Gardien, the tabernacles of the old church at Ste. Anne de Beaupré, the chapel of the Hôpital Général at Quebec and of the church at Indian Lorette are probably of this date, and it is to be hoped that the records may give us some information upon them. We know that Leblond de Latour worked on the *rétables* at Ste. Anne and Ange Gardien, and the records of the latter church have been examined, unfortunately with only negative result, but it is probable that the elaborately carved Corinthian columns in the present *rétable* are his work. The whole *rétable* has, however, been reconstructed in later times. Parts of the old woodwork of Ste. Anne have been preserved, and they also may be actually by Latour.

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century we come to the work of Les Vasseurs (later Levasseur), a celebrated family of sculptors of whom at least two generations worked in Quebec during the middle of the eighteenth century. We know of Noël Levasseur (1680-1740), François Noël (born 1703) and Jean Baptiste Antoine (1717-1775), and there is probably a confusion with another family of the same name some of whose members seem to have been workers in wood. In the accounts they are usually referred to simply as "Les Vasseurs."

The Island of Orleans lies in the St. Lawrence a few miles down from Quebec. A little more inaccessible than the mainland, it has preserved several churches from the early years of the eighteenth century.



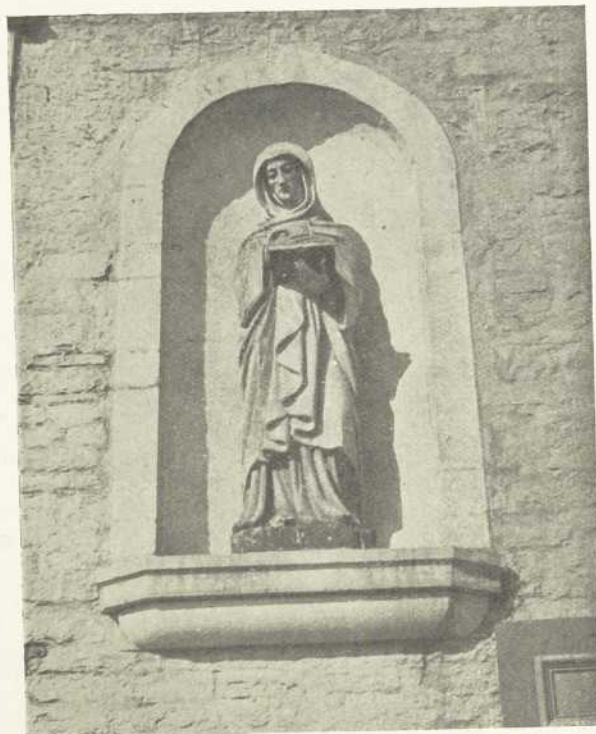
ST. LAURENT, ISLAND OF ORLEANS
The old church built about 1690 and demolished in
the nineteenth century



STE. FAMILLE, ISLAND OF ORLEANS
The front



ST. JOACHIM
Wood statue from the front of Ste. Famille
Les Vasseurs, 1749



STE. ANNA
Wood statue from the front of Ste. Famille
Les Vasseurs, 1749

Of these the Church of Ste. Famille, on the north side of the island, was built in 1743 and, though altered and redecorated at a later date, it still retains in the niches of its front five fine wooden statues, 6 feet 6 inches high, of pine and painted. They were made by the Levasseurs in 1748 and 1749 for their present position and represent the Holy Family. In the two lower niches are Ste. Anna with a book and St. Joachim with his crook and nest of birds, above them are St. Joseph with the flowering rod and



STE. FAMILLE: THE INTERIOR
Altar by Les Vasseurs, 1740. Rétable by Thomas
Baillargé, 1820-25

Our Lady, in the gable is Our Lord as a child. They are vigorously carved with an almost mediaeval quality; the features are clearly cut and the draperies bold. It is quite evident that the sculptors knew how to cut statues for an exterior light and for a high position. We have not many statues of this quality, but Dr. Marius Barbeau found at Les Eboulements three large figures, evidently watching disciples from a Calvary or similar group. They are of the same type and we may hope to find other examples.

The front of Ste. Famille is unique and very effective, though it is almost the result of an accident. Originally the church had the usual single *flèche*, but in 1807

two additional bells were given to the church and the *curé*, who was a man of some architectural knowledge, had the two side towers built to hold them. The three spires at different levels and on different planes make a very successful group.

The high altar of this church is also by the Levasseurs in 1749. The panels between the columns are added, for the colonnade was probably originally open. A more complete example of the same type is the tabernacle originally in the church of St. François de Sales, but now in the boundary chapel, made in 1771-73, probably by François Noël Levasseur. In this the grades are covered with *rocaille* scrollwork and are surmounted by Corinthian columns forming a niche which carries a scroll canopy and a cross. The loose scrollwork is in these examples kept within bounds by the rigid lines of the framework.

This church also possesses a fine Easter candlestick in carved wood which is described in the inventory of 1789 by M. Le Guerné, the *curé*: "Un beau chandelier paschal par Noël Le Vasseur cy-devant à l'usage de la Cathédrale qui a substitué un plus grand d'un assez triste gout. Je l'ai acheté 36 li de feu Connefroy."

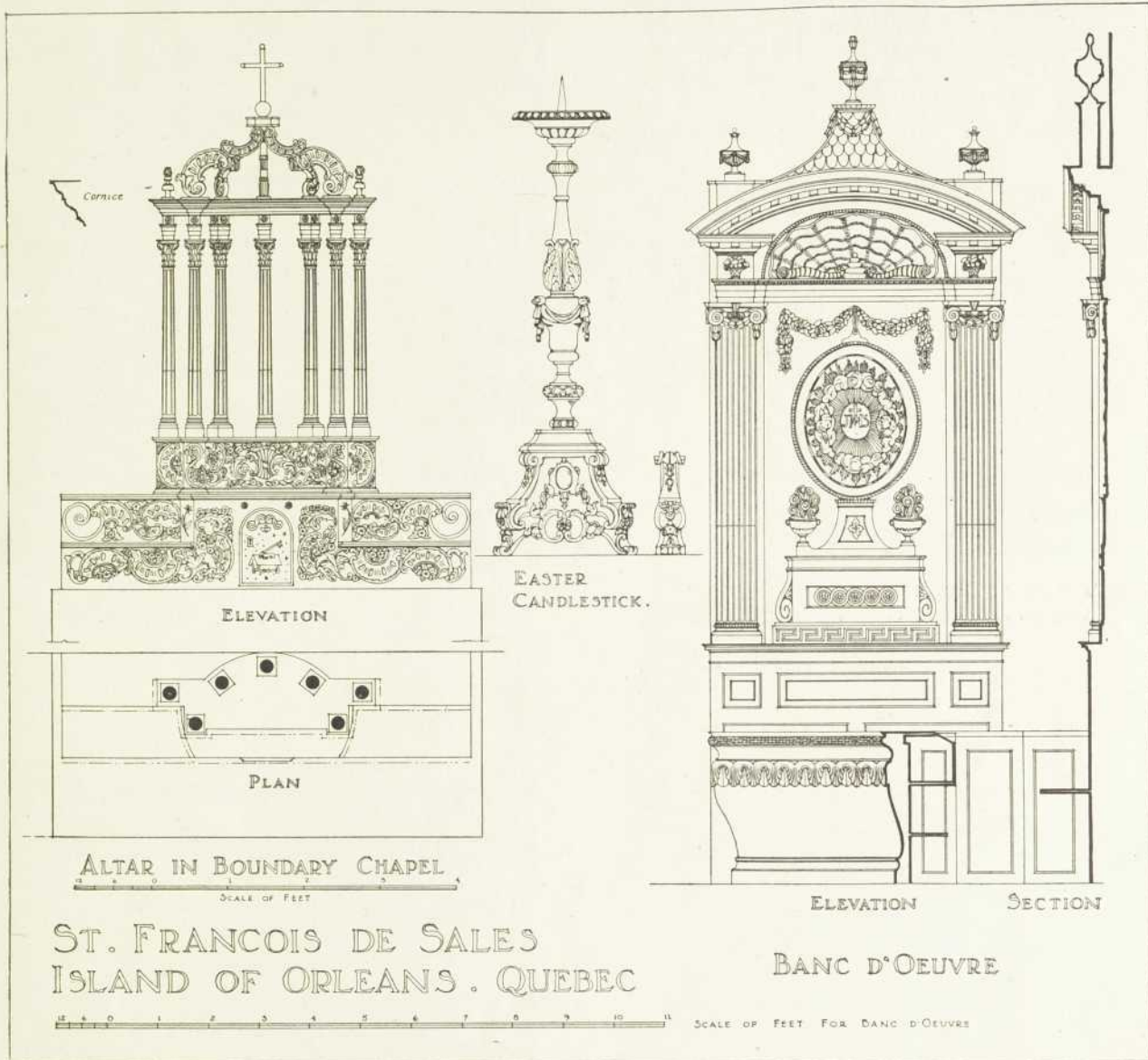
The Basilica at Quebec to which this note refers was burnt in 1922, and much interesting woodwork was lost. This candlestick must be one of the few relics left of the old work.

The English conquest of 1759 had less effect than one would have supposed. A certain amount of woodwork was certainly destroyed, but Wolfe's soldiers were under very strict orders not to damage the churches and, so far as we can gather from the church accounts, they suffered little beyond broken glass and damaged pews. After the conquest the country recovered rapidly. In 1765 Notre Dame des Victoires in Quebec was rebuilt (it had been destroyed during the siege) and by 1770 work was again in full swing.

A good example of the work from the later years of the century is the *rétable* and altar made for Mgr. Olivier Briand's chapel in the old seminary in 1784 at a cost of £1,000. It is the work of Pierre Emond, a sculptor of Quebec, who also made the side altars of the Basilica, now lost. It is in perfect condition and has never been painted. The altar is square, with long panels at each side and a large panel for the altar frontal between them. It is flanked by Corinthian columns above which the entablature breaks forward. The grades are carved with rather formal foliage. From above the tabernacle springs a tree which divides into two trunks and rises in a tangle of interlacing branches and foliage on each side of the central picture. The foliage is of olive in reference to Bishop Olivier's name and is delightfully carved. The panelling at the sides contains small presses in the lower part; in the panelling above on each side

is a niche with a shell head and a scroll bracket below to hold a statue. These scrolls are very vigorously carved, the panels are well moulded with shaped ends,

(1761-1812), whose work bulks large in the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. François Baillargé is said to have studied in



ST. FRANCOIS DE SALES, ISLAND OF ORLEANS: BANC D'OEUVRE

and the work generally is of a high quality. No doubt extra care was taken with it, as it was for the Bishop's own use.

Jean Baillargé, who came from France to Quebec in 1741, had two sons, François (born 1759) and Florent

Paris, and is given in the *Canadian Biographical Dictionary* as "de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture France." Father and sons were employed upon the woodwork of the old Basilica at Quebec, which was lost in the fire of 1922, but we still have the





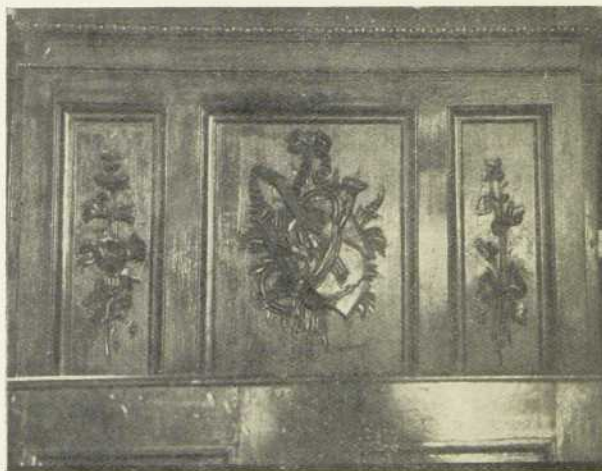
THE BANC D'OEUVRE IN THE BASILICA, QUEBEC
Original drawing by Francois Baillargé, 1799



STE. FAMILLE: A SIDE ALTAR
Florent Baillargé, 1791



Photo Livernois Frères, Quebec
CHAPEL OF MGR. OLIVIER BRIAND, GRANDE SEMINAIRE, QUEBEC
By Pierre Emond, 1784



STE. FAMILLE: CARVED PANELS FROM THE DADO OF THE RÉTABLE
Thomas Baillargé, 1820-25





ST. FRANCOIS, ISLAND OF ORLEANS: DETAIL OF THE RÉTABLE
André Paquet, 1833



ST. FRANCOIS: THE PULPIT
André Paquet, 1833



ST. FRANCOIS: THE FONT
Samson, 1854



SAULT-AU-RÉCOLLET, ISLAND OF MONTREAL: A DOOR
TO THE SACRISTY. About 1764

drawing for the *banc d'œuvre* by François about 1790. In his later years he worked with his son Thomas (1792-1859). In the contract for the rétable, altar and baldaquin at St. Joachim, Montmorency, in 1816, Thomas, then twenty-three years old, was expressly associated with his father. "Moi, François Baillargé,

pots of flowers in low relief; the rocaille work of the Levasseurs has entirely disappeared. The altar is flanked by two banded Corinthian columns on each side with pedestals standing on a panelled dado. Between the columns are almost life-size seated figures of the four evangelists. All the panels are carved with



ST. MICHEL DE VAUDREIL: THE HIGH ALTAR
Tabernacle by Liebert, 1792

de cette ville, architecte, pour moi et mon fils Thomas Baillargé, mon associé."*

This is one of the most elaborate pieces of work in the Province. The altar is of the console type, which becomes universal in the nineteenth century. The grades of the tabernacle are carved with acanthus scrolls; between the columns are arched panels with

* *Les vieilles Eglises de la Province de Québec*, p. 231.

foliage or figure subjects in low relief. François Baillargé seems also to have been a most industrious painter of church pictures, and there are still in existence many large examples of his art. Unfortunately the Quebec school, which produced so many fine sculptors, produced not a single painter of any merit.

Florent Baillargé, François' brother, was a sculptor of considerable ability, of whom we hope to learn more.

The side altars in Ste. Famille, made in 1791-98, are not large works, but are fresh, with pleasantly designed, rather naïve, carving. Quebec at this time must have been rather isolated, and such work as this shows that the Canadian carvers were developing their own tradition with some degree of independence.

Thomas Baillargé carried out a very large amount of

the garden; like his father he was fond of low relief figure medallions and panels.

André Paquet is said to have been a pupil of Thomas Baillargé and worked in a very similar style. The rétable at St. François de Sales, on the Island of Orleans (1835), is a good example of his work. The composition of columns, pilasters and panels is as usual,



Photo Edgar Gariépy, Montreal

SAULT-AU-RECOLLET: THE SANCTUARY

Fleury David, 1816-31. Tabernacle Liebert, 1792. Altar Tombeau Quevillon, 1806

work in the Quebec district during the first half of the nineteenth century. The rétable at Ste. Famille, the pulpit, *banc d'œuvre* and font at St. Joseph de Levis, near Quebec, the front of the Basilica at Quebec, are known to be from his hand. He carried on the work of his father, a Louis XV type with Corinthian pilasters enclosing panels of swags and trophies. His flower carving is often very naturalistic, with poppies, lilies, hollyhocks and daffodils evidently taken straight from

but the large cartouches, the pots of flowers and trails are very vigorously designed and carved. The pulpit in the same church, probably made by Paquet between 1834 and 1844, and the font by Samson of Quebec in 1854, show modifications which may be due to the influence of the Adams school dominant in America, or possibly of the French Empire School. The swags, trusses, and low-relief panels are quite of the Baillargé type, but the Ionic pilasters, coved cornice and small

mouldings are new. The carving of the handrail, and of the serpent and tree in the font, are quite unlike anything else which I know outside the Province of Quebec; they are perhaps a little rustic, but full of spirit.

Meanwhile another school of sculptors was working in the district round Montreal. There has always been a rivalry between Montreal and Quebec, and though the sculptors of one city occasionally worked in the other, yet, on the whole, they seem to have kept within their respective spheres. For one thing travelling was not very rapid, and the work required the personal attention of the sculptor, so that normally he would not work very far from his centre. Originally, no doubt, the Montreal sculptors must have come from Mgr. Laval's school of *arts et métiers*, though we cannot as yet trace any connection. There is a certain amount of woodwork in the Montreal district, which appears to date from the first years of the eighteenth century, probably even from the seventeenth, though as yet we have no certain data, but in the sanctuary of the Church of the Visitation at Sault-au-Récollet are two carved doors which at latest date from about 1764, and are undoubtedly local work. They are in two panels, the tops and bottoms shaped and floriated, the panels filled with scenes carved in low relief. In the upper panels are Samson and the lion, and Samson carrying off the doors of Gaza; in the lower are shown respectively the curé reading his breviary as he approaches the church, and the curé going to visit a sick parishioner. The little houses, the church and figures in the backgrounds are most minutely carved, and represent the types which we know were in use about the middle of the eighteenth century in Canada. They are coloured in polychrome, possibly the original colouring. We do not know who was the carver, but they were certainly made in Canada.

We have a few names of early sculptors in Montreal—Hébert, Labrosse—but they are mere names as yet. The first carver whose work we know is Maître Liebert, who, in 1792, made a tabernacle for the high altar at Sault-au-Récollet, and a similar one for St. Michel de Vaudreuil. In these examples his work is stiffer and less interesting than that of his contemporary Emond at Quebec. The strapwork panels are evidently inspired by the wrought iron of the period, and the design is a little restless. We still require to know something more of Maître Liebert.

A slightly younger man was Louis Amable Quevillon (1749–1823), the best known of the Montreal sculptors. He formed a school at St. Vincent de Paul, near Montreal, where he and his associates Joseph Pepin, Paul Rollin and René St. James produced a large amount of church decoration and furniture, and trained a number of sculptor-architects, many of whom we meet later.

Quevillon's work is not difficult to recognise. He

used a free handling of Louis XV, and followed in general lines the work of François Baillargé. He was particularly fond of delicate arabesque work, which he used as an infilling for panels in the retable or on gallery fronts. The altar tables are of the console type "à la Romaine" which we have met before at St. Joachim. They have angle trusses connected at top and bottom with borderings of scrolls and cartouches of rocaille, interspersed here and there with sprigs of more naturalistic foliage. The side altars at Sault-au-Récollet are typical examples executed by him. His name and that of his associates is connected with about twenty-five churches in and near Montreal; the woodwork of St. Matthias, for instance, is probably by René St. James, but all bears the stamp of a common school, and it is hardly possible to separate the members of the "firm."

David Fleury David, whose work we find in the church at Sault-au-Récollet, may have been a pupil of Quevillon and possibly was one of a family of sculptors, for we know of a Louis Bazil David, a pupil of Quevillon, who came from Montreal and did work in the Island of Orleans in 1812, rather to the annoyance of some of the islanders, who wanted a Quebec man. Fleury David did the internal panelling, wood vault and retable of Sault-au-Récollet between 1816 and 1831. Nave and choir are treated with a Corinthian pilaster order framing arches on impostes. The vault is of seven bays divided by broad flat ribs rising above the pilasters. The bays are treated alternately with diagonal ribs rising to large central rosettes and with arabesque patterns; on the ribs is a delicate meander of stem and leaves. The endmost bay and the vault of the sanctuary are panelled in a coffer pattern, the panels filled with arabesques and foliage sprays of great variety. In the spandrels of the sanctuary arch are cornucopiæ, from which stream forth a tangle of vine branches, fruit and foliage. All is carved in wood and pinned to the boarded ceiling. It is possibly the finest ceiling in the province—crisp, delicate and varied in design.

The sanctuary of this church is rectangular, and the retable has four detached Corinthian columns, the centre pair of which support a large scroll canopy. The lighting by two large windows gives stronger contrasts and a greater richness than usual.

This school of wood-sculptors lasted until about 1850, when it slowly gave way before foreign influences and a new generation of architects. We rarely meet with an "architecte" in the old records, and when we do he appears as an expert brought in to help in some structural question. The Levasseurs, Emond or Quevillon are always referred to as "sculpteurs" or "maître sculpteur"; they worked entirely in wood and executed their own designs. In the beginning of the nineteenth century these men begin to call themselves architects and to design work which they do not



ST. LAURENT, ISLAND OF ORLEANS
Second half of the nineteenth century. Showing
the influence of Gibbs



Photo Livernois Frères, Québec
ST. CHARLES, CHARLESBOURG
Mid-nineteenth century



ST. BARTELEMI BERTHIER: FRONT 1866

execute. So François Baillargé, in 1816, calls himself an architect, though he is usually referred to in accounts as sculptor. His son Thomas in 1844 designed and carried out the west front of the Basilica at Quebec, a work of masonry architecture, yet he was trained as a wood sculptor and undoubtedly executed much wood carving with his own hands. André Paquet, in the early accounts in which he is mentioned, is first "maître menuisier," then "sculpteur"; in the latest he is "architecte."

The title architect seems to have conveyed the idea of an engineer rather than of an artist, and Charles Baillargé, the nephew of Thomas, became a civil engineer. So François Xavier Berlinguet first appears as a pupil at Quevillon's school; later he designed and carried out as architect a number of churches in the Italianate manner which became fashionable in the mid-nineteenth century, or in an English style derived from Gibbs; and then we hear of him as a railway engineer.

The change can be noted in the churches. From about 1840 or so the fronts become architecturally more elaborate. They have stone towers to support the wooden belfries, and pedimented or scrolled gables; the doors are framed in pilasters with a cornice. And as the outside becomes more architectural the inside loses interest. Ugly plaster ornaments take the place of the delicate woodcarving, pseudo Gothic cusps and

BALLOTTA
GARY-SU-POE

pinnacles get mixed up with the traditional forms of the retable and tabernacle. Yet there is some interest in these late churches. The fronts of St. Jean, by Berlinguet, or St. Laurent, on the Island of Orleans, show very clearly the influence of Philip Gibbs, as to a lesser degree does Château Richer. Many of the churches retain the old single or double belfry which every Canadian carpenter knew how to design.

The larger parish churches often rebuilt their fronts, adding great façades in cut stone of a stiff, if dignified, Italian type with double towers. Fortunately, perhaps, the towers seem never to have been finished by the architect, and, after a lapse of ten or twenty years, the village carpenter was employed to put on double wooden belfries of the old Canadian pattern; Ste. Geneviève, by Berlinguet, and Sault-au-Récollet (1851), by John Ostell, an English architect, are good examples, both on the Island of Montreal.

The Gothic revival made its first appearance in 1825, when James O'Donnell, an American architect, commenced the large church of Notre Dame in Montreal. The choice of style was attacked on the grounds that it was Protestant and foreign, and efforts were made to substitute a design in the traditional manner by a Quebec architect. Unfortunately they were unsuccessful, the lure of the new fashion was too strong, and slowly the Gothic revival crept in, to be followed by other revivals, not at their best. The Gothic revival came to Quebec in its most degraded form, as a foreign

architecture drawn from books. The sense of craftsmanship and straightforward structural design which it gave to England were in Quebec to be sought in the old traditional Renaissance which it supplanted.

Since its death in the middle of the nineteenth century, the remains of this old colonial French architecture have been sadly lessened. A passion for pulling down the old churches seems to have seized the community with the wave of prosperity which came after 1870. Fire took what demolition spared, and we have now only a small remnant of what the province possessed even fifty years ago. Recently a new spirit has risen. The "Commission des Monuments Historiques de la Province de Quebec" has published two valuable books, one on the old churches, and one on the manors and houses; the old churches are being more carefully preserved, and the parishioners are beginning to take a pride in the beauty and history of their old carving.

In conclusion, I would acknowledge the co-operation of Dr. Marius Barbeau, of the Department of Anthropology, Ottawa, and of Professor A. Adair, of McGill University, who are doing that work upon the old parish records without which it would be impossible to write a connected history. There is still very much to be done, and much of what is here written will have to be rewritten, but we believe that eventually it will be possible to give a connected history of French Canadian art from Bishop Laval's day to the middle of the nineteenth century.



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Quevillon, 1802-06

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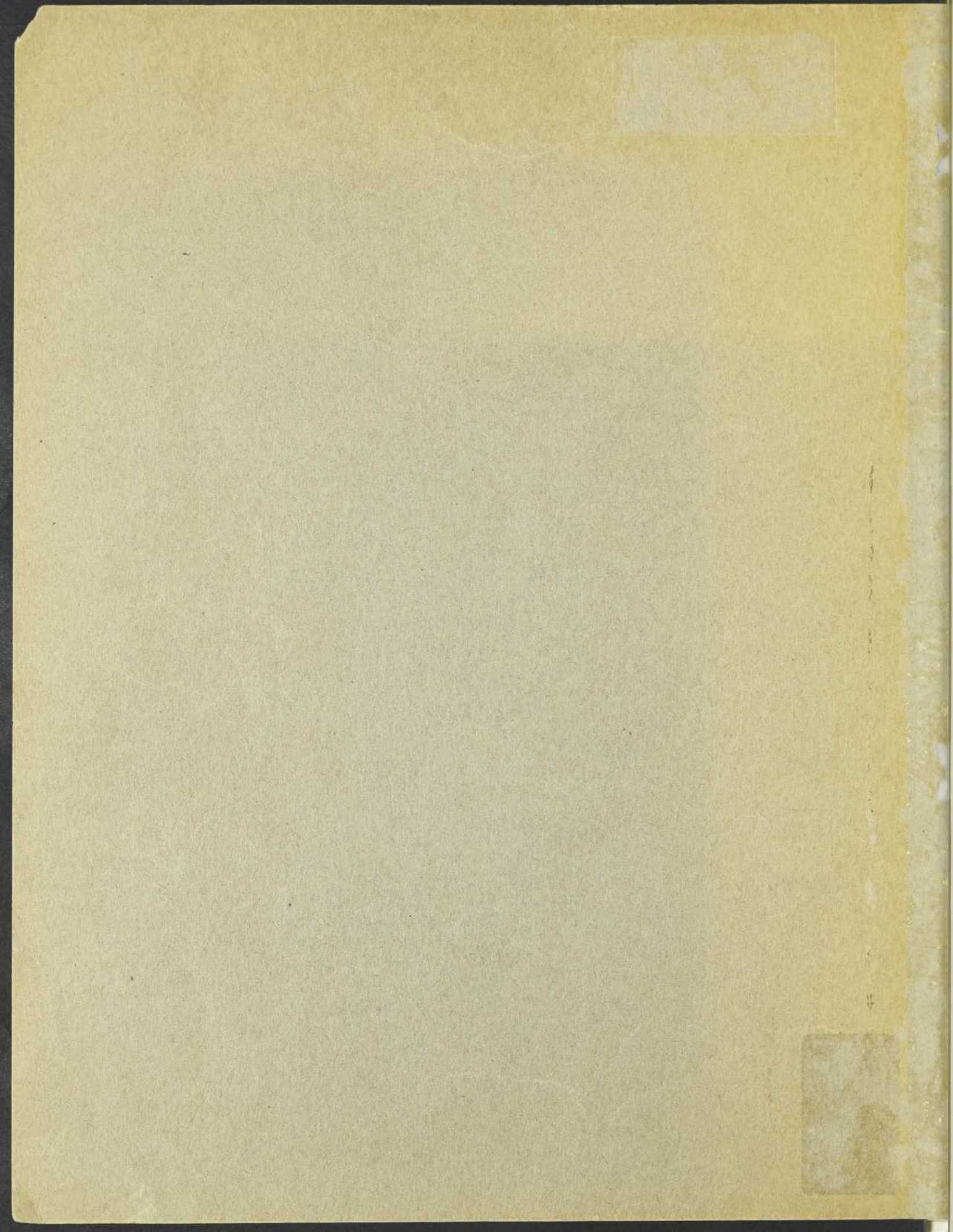
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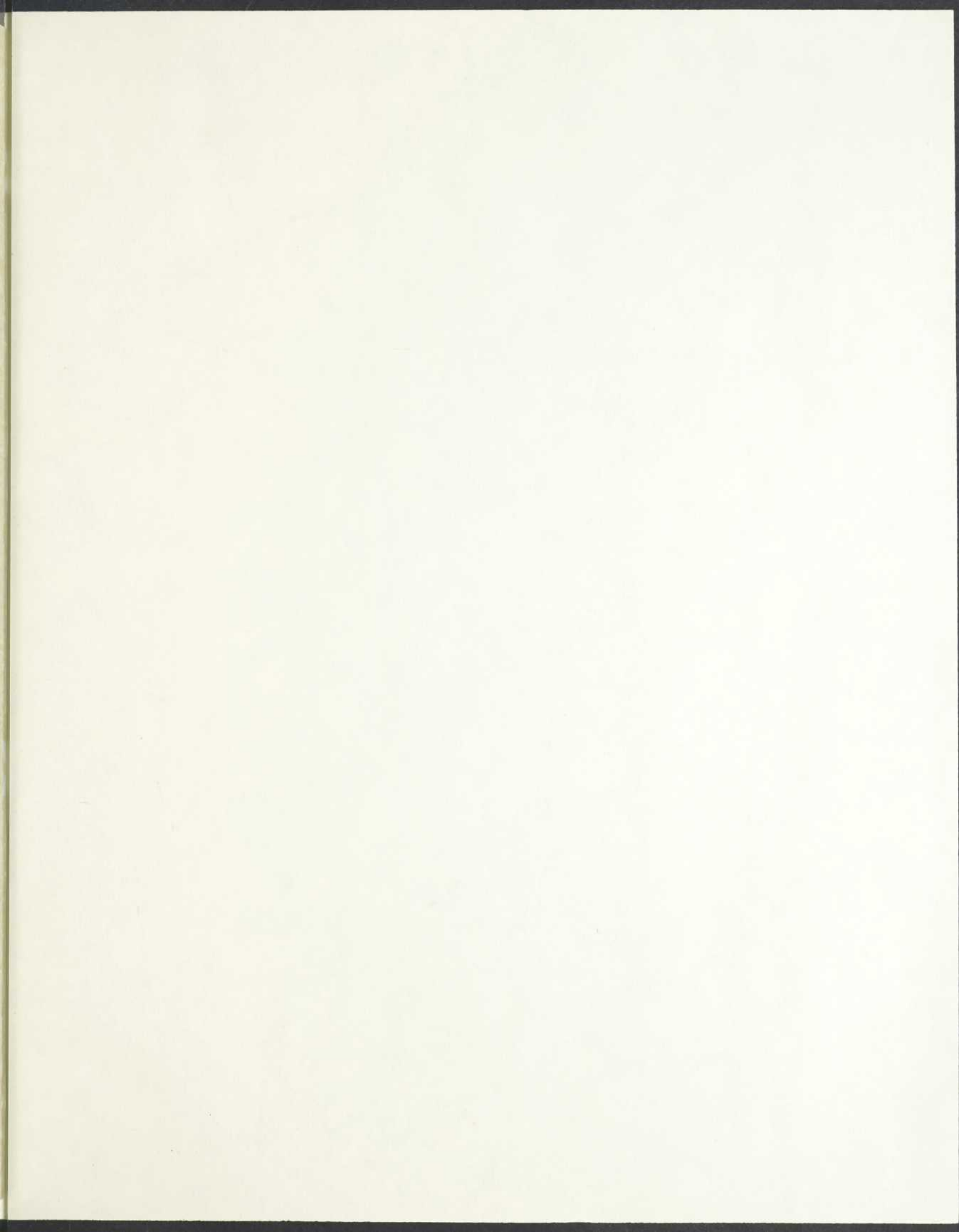
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